

Demyanko, Commander of the military Diver Service of the Engineer Forces of the USSR Ministry of Defence.

He had come to inform them of an extraordinary event that had recently occurred during similar diving exercises by military frogmen in the huge Lake Baikal, (Lat. 51°00 N, Long. 108° E, some 1,500 miles to the north-east, in the far eastern Trans-Baikal area of Siberia, and also in other lakes (not named) in Western Siberia.

In those lakes, during their diving exercises, the men had encountered mysterious “underwater swimmers, very human-like, but huge in size (almost 3 m. in height!)”

These beings were clad in tight-fitting silvery suits, despite the icy cold temperatures of the lake waters. They encountered the “mystery swimmers” at a depth of 50m. The strangers had no scuba diving equipment (“aqualungs”), nor any other detectable equipment, apart from sphere-like helmets on their heads.

Alarmed at this situation, the local Military Commander at Lake Baikal decided to try to capture one of the entities, and sent an officer and a squad of seven divers with a net to do the job.

When however, the seven Soviet frogmen attempted to net a “Visitor”, the entire group of seven divers were flung up out of the lake by a powerful force. When returning from such a depth, it was essential for the men to be decompressed, and this is a slow process that has to be strictly followed.

The seven men were severely ill as a result, with aeroembolism - Caisson disease, and a compression chamber was at once essential for every one of them.

In the Baikal Area the authorities had several such chambers, but only one was in working order, and it could contain only two men at a time.

The local commanding officer tried to put four of them into the chamber at once, and the result was that 3 of the divers, including their leader, died, and the other 4 were left as permanent invalids, - the terrible consequences of characteristic Soviet inefficiency and bungling.

The Major-General was now rushing to Issyk Kul to warn the local military, lest any similar rash acts should occur. (Issyk Kul is a great deal shallower than Lake Baikal, but nevertheless the authorities evidently felt that such beings might be there. Or maybe they even *knew* this as a fact. Did the Major-General already know something?).

A short time later, the Headquarters of the Soviet Military Region of Turkmenistan received an Order from the Commander-in-Chief of the Soviet Armed Forces. It gave a detailed account and analysis of the Baikal episode, and was supplemented by an information bulletin issued by the Headquarters of the Engineering Forces of the Soviet Ministry of Defence.

This bulletin listed numerous other deep-water lakes where there had been “*anomalous phenomena*”: sightings of underwater creatures similar to those seen in Lake Baikal; the descent or the surfacing of gigantic discs and spheres into or from the lakes; powerful luminescence emanating from the depths, etc., etc.

The purpose of these documents, in all cases *highly classified*, “for eyes only” of a very limited circle of senior military officers, was stated to be “*to obviate the occurrence of unnecessary encounters*”!■

A UFO CAUSED PANIC AT RIGA AIRPORT, LATVIA: CONFIRMATION OF THE EVENT (1961).

**© BY PAUL STONEHILL, Founder and Director of the Russian
Ufology Research Centre (California) and FSR Consultant.**

[We are grateful to Paul Stonehill for his permission to reprint this interesting case which he put out in October 2000. EDITOR]

A few rumours about this incident had circulated in the USSR. I was aware of some, but until 1996 did not have the complete story. Here it is:-

In August of 1961, a test flight of the most modern Soviet fighter-interceptor jet was to take place. The top brass wanted to film everything, so as to demonstrate the might of the Soviet Air Force. A film crew, headed by Victor Dudinsh, was commissioned for that purpose.

They set up their equipment in the vicinity of the airplane, next to the take-off and landing strip, at Riga Airport, in Latvia. Over one hundred military officers had been waiting to see the air show. But nothing happened. The jet had worked perfectly the day before, but now the pilot could not start the engine. At the same time a sinister sound pierced through the air, and a strange object appeared in the sky.

It appeared from nowhere and everyone was able to see it at once. They started running in every direction. Fear gripped everyone, and panic ensued. Dudinsh, a real professional, fought this fear to film the occurrence. He aimed the camera at the object in the sky, pushed the start button, and ran to the shelter.

The object did not descend, but rather moved in a strange fashion. It would disappear, and then reappear, but slightly further from its original position. This went on for a few minutes, and then something else took place. An entity inside the UFO was seen moving about intensively. The object was illuminated by sun, blue sky in the background, i.e. the visibility was fine.

Its shape was that of a triangle, its colour violet. A few minutes later and the UFO suddenly dimmed. It remained in the sky, but became somewhat invisible. As its brightness disappeared, so did the fear. The military

crawled out from various holes and shelters, and discussed the event. Not one doubted the ET nature of the object.

