

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
FOI/PA
DELETED PAGE INFORMATION SHEET
FOI/PA# 1347908-0

Total Deleted Page(s) = 6
Page 6 ~ Referral/Consult;
Page 14 ~ Referral/Direct;
Page 15 ~ Referral/Direct;
Page 16 ~ Referral/Direct;
Page 17 ~ Referral/Direct;
Page 18 ~ Referral/Direct;

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
X Deleted Page(s) X
X No Duplication Fee X
X For this Page X
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO : The Director

FROM : Mr. D. M. Ladd

SUBJECT: FLYING DISCS

DATE: August 14, 1947

- Mr. Tolson _____
- Mr. E. A. Tamm _____
- Mr. Clegg _____
- Mr. Glavin _____
- Mr. Ladd _____
- Mr. Nichols _____
- Mr. Rosen _____
- Mr. Tracy _____
- Mr. Carson _____
- Mr. Egan _____
- Mr. Gurnea _____
- Mr. Harbo _____
- Mr. Hendon _____
- Mr. Pennington _____
- Mr. Quinn Tamm _____
- Tele. Room _____
- Mr. Nease _____
- Miss Beahm _____
- Miss Gandy _____

In connection with your request to be advised as to the facts concerning newspaper reports of flying discs in the Portland area and the reported conference of army officials in Portland concerning flying discs, the Portland Office has advised that Leaveritt G. Richards, aviation editor of the "Oregonian," has stated that Captain William L. Davidson and Lieutenant Frank M. Brown of the Fourth AAF Headquarters, San Francisco, were in Portland on July 27, 1947. While in Portland they interviewed Dick Rankin, an experienced pilot, who had reported that he observed, on June 11, a formation of ten flying discs over Bakersfield, California. Richards added that Davidson and Brown had also interviewed the following four experienced pilots who were among the first to report seeing discs, Kenneth Arnold, businessman from Boise, Idaho; Captain E. J. Smith, a co-pilot; Ralph Stevens, United Airlines and Dave Johnson, aviation editor, Idaho "Statesman." In order to determine the purpose of these interviews Richards contacted Major General Twining of Wright Field, Ohio, and from him gained the impression that the AAF instituted this investigation to wash out the disc reports since they are definitely not of AAF origin.

On Friday, August 1, the plane in which AAF investigators, Captain Davidson and Lieutenant Brown, were flying, crashed at Kelso, Washington and both were killed. The wreckage was screened by AAF Intelligence from McChord Field. The "Tacoma News Tribune" and through them the United Press put out a story that the plane was carrying parts of a disc which had struck a boat owned by Harold Dahl and Fred Chrisman. It has also been inferred that this plane was sabotaged to prevent these disc parts from being examined.

STATUS

Investigation by the Bureau has reflected that this plane was definitely not carrying parts of a disc and there appears to be no substantiation of a sabotage charge.

For your further information there is attached a blind memorandum setting forth in more detail the results of the investigation surrounding the above plane crash. No further inquiry is being made in this matter.

ACTION

Air Force Intelligence has been advised of the results of our investigation.

RGF:mjp

RECORDED
&
INDEXED

162-45894-105

31 SEP 24

14

[Handwritten initials and signatures]

COPIES DESTROYED
270 NOV 18 1964

102

EX-81

August 14, 1947

FLYING DISCS

The "Tacoma News Tribune" and through them the United Press put out a story that an army plane which was allegedly carrying parts of a disc which had struck a boat owned by Harold Dahl and Fred Chrisman had crashed on August 1, 1947, killing two Air Force Intelligence officers who were interviewing persons who were alleged to have seen flying discs.

Harold A. Dahl and Fred Chrisman, when interviewed by Bureau Agents, advised in a signed statement on August 7, 1947, that in the early part of June, 1947, they picked up some strange rock formations from a gravel pit on Mauri Island, Washington. They sent a cigar box of these formations to one Ray Palmer, editor of the Venture magazine in Evanston, Illinois and also editor of the Fantasy magazine in Chicago, Illinois. According to them they requested Palmer to make only a chemical analysis of the rock formations. Palmer then wrote asking for additional samples stating he had been unable to analyze the material. Dahl and Chrisman remarked that a few days after the flying disc stories appeared during the latter part of June, Palmer contacted them by telephone saying he would pay for an exclusive story if the materials they had sent him were fragments of a flying disc. Dahl said he wrote Palmer a letter in which he represented the material as being a part of a flying disc, and both Dahl and Chrisman admitted that this statement was entirely false.

