

because I do in fact believe in the existence of UFOs, and I even go so far as to believe that the governments – and principally the Americans – know about this and won't want to reveal anything about it. But I fully accept the existence of extraterrestrial beings. I cannot see why it is that we should have to possess a civilization that enables us to get to the Moon and that there should not be another civilization that is visiting the Earth and does not want to make contact with us. I also think that there are machines invented by mankind that are likewise giving rise to phenomena of this kind, especially military weapons and spy-satellites.

“But I never managed to conclude my conversation with the captain of the *Trident*. I remember that I asked him to give me the position of the light, to which he replied that it was some miles to the south-west of Lisbon. Meanwhile, the frequency was becoming rather saturated with traffic, so I shut up. Later, the Tower controller told me that a jet aircraft of the Portuguese Air Force had already been sent up.

“I observed the phenomenon of the light for about half an hour. It takes the plane about 40 minutes to go from Faro to Vilar Formoso, and I only ceased to have it in sight when we were very near

to Vilar Formoso. One of the things I do remember is that the light diminished in volume, which indicates that it could not have been very far away. Its shape was round. If we consider for example the light of Venus, which is a planet that can be seen very clearly, with an apparent diameter of 5 cms or so, then this light would have been at least 30 cms or so in diameter, which is indeed very big. Compared with the light from a star, it would mean that this light was almost the size of a bicycle lamp. Imagine a star in the sky, and then, right beside us, a bicycle lamp, and their relative proportions would have been very much as in this case. The light was... well, there's no word you can apply to it. It was just a very massive light. For example, you can make milk a very clear colour if you add a lot of water to it. This light was like pure milk.

We are indebted to Omar Fowler chairman of the Surrey Investigation Group on Aerial Phenomena (SIGAP) and a founder member of the UFO Investigation Network (UFOIN), for obtaining this valuable report for publication in *Flying Saucer Review*. His colleague, our contributor, is chairman of the Centre for the Study of Astronomy and Unusual Phenomena (CEAFI) of Porto, Portugal.

EDITOR

A 1967 LANDING IN MADAGASCAR

H. Julien

We are indebted to the Editor of *Lumières Dans La Nuit* for permission to reproduce this case, which was published in LDLN No. 160 (December 1976). Our contributor is a Regional Investigator for LDLN. Translation from the French by Gordon Creighton.

MONSIEUR WOLF, residing at La Verdière (83), was good enough to furnish the following details when I interviewed him.

Of German origin, he served in the French Foreign Legion with a view to securing French nationality and ultimately settling here. He now runs a hotel very competently in the Haut Var region.

Here is his story:

“It was in May 1967. I was in Madagascar, and serving in the Foreign Legion. We had just been out on a reconnaissance exercise in bush terrain. We were in hourly radio contact with Central Headquarters. We had halted at noon in a clearing about 100 metres wide and begun to eat. The weather was fine. Suddenly we observed the arrival and descent of a machine of indefinable colouring. I am colour-blind myself, but I can state definitely that the thing shone very brightly, and was of the colour of a new coin shining in the sunlight. Around it there was an intense, dazzling glow. It came down with the motion of a falling leaf, and you would have said that there must have been some sort of accident – it was like a shining egg on the end of a piece of string. It came down very rapidly. And we felt a very powerful

ground shock when it landed. And then a piercing whistling sound. By now the craft was no longer luminous.

“After that the whole thing was unbelievable. There were 23 of us Legionnaires, with one officer and four non-commissioned officers. And we were all paralyzed. All of us saw the machine land and take off again, *but none of us perceived the lapse of time.*

“Let me explain: when the machine had departed, we all recovered the use of our limbs. We were all in exactly the same positions and the same places as we were in when it had landed. But when we checked up on the time, we realized that it was now 3.15 p.m. *Two and three-quarter hours had passed without our perceiving it.* We had missed three radio rendezvous with Headquarters. Our Officer got a fearful ticking off for it, for he was incapable of giving any effective explanation.

