

UFO INVESTIGATOR



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Three Radars Confirm Unknown Object

Jets Scrambled To Intercept UFO

An unidentified target on Air Force and FAA radars in southern Florida has sent two military jets scrambling into predawn skies to hunt for a mysterious airborne intruder that was reportedly witnessed by ground observers and air traffic controllers as well as three separate radar facilities.

The dramatic intercept attempt came at approximately 6 a.m. on September 14, when the North American Air Defense Command (NORAD), alerted by

tower operators at West Palm Beach International Airport, dispatched two F-106 jet fighters to locate and identify a "glowing circular object" that appeared without warning on the airport radar scope. The fighters were sent from Homestead Air Force Base south of Miami and ordered to use their own onboard radar systems to search for the UFO.

"If it had proved hostile, we would have destroyed it," one Air Force spokesman later stated.

Although no trace could be found of the strange target, one of the pilots, Major Gerald Smith, said there was definitely something in the sky over the city.

"We were getting height cuts from two different military radar installations," he said.

The "bogey" target was tracked for over an hour but disappeared from radar scopes shortly before the jets arrived on the scene. The initial contact, recorded at the airport at about 4:20 a.m., was made by FAA air traffic controller C.J. Fox, who described it as a "good clear target." Another controller, A.W. Brown, confirmed this description, saying, "This object was hard."

Visual reports came from control tower personnel, including FAA watch super-

visor George Morales, who described what he saw as "silver white in color and cigar shaped." He said he viewed the object through binoculars.

Other reports were received from West Palm Beach police, a Florida state trooper, an Eastern Airlines pilot, and local citizens. Most of these described strange lights in the sky, some blinking, some unusually bright. Not all reports coincided in time and location with the radar contacts.

Approximately one hour before the jets were alerted, the sheriff of Palm Beach County, William Heidtman, was notified about the sighting and decided to make his own search for the object in a helicopter. Like the fighter pilots, he found nothing.

In statements to news reporters, the Air Force admitted it could not satisfactorily explain the anomalous radar returns, although it cited "weather phenomena" as a possible answer. The visual reports, it said, could be accounted for as the planet Venus, which is exceptionally bright at this time of year.

Pilot Smith said he agreed with this evaluation. "It looked weird," he said, but "in my personal opinion, it was Ven-
(See Jets Scrambled, page 4)

Landing Reported In Alaska

An elongated UFO that appeared to land and later take off is currently being investigated by members of the Alaskan National Guard and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

The Army, unlike its sister branch the Air Force, would appear not to laugh at UFOs, and is in fact cooperating with officials in seeking to explain the sighting, which occurred around midnight Aug. 16.

The object was first observed flying south of Norton Sound by an Eskimo man and his wife. According to the two witnesses, the UFO had a cockpit on top, a large window, and red lights at the front and rear.

As they were watching, the object landed nearby, sat on the ground for several minutes, and then took off again.

The following day, Aug. 17, approximately 20 residents of St. Michael, which is located on Norton Sound, also reported a UFO in flight.

A sergeant in the National Guard filed an official sighting report with his headquarters in Nome and an Army advisor was dispatched to investigate the case.

A depression three feet in diameter and two inches deep was discovered where the object was alleged to have landed. Photographs and samples of soil, grass and water were taken and forwarded to an Army lab for testing. NICAP is currently in contact with the Army to obtain the results of the analysis.

New TV Show Stirs Old Theory

Among new arrivals on the fall TV schedule is a nationally distributed adventure series entitled "UFO," based on the much worked thesis that UFOs are hostile craft from a civilization bent upon a sinister mission to Earth. Produced by a New York television company, the show is being aired on CBS and other network affiliates throughout the United States in prime evening time, and promoted in various news and entertainment publications.

The show draws heavily on historical information about UFOs and tells the story of a fictitious military agency called SHADO—Supreme Headquarters Alien Defense Organization—which maintains a secret command center underneath the

streets of London. The time of the story is 1980, when, according to the show's writers, UFOs have been positively identified as alien devices seeking to attack human beings and terrorize people who sight the objects. The story's plot revolves around SHADO's efforts to prevent the attacks and discover the reasons for the incursions.

NICAP found out about the show last January and immediately contacted the production company to offer NICAP's help in developing program content. The company declined the offer without comment.

