

UFO INVESTIGATOR

NATIONAL INVESTIGATIONS COMMITTEE ON
AERIAL PHENOMENA
NICAP

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THE STRANGE OBSERVATION OF THE M. V. DOLPHIN

NICAP received the following report through the courtesy of Mr. Dave Squires, the operations officer of SEAN, the Scientific Event Alert Network. SEAN is a division of the Smithsonian's Museum of Natural History and it deals with the researching of short-lived phenomena such as volcanoes, earthquakes, and meteors.

The sighting report involves the captain and seven members of the crew of the Hellenic M.V. Dolphin. The vessel was in route from Koper, Yugoslavia, to Ashdod, Israel, on the evening of April 10, 1977, when the strange observation took place.

FIRST APPEARANCE OF THE LIGHTS

The observation that Ioannis S. Michalos, master of the Dolphin, registered upon his arrival in the port of Ashdod, two days after the event had occurred, revealed that at approximately 8:10 P.M., he, a lookout, and the cook witnessed three bright objects *directly* above the sea's surface. *The objects were in a straight line and each one was as big as a size "A" star.* The captain estimated their diameter to be about five centimeters. Their height, measured by sextant, was five degrees. A bearing on a gyro compass repeater placed the objects at 181-182-183 degrees.

The three objects remained steady and visible for ten minutes. At 8:20 they disappeared one after the other only to reappear five minutes later on bearing 189-189.5, altitude 2.56 degrees. Only two of the objects reappeared and both of their lights were a very bright orange.

The two objects began to move toward one another. At 8:29 one of the objects disappeared. The other was at bearing 188 and at 8:31, it too disappeared.

The strange observation was not yet over. At 8:33 a single light became visible on bearing 189, altitude 2.56 degrees. At this time the first electromagnetic effects were observed. The captain's personal television, located in his office, stopped working. When the single light disappeared at 8:38, bearing 189, altitude 2 degrees, the television resumed normal functioning. Neither the electrician nor any other member of the ship had tampered with the A.C. motor. Also, during the five minutes of this sighting, the magnetic compass was 20 degrees further east than normal. The compass was again working correctly at 8:38.

POSITION OF THE SHIP

On the evening of the sighting, the position of the Dolphin was approximately 32.13.0 north; 33.31.0 degrees east. Its course was 110 degrees; its speed 8 miles. The weather conditions were excellent with the wind ESE at 2-3 knots and the visibility at 15-20 miles. The ship's bearing was 075 degrees and had been checked with another vessel 18 miles away. The Dolphin's radar was working and showed a very thin cloud covering 12-14 miles 090 degrees east of the ship's course.

As the readings were being calculated, two of the objects on bearing 177-178, altitude 1.53, again appeared and began to approach one another. This time the chief engineer was called to the bridge to observe the event, and the second officer as well as the electrician followed him up to watch the sea's horizon and to witness the strange lights.

The two objects had reappeared at 8:45. At 8:52 one light disappeared. At 8:53 the second light followed the first and disappeared. At 8:56 one object again appeared, this time on bearing 180,

altitude 1.13. The single light vanished at 9:01 still on bearing 180, altitude 1.23 degrees. At 9:05 three objects arranged in line formation became visible on bearing 187-187.5-188, altitude 1.53.0-1.53.5-1.54.0. The center light was moving steadily toward the left.

The three lights did not remain in position for long. At 9:08 the two end lights vanished, but the middle light ceased moving and remained visible. While the center light held its position, a second light appeared at sea level, on bearing 180 degrees. This sea level object disappeared at 9:11, but the center light remained steady. It was now on bearing 187, altitude 2.03.0. Then, at 9:21, this last light disappeared. Neither it nor any of the other lights reappeared again.

NEW OBJECT APPEARS

This was not the finale of the sighting, however. Not only had the bright orange lights gone, but the light cloud cover that had been observed on the radar screen also disappeared. Also, at 9:40, a new object suddenly came into view. It was a bright silver color, and at one second intervals, it emitted a bright bluish-white light.