Dahl and Chrisman then received a call from one Kenneth Arnold of Boise, Idaho who requested them to meet him at the Winthrop Hotel in Tacoma on July 31, 1947. According to them Arnold called in army intelligence officers from Hamilton Field, California and one Captain Emil H. Smith of United Airlines of Seattle, Washington to attend this meeting. Dahl and Chrisman maintained they told the intelligence officers Captain Davidson, Lieutenant Brown, Kenneth Arnold and Emil H. Smith exactly how they got the rock formations and that they had no connection with any flying discs. Dahl and Chrisman stated that they then furnished some of the rock formation to the intelligence officers as samples.

Captain Davidson and Lieutenant Brown left Tacoma, Washington in a B-25 to return to Hamilton Field, California about 2:30 A.M. August 1, 1947, and were killed when their plane crashed at Kelso, Washington, after the left engine burned out an exhaust stack which in turn caught the left wing on fire which caused it to break off. The crew chief and each officer parachuted to safety.

Ernie Vogel, an Associated Press wireman at Tacoma advised that two or three days after the flying disc story started he contacted Dahl to check the story

COPIES DESTROYED
270 NOV 18 1964

ENCLOSURE

62-82744-10

that the Seattle Post-Intelligencer had received from the Fire Chief at Harbor, Washington, to the effect that Dahl had some flying disc fragments. At this time Dahl admitted to Vogel that the entire story was false.

Relative to Arnold, Dahl and Chrisman stated that he was paid by Ray Palmer of the Fantasy magazine and possibly the "Boise Statesman" to come to Tacoma and obtain a story from them regarding the flying disc fragments.

On July 31 and August 1, a total of five anonymous calls were received by a Tacoma Times reporter and the United Press Wireman at Tacoma giving information regarding the meeting at the Winthrop Hotel over the disc fragments and stating that the B-25 had been shot down or sabotaged which killed Captain Davidson and Lieutenant Brown, inferring that this was done because the intelligence officers were carrying disc fragments in their plane.

Dahl and Chrisman stated that these calls could only have come from themselves, Arnold or Smith, who, they stated, had a friend on the Chicago Times and was possibly selling the story to the Chicago Times through this friend. Dahl and Chrisman denied making these calls.

Smith, upon interview, stated that reporter Lantz of the Tacoma Times and Morello of the United Press office in Tacoma had informed him that Arnold had several anonymous calls and from the accuracy of the information transmitted Smith believes they were made by either Dahl or Chrisman.

Federal Bureau of Investigation
United States Department of Justice

407 U. S. Court House
Seattle 4, Washington
August 18, 1947

R.H. [unclear]

DIRECTOR, FBI

RE: FLYING DISCS SIGHTED BY FRED CRISMAN and HAROLD A. DAHL, TACOMA, WASHINGTON
SM - X

Dear Sir:

The following, in general, are the facts regarding the flying disc story that started by FRED CRISMAN and HAROLD A. DAHL which subsequently resulted in news stories by the Tacoma Times, the Boise Statesman and the Chicago Times that a B-25 carrying Army Intelligence officers was shot down or sabotaged over Kelso, Washington on August 1, 1947 because it was carrying some flying disc fragments.

The original story, as related by FRED CRISMAN and HAROLD DAHL, was to the effect that DAHL, while patrolling in his boat near Maury Island, Washington, sighted six flying discs, one of which fluttered to the earth and disintegrated, showering his boat with fragments which caused some damage to the boat and killed his dog. HAROLD DAHL wrote a letter to RAY A. PALMER of Ziff-Davis Company which publishes fantastic adventure magazines in Chicago, sending him fragments of the flying disk and relating the above story. RAY PALMER requested Trans-Radio News in Chicago to verify the story as related by HAROLD DAHL and FRED CRISMAN telegraphed RAY PALMER confirming DAHL's story. RAY PALMER then engaged KENNETH ARNOLD, Boise, Idaho, who was the first to report sighting the flying disc and whom RAY PALMER had previously made a contract for a story regarding the flying disc, to come to Tacoma and check the story as related by FRED CRISMAN and HAROLD DAHL.