Reaction to the series has already been received from NICAP members, ranging
(See New TV Show, page 2)

NICAP Investigates California "Occupant" Case

Take three young men who admit they are intrigued by "flying saucer" stories, an isolated desert setting, unexplained circular markings on the desert floor, strange lights at dusk, and add to that a strong dose of imagination and you have all the necessary ingredients for an "occupant case" that occurred Nov. 13, 1971, in Lucerne Valley, Calif., involving an alleged landing of a UFO and the sighting of one or more "creatures."

"It'll be some time before we conclude our investigation of the sighting. But if the reports we have are accurate, it may become a classic example that flying saucers do exist," remarked one NICAP investigator early in the investigation of the case.

It now appears, after a lengthy probe, that the early optimism was unwarranted. On the basis of detailed data supplied by NICAP's Los Angeles Subcommittee, NICAP has concluded that the case is most likely "classic" only as an example of people seeing what they wish to see.

Essentially, the sighting involved three hunters from Santa Ana, Calif., on an overnight trip to the small isolated desert community of Lucerne Valley. As they searched the valley floor for game late in the afternoon, they came across numerous markings in the earth.

All three witnesses were familiar with UFO stories and immediately began to speculate that the markings were remi-

niscient of landing reports they had read.

As the sun began to set, they set up camp near a ridge overlooking the valley, in hopes, they admitted later, of seeing a UFO.

As the men sat watching, their attention was soon drawn to two bright white lights in the southwestern sky. One of the men said he thought they were Venus and another planet, while the other two disagreed, noting that one of the lights appeared to slip behind the hills "all of a sudden."

During the next few minutes, the men claimed they witnessed several other lights maneuvering back and forth in the sky. Suddenly, the men spotted one light come in through a mountain pass and appear to land in the area where they had earlier spotted the "strange" markings.

As soon as the light landed, its glow went out. Within a few seconds, the men spotted a series of "whitish-yellow" lights appear near the landing site. According to the witnesses, the lights began to maneuver swiftly back and forth along the valley.

The lights followed a "searching" pattern, appearing to "float" above the surface as they roamed about the valley floor. One of the men suggested they signal one of the lights with their own flashlight. His companions argued against the idea. As they continued watching, one of the men noted that the light

appeared to be getting closer, and the men wasted no time in leaving their location and returning to their campsite.

The case was reported to NICAP Nov. 19, LANS, NICAP's Los Angeles group, investigated the case thoroughly during the next eleven months and produced the following findings:

- At least one of the men had a history of previous sightings, one of which involved a photograph that was later determined to be a possible hoax.

- Local amateur rocket clubs frequently use the area for launching model rockets, thus accounting for many, if not all, of the "strange" markings found and reported by the men.

- Tests of soil and rock samples in and around the circular markings reported by the witnesses revealed no evidence of anything unusual.

- A local military base frequently conducts night maneuvers in the area, including parachute flares; no maneuvers, however, were conducted the night in question.

- These findings plus the major fact that the witnesses appeared at times to be preoccupied with UFOs could easily have led them to make an inaccurate interpretation of natural events.

New TV Show

(Continued from page 1)

from enthusiastic approval of the program's attractive female performers to harsh criticism of its violent theme. Some members have expressed concern that the public will be misled by the program into believing that UFOs are actually causing harm to people who chance to encounter them—an allegation NICAP has firmly opposed in years past for lack of evidence. One member wrote, "The program could instill terror into people of all ages who have heard enough about UFOs to believe they exist as extraterrestrial vehicles but have had no contact with research that is nonsensational."

Commenting on such a possibility, NICAP President John Acuff said, "We feel most viewers will recognize the show is presented as science fiction and not based on real events. Screenwriters have used the theme of an invasion from space many times before, and the public is familiar with it. We do feel, however, that the program gives a seriously misleading impression of what has been reported by actual witnesses in close UFO encounters. Certainly, there is no reliable evidence that UFOs are part of a military action against Earth."

Odd Pattern Noted In Reports

Preliminary statistics compiled shortly before this issue of the newsletter went to press reveal an unusual pattern in UFO sighting reports received by NICAP from North America during 1972.