The bright silver object was on bearing 082 degrees, sextant altitude 25 degrees. It remained steady for three to four minutes when it unexpectedly zoomed downward with a tremendous speed, continuously emitting the bluish-white light, heading directly toward the sea. The object reached the sea's surface at 9:45 and was on bearing 087 degrees. It remained on the surface for about two minutes still giving off its light. The ship's radar was unable to pick up a return from the object. Then, at 9:47, this object also

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(see M. V. Dolphin)*

INVESTIGATOR SOLVES MYSTERY OF THE BURNED GRASS PATTERN

Interview

On Tuesday morning, May 31, NICAP received a call from a teacher at the Philadelphia School for the Deaf. John Morary described an unusual sighting, unusual because the evidence was still visible. It appeared to the many witnesses at the school that a UFO had landed during the night and had burned an area of the lawn into a symmetrical pattern. The UFO was never seen but the geometrical design was still easily discernible.

NICAP immediately called S. B. Moorehouse, our Philadelphia area investigator. Mr. Moorehouse proceeded to the 30 acre campus to conduct his analysis of the case.

Once he reached the campus, Mr. Moorehouse encountered the excitement of the students and the faculty. They wanted the evidence to point toward a UFO explanation. However, unhampered by the opposition, Mr. Moorehouse's careful investigation and conclusive findings read like the plot of a mystery.

At approximately 11:00 A.M. on Friday, June 3, 1977, Brenda Cassel of NICAP phoned my home to report a phone call from a John Morary, a teacher at the Philadelphia School for the Deaf, regarding a symmetrical pattern of dead grass near one of their school buildings which neither the police nor the school personnel could explain. The pattern consisted of two concentric circles of dead grass, one about 40 feet in diameter, with spokes to an inner circle about 30 feet in diameter, and with other protrusions. She asked me to make an investigation for NICAP.

Arrangements were made to meet John Morary at 12:30 P.M. at 7500 Germantown Ave., Philadelphia, approximately 35 miles away.

Enroute from his office in the Administration Building, Morris Hall, to the site of the strange pattern near one of the other buildings, Jack Morary reported it was noticed on Monday, May 30, 1977, when children in a class on the second floor of the building were being instructed in the importance of detailed observation, particularly for deaf people. As a demonstration, each student looked briefly out the window and reported to the class what they had seen. One child reported the pattern in the grass below, and the story spread rapidly around the 300 student campus. An attempt had been made to rope off the area, which the students did not observe.

Jack Morary said he had first called in the Philadelphia police, who came and observed and said that while they did not understand it, no one was being hurt or threatened by it so it was beyond their jurisdiction. In a phone call to the Franklin Institute, they said the report was interesting but not in line with their scientific investigations. The American Society for the Advancement of Science offered a few suggestions which were not applicable (such as rain drip pattern from a roof), but they were not interested further. In a phone conversation with the McGuire Air Force Base, they reported that they had never investigated such instances and were not interested. A friend then suggested that an outfit in Maryland investigated UFO related incidents and John Morary phoned NICAP. He said he was delighted with the prompt response of an investigation.

On arrival at the site, the pattern in the dead grass was clearly visible, with green grass around it.

In going over the area with a Geiger Counter, no radiation was present above normal background level. One tree trunk was pointed out as having been scorched, but this appeared to be a sap discharge from a trunk abrasion higher up. This was one of eight trees adjacent to the pattern and partially shading it in near noonday sun. There was no sign of disturbed foliage or branches above the pattern in the grass.

Jack Morary said that a teacher, a Mrs. Blonsky, had since recalled seeing a similar pattern during summer school about five years ago. In interviewing Mrs. Blonsky, she reported that during the summer of 1972 she taught school when there were relatively few people on the campus, and had looked out the window from the second floor and had noticed the pattern in the grass, but thought it was out further from the trees. When asked if tree growth in five years might have made a difference, she said it undoubtedly would have. She also volunteered that a five year old recollection did not justify a factual judgment. She said that the few on campus could not explain the pattern and that it later disappeared.