ENCL. ATTACHED

KENNETH ARNOLD came to Tacoma, Washington July 30, 1947 and arranged for a meeting the following day, July 31, with FRED CRISMAN and HAROLD DAHL in his room 502, Winthrop Hotel, Tacoma, Washington. KENNETH ARNOLD also called to attend the meeting Captain EMIL J. SMITH, United Airlines Pilot who had also reported seeing flying disc fragments, and Army Intelligence to attend

RECORDED
&
INDEXED

EX-64

62-
IF
34
106
R

R-344
[Signature]

14

COPIES DESTROYED
270 NOV 18 1964

August 19, 1947

this meeting. KENNETH ARNOLD, Captain EMIL J. SMITH, FRED CRISMAN, HAROLD DAHL, Captain DAVIDSON and Lieutenant BROWN of Army A-2 Intelligence from Hamilton Field, California, all met in ARNOLD's room at various times during the afternoon and evening of July 31, 1947 and discussed the flying disc story as related by CRISMAN and DAHL. The Army Intelligence Officers, Captain DAVIDSON and Lieutenant BROWN, left about 2:00 A. M. the morning of August 1, 1947 to return to Hamilton Field, California for Air Force Day in a B-25 and were carrying some of the reported disc fragments. The left engine on the B-25 burned an exhaust stack which in turn caught the left wing afire, the wing subsequently breaking off and tearing off the tail. The B-25 crashed, killing Captain DAVIDSON and Lieutenant BROWN. However, the Crew Chief and a hitch-hiker parachuted to safety. Intelligence Officers at McChord Field, Washington advised there was no indication of any sabotage. The plane crashed at Kelso, Washington approximately 2:50 A. M. August 1, 1947.

Five anonymous calls were received by a reporter, Tacoma Times, and the United Press Wireman, Tacoma, between 11:30 A. M., July 31, 1947 and 5:30 P. M., August 2, 1947. The first call was to a Tacoma Times reporter approximately 11:30 A. M., July 31, in which the caller stated that there was a meeting taking place at that time in room 502 of the Winthrop Hotel concerning the disc fragments found on Maury Island. The second call was received between 11:00 A. M. and 12:00 noon, August 1, 1947 by the Tacoma Times reporter in which the caller advised that at that moment a big meeting was taking place in ARNOLD's room number 502, Winthrop Hotel; that the B-25 which crashed was carrying disc fragments and that McChord Field officials had stated it was shot down or sabotaged. The third call was received Friday, August 1, 1947 at 5:30 P. M. by the United Press Wireman, Tacoma, in which the caller stated that the B-25 which crashed at Kelso, Washington was carrying flying disc fragments and that the dead officers were Captain DAVIDSON and Lieutenant BROWN, A-2 Intelligence Officers at Hamilton Field, California. This call was prior to the release of the dead officers' names by Army authorities and the caller indicated that when the names were released, it would verify the information he was furnishing was correct. The fourth phone call was received at approximately 6:45 P. M., Friday, August 1 by the United Press Wireman in which call the caller stated the B-25 was definitely shot down and that if he contacted Army Intelligence officers, they would not deny it. The fifth phone call was received by the United Press Wireman, Tacoma, at 5:30 P. M. August 2, 1947 at which time the caller stated the B-25 was shot down from the air with a 20 m.m. cannon; that the Marine plane found recently on Mt. Rainier had also been shot down and that Captain SMITH would be taken to Wright Field Tuesday morning. When the Army authorities released the names of the dead Intelligence officers which verified the information as given by the anonymous caller, the Tacoma Times printed this story on August 2, 1947 and carried several articles thereafter inferring that the B-25 had been shot down or sabotaged because of the fact that it was carrying disc fragments. DAHL and CRISMAN have admitted that the material which they sent to RAY PALMER had no connection with any flying discs and have given a signed statement to that effect which are being

August 19, 1947

forwarded herein. DAHL and CRISMAN deny, however, that they actually started the flying disc story and their actual part in the story. United Airlines pilot, EMIL J. SMITH, states that DAHL and CRISMAN on July 31, 1947, both related their original flying disc fragment story. Information gathered would indicate that the anonymous phone calls were possibly made by FRED CRISMAN in order to build up the flying disc story to the point where they could make a profitable sale of the story to RAY PALMER, Chicago, Illinois. No facts have been developed which would definitely prove that CRISMAN made these calls. However, from all facts and information gathered, it appears he is probably the most likely to have made the anonymous calls. The detailed interviews of the persons contacted in regard to this flying disc story are being set out below.