The statistics show a decline in reports beginning in January and continuing through May, followed by a sharp turnaround in June that continues strong in July and peaks in August. This is almost opposite what might be expected for the winter months, since the cold-weather season is usually a "quiet" period of reported sightings, broken only as warm weather returns and people start to spend more time out-of-doors.

The same curious pattern was evident last year in a comparison of reporting statistics for 1970 and 1971 (*UFO Investigator*, December 1971). Strangely, however, the pattern appeared only in 1971, not in 1970. The earlier year was almost devoid of discernible trends, possibly because of disruptive effects from closure of Project Blue Book in December 1969.

Comparisons between the statistics for 1971 and 1972 show remarkable consistency, with the winter-spring decline

clearly defined and the unexpectedly late reversal coming in June of both years. By far, August is the most active month, with sightings averaging more than one report every other day. In 1971, the least active month was April; in 1972, May.

A multitude of theories might be offered to explain why midwinter would show strong reporting activity (at least in North America), while April and May register only minimal numbers of reports. Climate presumably is a factor, but alone does not appear to account for the peculiar fluctuations. If temperatures and pleasant weather were the principal influences, April and May should be more active periods of reporting than January through March. Further, May and June should be as active or perhaps even more active than July and August, due to the relatively comfortable weather of the former over the latter.

Since the statistics indicate none of these expectations is met, there would seem to be other forces at work in determining the number of sightings reported during the various seasonal periods.

Police Greet UFO With Gunfire

More Data Received On South African Landing

News reporter Kenneth Whiting of Associated Press has filed this story on the recent "shooting" at a landed UFO in remote South Africa (UFO Investigator, August 1972):

Johannesburg, South Africa (AP). Notice to unidentified flying objects (UFOs): try to avoid South Africa.

Gunfire instead of a red carpet welcome greeted the UFO which dropped in unannounced on the Smit Farm near the remote village of Fort Beaufort.

Nobody disputes that Bernardus (Bennie) Smit, several of his laborers and two policemen saw something. The national debate concerns the proper protocol for receiving a UFO.

The police insist they had every right to shoot at it. Noted scientists said the gunplay was foolish if not downright dangerous. A newspaper complained that the unfriendly reception might have scared off little green envoys from another planet.

Smit, 40, said one of his farm hands spotted the UFO about 8 A.M. on June 26. Smit fetched his trusty .303 rifle and called the cops.

"It seemed to glow red in the bush and as I watched it turned from bright red to dark green and then to whitish yellow."

After the police arrived, several of Smit's hands tried to drive the UFO from the bush much as they would herd livestock. It veered away into trees at their approach, said Smit.

"There was a star-like protuberance at the right end of the oval-shaped object, something that seemed to grow in size as the white light it emitted grew in intensity. We could not fire at it at that stage since the laborers were in our line of aim, but as the object disappeared downwards I did fire at the star."

Smit used his rifle and the police fired pistols from as close as eight yards. About 15 shots were fired while the UFO hung around in bright sunlight for more than four hours, emitting a humming noise.

Smit said the object, which was about a yard wide and two yards long, left by crashing noisily through the undergrowth.

A dozen more hastily summoned cops combed the area. They photographed and took plaster casts of several triangular imprints on the ground and rushed soil samples off for laboratory analysis.

The imprints suggest that the object had three legs arranged in a triangle like a camera tripod and that it touched ground several times, said one policeman.

There was controversy about what to do when a UFO comes calling.

"I know of no law which forbids you to shoot at an invader from outer space," said the deputy commissioner of police.

"Anyone who shoots at UFOs should be warned against doing so," said Prof. Arthur Bleksley, former director of the Johannesburg Planetarium. He was skeptical about the sighting at Smit's farm.

"What surprises me about these people who are supposed to have travelled millions of miles to see us is that they always land in obscure, unheard of places like Fort Beaufort where they hide themselves away till they are shot at by policemen."

Uil Resnik, an astronomer and psychologist, said the shooting was dangerous because the UFO might have exploded.

"But the beings who sent the UFO to Fort Beaufort are far more likely to be amused than annoyed. The UFO has been dismissed as fake by many South Africans because it was so small. This is ridiculous. We send up capsules filled with tiny instruments to explore outer space, don't we? This is obviously what this was —

(See South African Landing, page 4)

SIGHTING ADVISORY

Preliminary information on new reports. Details and evaluations will be published when available.

