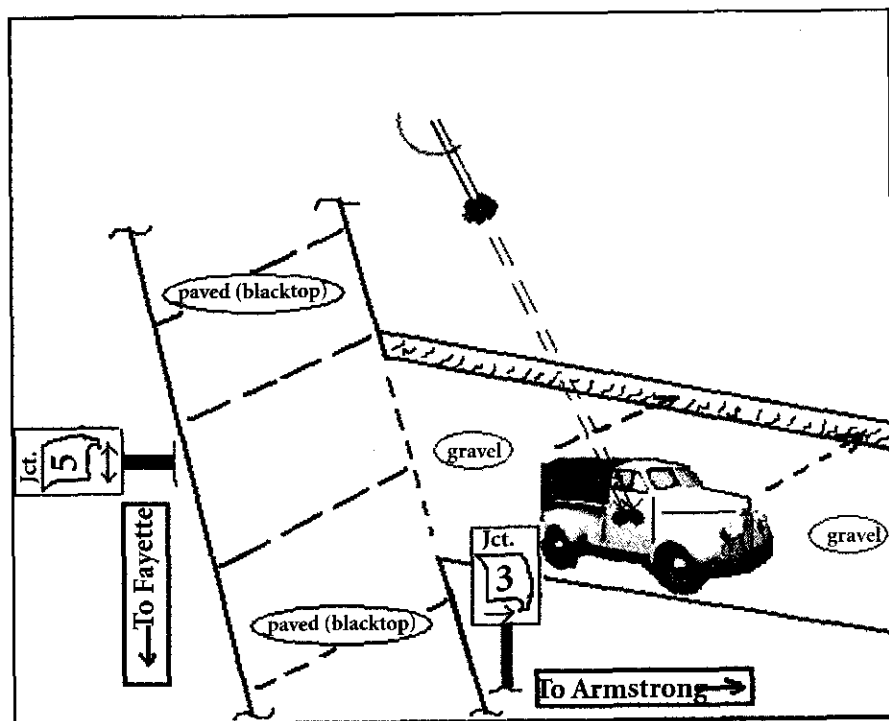


0. AGRESIVO The UFO Shot At Us!



by Richard W. Todd

I am writing this 57 years after the event, but the details are etched into my permanent memory so indelibly, it could have happened yesterday.

In June 1947, my parents, Fred and Katie Todd, operated a small country store in Armstrong, Howard County, Missouri. Armstrong was a very small community with only a few hundred people. I had completed second grade at Armstrong Elementary School and celebrated my eighth birthday in May. Now it was nearing the end

of June and, typical for mid-Missouri, getting very warm and humid, so I liked to hang out in the "ice house." This was a small, one-room shed next to the frame store building. It was always cool in there, and I liked to nibble at the small slivers of ice that would break off when the large ice blocks—which were covered by sawdust to insulate them—were cut into smaller blocks for our customers. Few if any people in Armstrong owned refrigerators in 1947, so most used iceboxes for keeping items cool.

1947

It's Shooting At Us!

About that time, my father slowed the truck and turned right onto Route 3. Although our direction had changed, the object was still visible to me clearly out of the side window, seemingly in the same relative position in the sky to our truck. I remember my father asking if I could still see the object after he had turned. He was going very slow, and I think that he intended to stop and get out of the truck to see what I was looking at, but before I could answer his question, I saw two bursts or pulses of extremely bright red "light" (?) from what looked to be the middle of the object. I could distinctly see that they were parallel to each other and were coming straight at us.

"It's shooting at us!" I yelled as I slid over next to my father and ducked. I had no sooner gotten those words out when something hit the passenger-side door. Simultaneously, there was a blinding flash of reddish light and a deafening, gong-like sound. At the same instant, the pickup truck (loaded with 900 pounds of ice) was knocked sideways from the right lane of the road into the ditch on the left side of the road. Amazingly, we did not turn over, nor did the ice come out of the back, although the ice blocks were tied to keep them from sliding around.

When the truck came to rest in the ditch, I was clutching my father's arm as hard as I could and shaking with fear. I remember my father saying, somewhat forcibly, that we needed to get out of the truck. I believe from his tone that he

My father traveled twice a week to an ice-manufacturing plant in Fayette, Missouri, a town of roughly 2,000 located about 12 miles to the southwest, and brought back three 300-pound blocks of ice in the back of his pickup. I would always accompany my father on his "ice run," and it was on the return trip from Fayette, in the middle of the day, with the back of the pickup loaded with ice, that the UFO encounter occurred.