As shown in photo No. 2, two shovel holes were dug, approximately three feet apart, one in the center of the widest circle of dead grass and the other in the adjacent green grass area. In the dead grass hole fine cinders were immediately encountered, with larger clinkers and slag pieces at increasing depth. In the green grass area, normal topsoil was immediately encountered, changing to a slightly reddish clay with increasing depth. The holes were refilled with the material taken from them.

Evaluation

It appears that the pattern in the grass outlined a walkway around a former Victorian type herb or rose garden for which the cinders formed a foundation for the flagstone or other walking surface. Since the soil above the cinders was found to be minimal, such grass as had been able to grow there was dependent on rain and not ground water, which is the principal source of plant moisture. It has been very dry in the past few months in the Philadelphia area, and the Weather Bureau reports that the ground water is presently 7 1/2 inches below normal. Apparently, under these conditions the grass above the cinders turned brown, revealing the pattern in the surrounding green grass.

Observations

Parenthetically, this investigation has been an interesting learning experience in mass hysteria. The fact that the whole student body of over 300 and the faculty were so emotionally involved in a UFO incident could probably be traced in part to a teen-ager who is not a student there but who frequents the campus because he is the son of one of the very active Directors, and has ready access to all levels. His hot-line was working well because in the 1 1/2 hours between my phoning and arrival he learned that an investigator from NICAP was coming and had ridden over on his bicycle to meet me shortly after my arrival. He also advised that his father and uncle were coming, which they later did.

teen-ager told me in an aside, "I see we have a Philip Klass with us also."

On departure, I encouraged the teen-ager to continue his interest in UFO's, which he said he would certainly do.

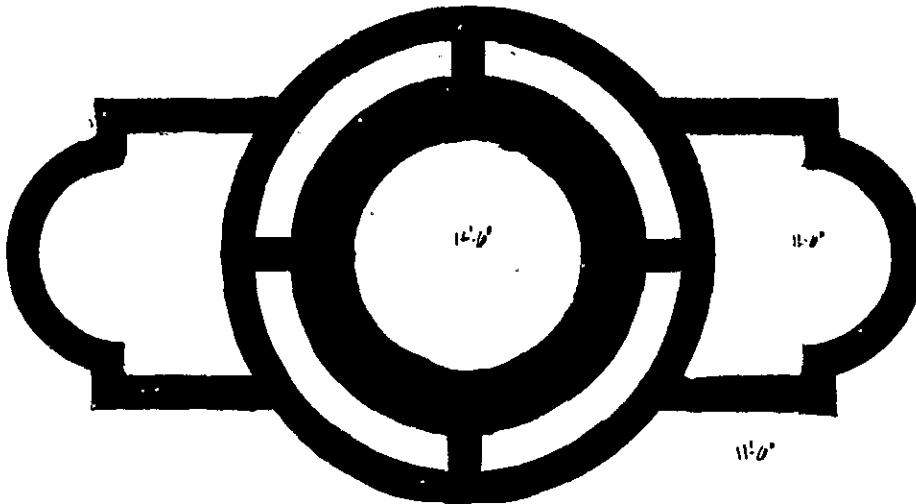
*M.V. Dolphin
continued from page 1*

disappeared. The crew members searched the sea's surface and the sky carefully, looking for any reappearance of the objects they had seen during the past hour and a half. The captain and crew remained on the bridge through the rest of the night and into the next day.

Only one last observation was made. At 1:05 A.M. a bright silver object appeared on the sea's surface, on bearing 092 degrees. It emitted the same bluish-white light and it vanished for the last time at 1:10 A.M.

Captain Michalos ended his report with the fact that, upon reaching Israel, he had checked with the proper authorities and had found that no Marine or Air military exercises had been executed at the time and date and position of his and his crew members' sighting.

All eight of the eyewitnesses signed their names to the captain's report of the strange lights. They included the captain, the engineer, the second officer, the third engineer, the electrician, two watches, and the cook.