The following investigation was conducted by Special Agent DAVID A. MACCULLOCH at Tacoma, Washington on August 6, 7, 1947:

ERNIE VOGEL, Associated Press Wireman, Tacoma, Washington, advised that in the early part of June, 1947 he was requested by the Seattle Post-Intelligencer to check on a story which he was informed had been obtained from the Fire Chief at Harper, Washington. The story was supposed to have originated with FRED CRISMAN. Mr. VOGEL stated that the story was to the effect that DAHL, while patrolling in his boat near Maury Island, saw five or six flying discs, one of which fluttered toward the ground and finally disintegrated. Fragments of the disc were reported to have showered down on the boat of HAROLD DAHL, causing some damage and killing his dog. Mr. VOGEL stated that he went to the home of HAROLD DAHL on 3903 North Cove, Tacoma, Washington to check with him on this flying disc story. He stated that as best he could recall, this was just a few days after the first flying disc stories had appeared in the paper and was on a Sunday evening. He believed it was the early part of June. He stated that DAHL took him in the kitchen and proceeded to talk about this flying disc story in low muffled tones. He stated that DAHL acted rather suspicious and that shortly his wife came into the kitchen and was in a considerable rage, telling DAHL to admit that the entire story was a plain fantasy which he had dreamed up. He stated that after his wife told DAHL to admit the entire story was false, that DAHL then admitted that there was nothing whatever to the story and it was an entire hoax. VOGEL stated that in view of the enraged condition of DAHL's wife, he immediately left and reported to the Seattle Post-Intelligencer that the entire story was a hoax and that they should not print it in any way. He further stated that he advised the Seattle Post-Intelligencer that DAHL was a mental case and that nothing which he had reported should be carried as far as a news story. Mr. VOGEL stated that since that time he had received repeated requests from the Boise Statesman requesting information as to the flying disc stories reportedly originating with FRED CRISMAN and HAROLD DAHL. VOGEL stated that he had never, in his experience, had such pressure brought upon him to release a news story and that he repeatedly advised the Boise Statesman that the story of seeing the flying discs by DAHL and CRISMAN was a complete fabri-

August 19, 1947

cation and should be in no way, carried as a news story and refused to furnish any information regarding these reports. He further stated that he advised the Boise Statesman shortly before, or at the time KENNETH ARNOLD left Boise to come to Tacoma to check on the flying disc stories with DAHL and CRISMAN, that ARNOLD should not come as the entire story was a hoax.

The following information was obtained from PAUL LANTZ, 4513 South 7th, Tacoma, Washington, Proctor 8416, a reporter for the Tacoma Times:

It was the Tacoma Times paper which first issued a story on August 2 and subsequent stories intimating that the B-25 which crashed at Kelso, Washington on the early morning of August 1, had been sabotaged or shot down because of the fact that it carried flying disc fragments. LANTZ stated that on Thursday, July 31, at approximately 11:30 A. M. he received an anonymous phone call in which the caller stated that KENNETH ARNOLD and Army Intelligence officers were meeting in room 502 of the Winthrop Hotel to check on the flying disc story from which fragments were obtained on Maury Island. LANTZ stated he turned around to speak to his editor and when he picked up the phone again the line was dead. He stated that the caller asked for BURT McMURTIE, a reporter on the Tacoma Times who was out at the time of the call. He stated that BURT McMURTIE called ARNOLD at room 502 in the Winthrop Hotel and was advised by ARNOLD that he could furnish no information as he was there on a Government mission. LANTZ stated that on Friday, August 1, between 11:00 A. M. and noon, he received another phone call for BURT McMURTIE in which the anonymous caller stated that he might have some information for him. LANTZ asked the caller if he was not the same party that had called the previous date and he said yes. The caller then related that at that moment there was a big meeting in progress in ARNOLD's room, 502, in the Winthrop Hotel; that the B-25 which crashed that morning in Kelso was carrying flying disc fragments from California and that McChord Field officials had stated the plane was sabotaged or shot down. The caller then hung up after making some statement to the effect that he was a switchboard operator. LANTZ stated that he went to the Winthrop Hotel on Friday about noon and found that there was no male operator on duty. He stated he then went to room 502 and ARNOLD answered the door and that Captain EMIL J. SMITH, United Airlines pilot, was on the phone. LANTZ stated that he heard SMITH make a statement to the effect that the information must be very strictly confidential. He stated that there were one or two others in the room besides SMITH and ARNOLD, but that he could not identify them. He stated that ARNOLD told him he could make no statement and that he had attempted to check the story with various people on Maury Island with negative results. He stated that about 3:30 P. M., Friday, he wrote a story regarding the mysterious informant and called ARNOLD at his hotel room, stating that he had written this story and that ARNOLD had better check it. He stated that he talked to TED MORRELLO, the United Press Wireman, Tacoma, who advised that the story sounded fantastic. LANTZ stated that about 5:30 P. M., Friday, August 1, an anonymous caller called TED MORRELLO, the