We were about five miles from Fayette, heading north on Missouri Route 5 (a paved road), nearing the turnoff onto Missouri Route 3 (a gravel road), which would take us to Armstrong, when I noticed, while looking out the passenger-side window, something bright and shiny very high up in the sky at an angle I would estimate now at about 60 to 70 degrees above the horizon. The sun was almost directly overhead in a cloudless sky, and I had to shield my eyes to block it in order to make out the shiny object. Then I saw it clearly: a brilliant, silver-colored, spherical object, which appeared to be about the relative size of a basketball, was hovering motionless in the sky glinting brightly in the sun. I yelled for my dad to look up in the sky and stuck my arm out through the open window, pointing upward in the direction of the object. However, he couldn't see it from the driver's side of the truck, as his view was blocked by the roof. He tried to see it through the small window at the rear of the 1947 Studebaker truck's cab; however, the ice, which had a tarpaulin over it, blocked his view looking through that window as well.

DE → EARTHQUAKE!

thought it might explode. I was so petrified that I was literally unable to move, and he had to drag me out through the driver's-side door. However, after getting out, and seeing that the truck was still in one piece, my fear subsided somewhat.

I held on to the driver's side door, with my father supporting me, until I could stand on my own, and then we both walked around the back of the truck to the passenger side. There was nothing to be seen. The door was intact, without even so much as a dent. It was covered with dust from the gravel road, and I vaguely remember that there were some "smudges" in the dirt. We both just glanced at it and then turned to look up into the sky; but there was nothing to be seen there, either. The UFO had disappeared. I was still looking up at the sky searching for the object when my father observed that there were no skid marks in the gravel. We must have been knocked off the ground until we landed in the ditch.

After some coaxing, I agreed to get back into the truck, although I insisted on climbing back through the driver's-side door and sitting as close to my father as I could get. He started the engine with no problem (apparently the engine quit the instant we were hit) and was able to drive the truck out of the ditch and back onto the road, also without any problem, as it was shallow and bone-dry.

My father didn't say anything for some time about what had just happened to us. As we neared Armstrong, he asked me to promise not to tell my mother about

our experience, as he didn't want her frightened too. I nodded in agreement.

When we got home, my mother asked me if I felt okay. I must have looked very pale. I mumbled that I was just a little carsick (which often happened to me when I rode in a vehicle). Then I went to my room, which was in the back of the store, and fell exhausted on the bed.

Physical Evidence

When I awoke later that afternoon, I saw that the ice had been unloaded and that my father had washed the truck and was in the process of waxing it, which was not something that he normally did. He had already applied wax to the passenger door and was rubbing furiously to polish it when I walked up to see what he was doing. I didn't notice anything until my father pointed silently to a particular place on the door, in the center of the panel below the window. It was then that I saw there were two faint spots in the paint.

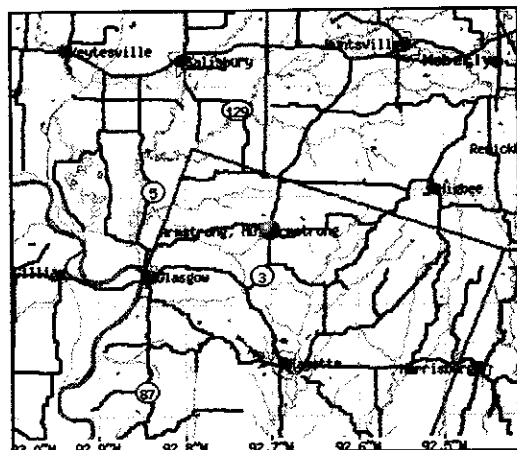
Each slightly discolored spot was about an inch in diameter and irregular in shape, and they were spaced about four inches apart. The paint finish wasn't broken; it was just duller in those spots, although you had to look very close to notice, and the wax did nothing to make them shine as it did for the rest of the paint around them. I'm not sure how my father noticed them. He may have looked more closely at the smudges in the dust on the door after we got home.

As agreed, nothing about the inci-

dent was ever mentioned, and I don't believe that my mother ever knew about it. My father and I never discussed it, even though I often thought about it and wondered what had really happened. I don't believe my father ever saw the UFO, even after he turned and twisted around trying to get a view of it out of all the windows before he turned onto Route 3.

In 1950 we moved to Moberly, Missouri, a larger community of about 13,000 in Randolph County 23 miles to the north. Moberly was where I was born, and where my paternal grandparents and my brother (who was 19 years my senior) lived. As I went through junior and senior high school, "The Encounter" was still very fresh in my mind, and I developed an intense interest in scientific subjects, especially physics and astronomy. I also developed a keen interest in science fiction and read everything that I could on the UFO sightings that were reported during the 1950s. But I don't recall ever reading about a UFO shooting at someone, at least not at someone on the ground.