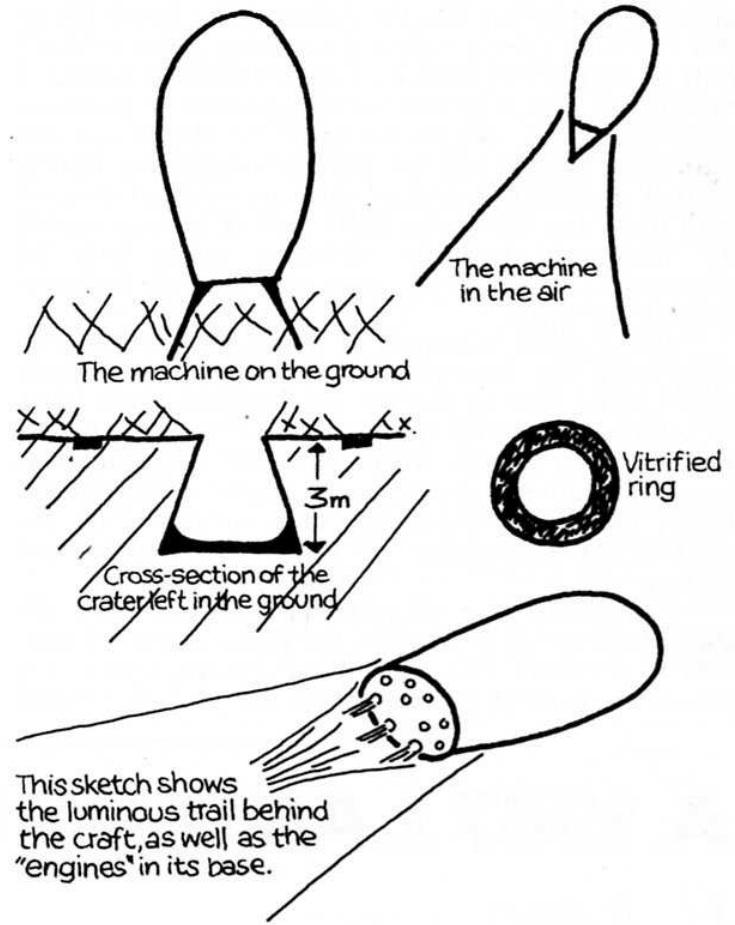
“The machine was smooth, with no visible doors or windows. It appeared to bear no markings. No antenna. It was like a smooth egg, twice as high as it was wide. I can't say what its exact size was, given the amount of vegetation in the clearing. But, comparing it with the height of the trees as it was taking off, you could reckon that it was between seven and

eight metres high. In its base it had several openings, of which we were able to get a good view as it took off. There were flames coming from them — not normal flames, nor comparable with anything known to us. These flames or lights were of various colours. One could have taken them for flames, but they must surely have been something else. Something like what you see when you use a welding machine to cut metal. Each of the openings emitted a “flame”, the whole thing producing one big thick short flame about one-twentieth of the length of the machine itself.

“It had legs. I did not see them, because of the vegetation, but on the ground there were three marks, set in a triangle, where it had stood. In the middle of the triangle there was a charred crater three metres deep — a crater which widened out towards its base. At the bottom of the crater there were some crystals of all colours, like bits of broken glass. The bottom of the crater was full of them, especially in the corners. It was like a vitrified ring.

“When the craft departed, it rose up slowly until it was above the trees. Then it vanished at a fantastic speed, as though sucked up into the sky. It left a sort of trail in the air behind it.

“Headquarters ordered us not to approach the landing site and not to discuss the matter among ourselves. Some specialists arrived by plane from Paris to interrogate us. We were made to swear on oath that we would keep it secret. We were visited by the doctors and we were made to undergo tests. For two days after the event we all had violent headaches, with a buzzing in the ears and a powerful beating in the area of the temples. We were not told the results of the tests made on us.”



SWAMP GAS FROM THE PAST

Luis Schönherr

NOW and then you come across reports which sound very familiar to the student of our subject, although they were published long before UFOs began to make headlines in our newspapers. An article of this sort I have found recently in an old issue of a popular scientific periodical widely circulated in German speaking countries.¹ Its author tries at first to give a proper definition for the so-called will-o'-the-wisps. In view, apparently, of the phenomenological difference in the various reports he concludes “...that under the flag of the will-o'-the-wisp a number of completely different phenomena are sailing. These have nothing in common, except the fact that they are spreading a certain luminosity”.

A number of possible scientific explanations for at least part of the phenomena is mentioned. It turns out that the author is a bit sceptical about the most popular view, according to which the decomposition of organic matter and the accompanying production of hydrogen, carbon dioxide and methane (swamp

gas) may be responsible for those lights. In his opinion the general content of inflammable swamp gas is so low and the content of carbon dioxide is so high, that it was difficult to imagine how such a mixture could burn at all, the more so as nothing was known about the process of ignition.²

As an alternative explanation he mentions the idea of a ‘cold’ light produced by bacteria, which hypothesis is ascribed to the Englishman Sanford. An observation by the German physicist Knorr is quoted, according to which no warmth was noted although the observer held his brass mounted walking stick into such a light for a quarter of an hour.

After having considered a possible combination of both of the above explanations — that gas from the swamp carries with it luminosity producing bacteria, which luminosity would increase on contact with atmospheric oxygen — the author cautions the reader against a premature conclusion: this may be so, he says, but conclusive proof is still lacking.

It is further admitted that St. Elmo’s fire would be a reasonable explanation in some cases. But here too the writer is very cautious, for he observes that this explanation would have to be ruled out if there had been trees in the vicinity which had shown no such glow. The possibility that glow worms and fire flies may be mistaken for a far bigger light on dark nights,

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