August 19, 1947

United Press Wireman, stating that Captain DAVIDSON and Lieutenant BROWN were the Intelligence officers that were killed in the crash of the B-25 and that civilians and the sheriff had been kept away from the wreckage with the Army guarding it. He stated the anonymous caller then said that the names had not been released yet by the Army and that this would verify his statements. PAUL LANTZ stated that the following morning, Saturday, August 2, the Army verified that the officers killed were Captain DAVIDSON and Lieutenant BROWN and two days later verified that they were Army Intelligence officers. LANTZ stated that the anonymous caller again later contacted TED MORRELLO, calling him by that name, and at this time stated he did not call the Tacoma News Tribune or the Associated Press and denied calling PAUL LANTZ or BURT McMURTIE. In this call the anonymous caller stated that, "Don't think I'm doing this for you." He then asked if the story had been put on the wire and when MORRELLO said yes, the caller stated, "We want this to get back to New Jersey." The caller further stated that the B-25 was shot down by a 20 m.m. cannon and that the marine plane which was recently found wrecked on the side of Mt. Rainier, having been missing for several months, had also been shot down. The caller stated to MORRELLO that he should get in touch with a flyer named MORGAN with United Airlines who, he stated, was with Captain SMITH when they were shot at over Montana. The caller then stated, "I'll see you Tuesday. I'm going to San Francisco." LANTZ stated that he had checked with Captain EMIL SMITH of United Airlines who denied knowing any pilot by the name of MORGAN; denied ever having flown over Montana. LANTZ stated that MORRELLO received another anonymous call in which the caller stated that SMITH would be sent to Wright Field on Tuesday and that Saturday one of the men who found fragments of the flying disc was to be flown to Alaska. LANTZ stated that in view of the fact that the information as to the Intelligence officers on the B-25 had been as furnished by the anonymous caller, had subsequently been verified by the Army, the story was released that the B-25 was carrying disc fragments returning to Hamilton Field, California and furnishing the inference that the plane had been sabotaged or shot down. LANTZ stated that about 8:00 P. M. on Sunday, August 3, he contacted Captain EMIL SMITH at his home, 3027 West Laurelhurst Drive, Seattle at which time SMITH stated he had not given any story out to the Post Intelligencer at Seattle; stated that he had gotten a telegram to call a number in Boise and when he called and found out it was the Boise Statesman, he had hung up. He stated that the Boise Statesman then contacted him, at which time he admitted he had seen the disc fragments, but that he did not take any of them. This time SMITH informed LANTZ that he had been with Major GEORGE SANDERS, Public Relations Officer from McChord Field, all afternoon until about 3:45 P. M. SMITH informed LANTZ that he had told the Army authorities everything that he and ARNOLD knew about the flying disc fragments story from the time that KENNETH ARNOLD left Boise, Idaho and he had left Seattle, Washington. This time SMITH admitted that there were some of the supposed disc fragments in ARNOLD's room at the Winthrop Hotel and that CRISMAN and DAHL had been in the room Thursday afternoon. On Monday PAUL LANTZ stated that he called HAROLD DAHL who advised that if this were not used in the paper, he and FRED