As I became more knowledgeable about scientific laws and principles in high school, and then during college at the University of Missouri, I tried to analyze the seemingly physically impossible events that had occurred during our UFO encounter and to see if I could make any sense out of them. There were three aspects or questions



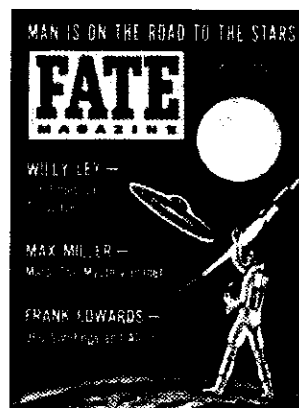
Map of area where encounter occurred.

that I tried to find scientifically plausible answers for. The first two involved the "what" and "how" of the incident, while the third asked "who" and "why."

The Impact of the Force Beam

We had been hit with some sort of force beam that was able to instantly move an object weighing over two tons (the combined weight of the pickup and the ice) a distance of roughly 20 feet perpendicular to the direction of travel. Even though this force was of a magnitude to knock the truck off its wheels and hurl it across the road into the ditch, it was somehow dissipated so as not to make even a small dent in the side of the truck's door or to injure the occupants. There was little mystery as to the loud "gong" sound: I'm sure that the hollow sheet-metal door would give such a sound when struck; however, how

Fifty years ago



FATE
March 1958
Vol. 11, No. 3

"His Wonders to Perform" Miracles at Sea

The series of disasters was strange enough—but even stranger, they seem to have been arranged for one purpose.

by Harvey Berman

On a blustery October morning in 1829 the schooner *Mermaid* set sail from Sydney, Australia, for Collier Bay on the west coast of the continent. Captain Samuel Noltbrow was at the wheel and there were 18 seamen and three passengers aboard. Rarely have 22 sea-going souls been subjected to greater privations or caught up in a more fantastic chain of events than were these persons. The series of incidents that followed their setting sail defy the imagination and are probably without parallel in the history of man against the sea.

For three days the *Mermaid* followed her course without mishap. The wind was fair. The sky was clear; the glass was steady. Sydney was far astern when Captain Noltbrow went below, as he usually did during the uneventful voyage around

northern Australia, leaving his vessel in charge of his second in command. The crew, for their part—once the skipper had gone to keep company with his "wee little Scotties" contained in a case of good English whiskey purchased just before sailing time—loll about the deck basking in the sun, and attended to their few duties.

On the fourth day out, however, the wind died down abruptly and an uneasy silence fell over the becalmed *Mermaid*. The quiet and the lack of motion suddenly wrenched a red-nosed Noltbrow out of his stupor and back to the helm of his schooner. On deck he noticed that the barometer was falling and that the sky was a sullen wall of darkness. His crew stood idly by, waiting for whatever was coming.

Shortly before midnight—when the *Mermaid* was in Torres Strait, a treacher-

it could have been hit hard enough to make a deafening noise without denting the door panel is definitely an unknown.

I also believe that whatever the pulse was that struck us and produced a brilliant flash, it did not involve heat. Even though the windows were open, there was no sensation of any extra heat nor any kind of wind blowing in the windows when the impact occurred.

I was also not aware that the truck was being moved, or of any jolt, when the truck landed in the ditch. It was an instantaneous event. Unless I momentarily fainted from fright, the whole sequence occurred in a split second. There may have been something that my father saw or experienced that I didn't because he wanted me to get out of the truck immediately. He may have interpreted the intense flash of red light as fire.

Needless to say, I have never been able to come up with any scientifically plausible answer that didn't defy the laws of physics as I know them, without resorting to a "science fiction" scenario (such as, when the pulse hit, we were surrounded by some sort of a "tractor beam force field" which protected the truck and the passengers as it lifted and moved us across the road, without touching it, and gently deposited us in the ditch in an instant of time).