July 3, 1972 — South Shore, Mass. More than two dozen witnesses reportedly observed a silvery "triangular-shaped" UFO for almost one hour (7-8 p.m.) before it disappeared behind clouds. One witness, a former Air Force Lieutenant, said, "It was translucent and I thought I could see blue sky through it, but its edges were white and well defined." A local Air Force official at Hanscom Air Force Base admitted receiving numerous reports of the UFO but said none was recorded in keeping with current Air Force policy. NICAP's Boston Subcommittee has investigated this case, and has determined that the UFO in question could have been a weather balloon launched earlier in the evening by a local US. Weather Bureau Station.

July 31, 1972 — Monroe, N.C. A 17-year-old high school student claims she observed a brilliant blue-white light from her bedroom window for more than an hour. The witness says she is convinced it was not a star since it was cloudy that night and there were no other stars visible. The object, first observed around 2:30 a.m., moved straight up and down, sideways, and "sometimes downward with a falling leaf motion . . ." After more than an hour, the first object was joined by "two less brilliant lighted objects."

August 20, 1972 — Reading, Pa. Three city police officers, including a sergeant, observed an oval-shaped object hovering several thousand feet in the sky above Mt. Penn. They said the object changed color from white to red to bluish-green. After an unknown period of time, the UFO suddenly shot upward and out of sight, according to the officers.

August 21, 1972 — Portland, Oregon. A 39-year-old woman reported what appeared to be a solid object surrounded by pulsating lights. She first spotted the "elongated" object at 9:45 p.m. and observed it for approximately 20 minutes before it disappeared behind some tall fir trees.

August 21, 1972 — Waukesha, Wisc. An 18-year-old restaurant manager claims he was driving down a lonely country road at night when he saw a large, orange, circular object 20 to 30 feet in diameter hovering at tree-top level. At the same moment, according to the lone witness, the entire electrical system of his car went dead. After a few seconds, the object made a strange "beeping" sound and took off. The witness was able to start his car but the rest of his vehicle's electrical system (lights, horn and radio) would not function.

August 27, 1972 — Lafayette, Ind. A University of Purdue coed said she and a friend, while walking across the campus around 9 p.m., spotted a "stingray-shaped" UFO with a shallow dome on top moving across the sky in a southwesterly direction. The object, according to the witnesses, appeared to tilt over on its side before disappearing from sight.

September 13, 1972 — Burlington, Colo. A rural family, who police say are responsible people, reported that a UFO "as big as a house" flew parallel to their car as they were driving down a country road at night. One witness said the object landed and took off twice in a nearby field. The object, according to the witness, was round and big, and "rays" appeared to be coming out of it. (A similar object was spotted by a sheriff in Colby, Kan., 75 miles east of Burlington, in July.)

newsnotes

BOSTON EXHIBIT STILL AVAILABLE



With Fall approaching and schools back in session, NICAP members in the Boston area will be interested to know that the UFO exhibit offered last Spring (*UFO Investigator*, May 1972) by NICAP's Massachusetts Subcommittee is still available for showing at schools, libraries, museums, and similar institutions. Shown above at its presentation in Wenham, Mass., last March, the exhibit covers all aspects of the UFO subject and is profusely illustrated. For more information, contact Subcommittee Chairman Raymond Fowler at Box 19, Wenham, Mass. 01984.

MORE KUDOS FOR HYNEK

Hard on the heels of *Science* magazine's surprising praise for Dr. Allen Hynek's new book (see last month's newsletter) comes another important accolade, this one from the venerable *Christian Science Monitor*.

Hynek, says the *Monitor*, "never forgets that, as there are things in 20th-century science of which 19th-century science never dreamed, so there will be a 21st-century science and a 30th-century science of which today's scientists have not the faintest inklings. The UFO phenomenon may be the advance guard of those sciences of tomorrow."

The newspaper credits Hynek with a sensible, thoughtful approach to his subject, and says "he is not criticizing for criticism's sake, nor is he carried away by the anger that has marred some of the UFO controversy on both sides. One of the most remarkable elements in the whole UFO business is the passions it has aroused in scientific breasts, action and reaction totally out of proportion to the stimuli. Dr. Hynek does not fall into that trap."