Dudinsh ran back to his camera, and saw that it was working, but the film was already spent. He wanted to take it back to the studio, but the airfield commander confiscated it. The KGB arrived some time later, and took the film away.

Dudinsh, however, convinced the airfield commander to take witness statements from the hundreds of eyewitnesses. Most signed it with trepidation. The pilot was the first to sign; he also mentioned that it was probably the UFO that caused the strange behaviour of on-board equipment, and the dead engine of his jet.

Dudinsh and his colleagues did find out some time later that the UFO was filmed. Those who witnessed the object had been warned to forget everything and keep silent. Somehow the information about this UFO leaked to the West, and letters of inquiry followed. So did offers to buy the film.

To de-fuse the situation, the Soviet media published a report that the object sighted that night was a meteorological probe. For many long years no further information came from the KGB archives. I tried to get more details, but all my contacts could find out nothing.

S. Boyev pursued this case, too. He published his account in the *NLO* magazine (Issue 13, 1996). *Perestroika* was now in the air, and Boyev was able to get permission to see the film. He was preparing materials for his documentary about UFOs over the USSR.

The KGB, damaged by *glasnost* and changes sweeping the USSR, relented and released everything. A famous Soviet proponent of the UFO phenomenon, a scientist from the Academy of Sciences, V.S. Troitsky, assisted

Boyev. Still, even then the authorities did not recommend them to disseminate the information.

The first public showing of the film took place in somewhat strange circumstances. The giant hall of the Institute of High Temperatures was filled by hundreds of UFO debunkers. Exactly at midnight the light was turned off, and the crowd breathlessly watched a UFO over the airfield. The film lasted thirty seconds. For the next three minutes the audience sat silently, and then discussions literally exploded, and lasted until the morning.

Everyone had a UFO story of his own, and everyone there was tired and disgusted by the silence being maintained about the UFO phenomenon under the Soviet regime. Experts were questioned, and they confirmed that the UFO had nothing to do with weather balloons, probes, or space junk. The object was classified as a cosmic voyager, a phenomenon of extraterrestrial origin, unknown to science.

The psychosis -horrible fear- experienced by eyewitnesses was probably caused by powerful and directed infrasonic radiation. Other measurements based on the film and interviews indicated that the object had hovered at an altitude of 20 kilometres, and its "base" was more than 200 metres wide.

This affair of the 1961 Riga UFO left a mark in the history of Soviet UFO phenomena, a mark that the KGB could not hide. But not everyone agrees that the object actually was a UFO. The well-known Soviet debunker and scientist, Migulin, described it as "a weather balloon". This opinion is also shared by a respected Russian ufologist, Mikhail Gershtein. Hopefully, we will be able to examine the film closely, and find more eyewitnesses who were in Riga at the time, in 1961.■

BIG CAT THOUGHTS, © by TREVOR BEER, FRES, FZS, MBOU, FSR Consultant.

A warm welcome to Trevor Beer, our new Consultant, who lives in Barnstaple, Devon, and, after a career as a writer in the educational field, is now well known as Britain's top expert on the various species of Big Cats which are found in our country and regarding which he writes regularly in the Devonshire newspaper *Western Morning News*.

A great lover of all kinds of wild life, he is a Scientific Fellow of the Zoological Society, a Fellow of the Royal Entomological Society, and a member of the British Ornithological Union and founder of the North Devon group of the RSPB (Royal Society for the Protection of Birds).

His highly popular *Nature Watch* column appears daily in the *Western Morning News* and he has just won the coveted David Bellamy Award issued every year by the British Naturalists' Association, the oldest conservation organisation in our country. FSR readers may have noticed that I have recently expressed some startling views about the possible origin of some (maybe most) of Britain's Big Cats, and I am delighted to find that Mr. Beer shares my belief that there "may be a UFO link"!

His letter in this issue shows the extraordinary range of Mr. Beer's knowledge and talents. -Editor

"Where do they come from?" The most asked question of all from believers and sceptics alike when the subject of British Mystery Cats loose in the wild in the UK and Ireland crops up. Interestingly no one asks where do they go, yet the creatures live on amongst us and we amongst them.

As a cryptozoologist and investigator into the alien big cats for many years, and into folklore and legend since the 1950s, it is the *black cat* phenomenon, of leopard size and sometimes larger, that intrigues me most of all.

Appearing and vanishing as they do with the ease of all felines, it is at times as if they disappear at will even