Sketch of the dead grass pattern made by drafting course student at the school

The fact that Mrs. Blonsky saw a similar pattern during the summer of 1972, and which subsequently disappeared, appears to be due to a similar occurrence. The precipitation statistics show that during July and August of 1972, the rainfall in the Philadelphia area was only 1/3rd of that during these months of the preceeding year, and was followed by a 60% increase during the following two months.

Much to the obvious disappointment of the School's personnel, no UFO phenomena appeared to be involved in this investigation. Gratitude was expressed, by both the School personnel and members of The Board for NICAP's assistance with this investigation.

The teen-ager advised me that the Air Force had been there and taken a soil sample for analysis, but when I confronted him with Jack Morary's report that they denied any interest, he said this was obviously another cover-up. He showed me a cup-size depression in the dead grass area and asked how else that got there—they must have taken the sample in the night. My attention was also directed to various marks, such as apparent bear tracks on the tree considered burned, and I was cautioned not to touch it because Dr. Hynek had touched some discolored residue at Socorro, New Mexico, and had gotten a bad infection. When one adult stated his disbelief that a UFO was involved, the



above Photo # 2
Test holes made in both dead grass and green grass areas.

BOARD MEMBERS RETIRE

Photo Analysis

Two long standing members of NICAP's board of governors will retire from their posts this year. Both Charles P. Miller and Bruce A. Rogers have had distinguished careers in addition to their association with NICAP.

Charles P. Miller, who is currently the Vice-president of NICAP, was born in Texas and later moved to Washington, D.C. He began his working career as a journalist, and at the end of World War II, he helped the State Department organize the USIA (United States Information Service). After setting up this service, Mr. Miller joined the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA). He was later named Vice-president of Editorial Affairs for AOPA, and he held this post until his retirement in 1971. Mr. Miller is a graduate of Simmons College (Hardin-Simmons University) and is currently working as a consultant to AOPA.



Mr. Charles P. Miller

Dr. Bruce A. Rogers is a native of Iowa but presently lives in Arizona. He has working experience and an educational background in engineering, physics, and metallurgy. His last position, before his retirement in 1960, was as a professor of mechanical engineering at Texas A & M University. He received his doctorate from Harvard and his undergraduate degree from Iowa State College where he also taught chemistry.



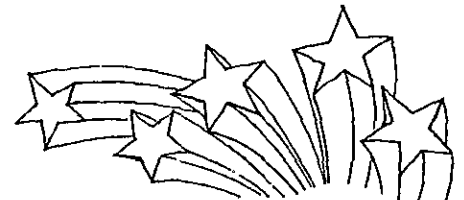
Dr. Bruce A. Rogers

Both Mr. Miller and Dr. Rogers have brought distinction to NICAP by devoting their time and energy to the conscientious study of UFO's and to the growth and management of NICAP. They will be sincerely missed by the NICAP staff and its members.

The photograph of the Miami, Florida, apartment building, printed in the May newsletter on page four, is an example of a lens flare. The member who submitted the photograph was interested in the bright light in the upper left hand corner of the print. According to our photo expert, this bright light, or lens flare, is the result of light coming from a source just outside the scope of the camera lens (and the photographer's field of vision as he looks through the viewfinder.)

If the light source is intense enough, it may enter the shutter at an oblique angle and be reflected within the body of the camera. Consequently, the lens flare is considered to be a camera-oriented flaw in the processed picture.

Lens flares are fairly easy to recognize. The bright area of light that is in a print will be found somewhere on the arc of a circle which is often seen as a softly illuminated area on the print. The source of the external light would be proportional to the radius of the circle. The effect of the light on the exposed film is caused by the rebounding light within the camera, not by an unseen UFO.



SIGHTING ADVISORY

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

At approximately 9:30 P.M. on May 9, Miss Leslie Hendricks of Livingston, N.J., and Mrs. Nancy Allocco of Harding Township N.J., witnessed what appeared to be the same sphere-shaped object hovering low in the sky. The two women, who saw the object in separate observations in different areas of the state, watched the object for about 15-20 seconds before it sped out of sight. The object was large and silent. It looked like the harvest moon.