While warning that "the reader of this book will not find the answer to what UFOs are or even whether they are physical or psychological phenomena," the *Monitor* cites the book as a hopeful sign "that one day the [UFO] problem will be solved in a manner that will justify all the interest expended on it."

HYNEK BOOK HELD UP

Sales of Dr. Allen Hynek's *The UFO Experience* have exhausted NICAP's inventory of the book, producing a backlog of orders from NICAP members. Efforts to arrange a resupply from the publisher have just been completed, and a new shipment will reach our office by the first of this month. We regret the delay and appreciate the patience of those members who have been waiting for their books.

SPECIAL OFFER
LIMITED TIME

BACK ISSUES

Revised List

NICAP's supply of back issues of the *UFO Investigator* is beginning to run low. To make sure every member who wants to obtain back issues can do so, we are making the following special offer, good for a limited time only.

All back issues currently in stock may be obtained by active members at the rate of \$.50 each, postpaid. For nonmembers, the price is \$1.00. This offer is made on a first-come, first-served basis, until supplies are exhausted. The offer expires December 31, 1972, and no issue will be reprinted or sold thereafter under the same terms.

Please note that all issues in Volume I and II are out of stock and not available. Special arrangements are being made to offer these through an outside agency within a few months, along with other back issues. When this is done, a notice will be published in the newsletter.

ISSUES IN STOCK

Volume III, all numbers (1-12)
Volume IV, all numbers (1-12)
Volume V, No. 1 (only one published)
1970, all issues (May-Dec.)
1971, all issues (Jan.-Dec.)
1972, all issues to date

ISSUES NOT IN STOCK

Volume I, all numbers (1-12)
Volume II, all numbers (1-12)

PRICES

Issues in stock — Members: \$.50 each
Nonmembers: \$1 each
Prices include mailing

Issues not in stock — NOT AVAILABLE

Remember: This offer expires December 31, 1972, and will not be repeated. After that date, back issues will be available only through an outside source, at different rates. Order now, and enclose full payment.

South African Landing

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an unmanned space laboratory sent to explore conditions on Earth or possibly to make contact with us." *The Star*, a Johannesburg newspaper, editorialized that people of other lands greet flying saucers "with excitement or with awe and are ready to take the visitors to their leaders . . . If that UFO was carrying little green envoys from another planet we hope they'll understand: They just happened to choose a landing spot where the natives are unusually hostile and xenophobic, insecure and trigger-happy to boot."



MEMOS
FOR
MEMBERS

RENEW FOR ONE YEAR

An important reminder to NICAP members: When you renew your membership, use the form we send you and renew for *one year only*. This simplifies our bookkeeping and helps us keep costs down. If you renew for more than a year, we have to refund the extra amount or take it as a donation and bill you again next year. Our computerized membership system is designed for one-year renewals only.

WANT TO BE A NICAP INVESTIGATOR?

Members often ask how they can apply for authorization to become an official NICAP investigator. The answer is that we are currently in the middle of a reorganization program for our field personnel and not actively recruiting new representatives. As soon as the reorganization is completed, we will issue revised guidelines for formation of investigation units, and will advise all members via the newsletter. In the meantime, we would welcome any sighting reports or other material you feel should be included in our files.

Jets Scrambled

(Continued from page 1)

us." He said he flew over the airport at low altitude to view the object from the same general position the radar operators were watching it. He passed so close to the tower, he reported, he had to get special permission before he did it. Afterwards, he switched on the plane's afterburners and flew above the clouds to confirm his observation. He later speculated that a "strange roar" reported by citizens on the ground that same morning was only the sound of his afterburners as they cut in to boost the craft skyward.

NICAP's investigator, Carl Thorbahn, talked with controller Brown and some of the West Palm Beach residents who reported the sightings. He said Brown described the radar target as moving erratically in the northwestern sky, at a range of 12 to 16 miles from the airport. It was "like nothing I have ever seen," he told Thorbahn. He added that the object "could not possibly have been gas or other atmospheric (phenomena)."

Another operator was quoted by a Palm Beach newspaper as saying the UFO traveled at an estimated speed of 120 miles per hour through a constantly changing course. Officials at Miami International Airport, which also tracked the strange object, reported no aircraft was known to be in the area where the UFO was spotted.