The Nature of the Force Beam

I had clearly seen the two brilliant red pulses leave the center of the object, and I saw a red trail behind the pulses as

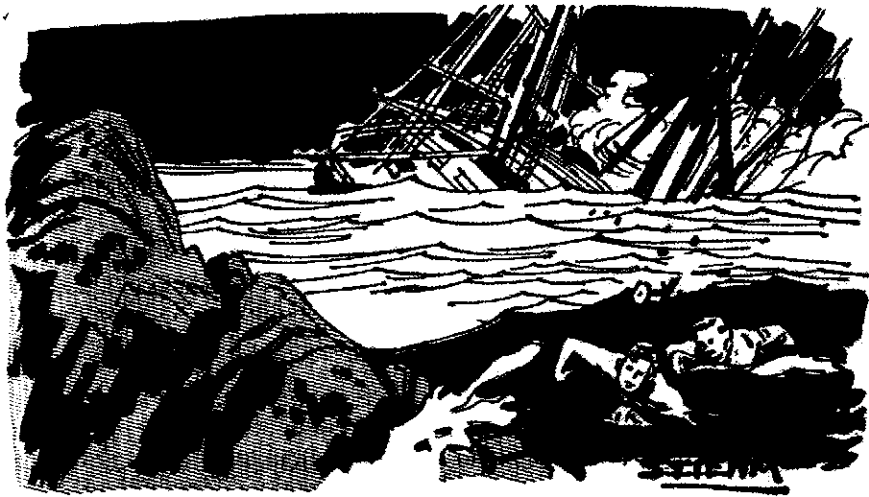
they traveled toward the truck, which looked very similar to what I now know a laser beam looks like. Yet after a second or so of watching this, I was able to yell that we were being shot at, and I moved over in the seat beside my father before the pulse hit the door. Therefore, it could not have been a laser beam, as that would travel at the speed of light and we would have been hit before I even was aware that we were being shot at. What, then, could the pulse or beam have been?

The Purpose of the Force Beam

There is one more question that has nagged me even more than the previous ones: Since we were fired upon from the UFO by some type of weapon, and hit, there had to be some sort of intelligence aiming at or sighting us. But, as there was no damage done to either of us (aside from having the wits scared out of us), or the truck, whoever (or whatever) was behind the firing must not have intended to harm us. What could have been the purpose? Surely we weren't just being used for target practice by bored alien juveniles with their phasers on stun. But as ridiculous and unscientific as that sounds, it is as good as anything else I can come up with.

As the years passed, I began to wonder if I could have imagined the incident. The question of whether my memory of the event was reliable was resolved in a very unusual and emotional way. My mother passed away in 1979, and I returned to Moberly from my home in Seattle for

A FORRENTAL DEATH



ous body of water separating Australia and New Guinea and strewn with a thousand and one traps for a ship—the storm hit. High winds ripped through the schooner's rigging and hurled mammoth waves over her starboard rail. Hard rain beat down relentlessly. Frantically, Nolbrow watched the *Mermaid* being driven toward a ridge of rocks to the north. Desperately he attempted to stave off disaster. Nothing, however, would turn the ship from its storm-driven course, from its rendezvous with destruction.

Three hours after the storm first hit the *Mermaid* struck a coral reef. With a hiss and an impact that rocked the vessel from stem to stern, her bottom was ripped away and the angry sea poured into her hold.

"Abandon ship," Nolbrow ordered.

Disorganized seamen and passengers hurled themselves over the side and started swimming toward an immense rock jut-

ting out of the water about 200 feet downwind. In the panic and the darkness it seemed certain that the loss of life would be heavy. Yet, later, when the exhausted Captain Nolbrow pulled himself up onto the rock—having been the last to abandon his ship—a count revealed that all 22 persons aboard the *Mermaid* had made it to safety. Incredible but true—not a single life had been lost in the violent sea that had sunk the *Mermaid*.

Three days elapsed before help arrived. Finally, the bark *Swiftsure* hove into view and picked up the *Mermaid*'s survivors. Continuing on her course then, the *Swiftsure* headed west.

But disaster struck for the second time. Passing close to New Guinea, the *Swiftsure* found herself caught up in an overpowering current—a current that was not indicated on any of the excellent charts of the area. And the *Swiftsure* was dashed to pieces

a few hours to live.

During these last hours there was only one thing that the woman wanted. Delirious, she called constantly for her son, a boy she had not seen since he ran away to join the Royal Navy, nearly 15 years before. Finally, coming up on deck, Dr. Sparks cast about for a sailor who would match the age and general appearance of the vanished youth the patient spoke about. He found a perfect substitute among the crew of the *Mermaid*. Thirty years old, tall, with blue eyes and dark hair, the man even had been born in England. Moreover, when asked to help the young man proved willing to deceive the elderly woman so that she might die in peace.

Together, the doctor and the seaman went below. Outside the woman's cabin the physician turned to his accomplice and told him what he must do.

"Listen carefully, lad," he said. "The poor woman's name is Sarah Richley. I want you to pretend that you're her son, Peter. Got that? Remember the name—Peter Richley—don't make a mistake."

The sailor was no longer listening. His face had turned white and he leaned against the wall in the narrow companion-

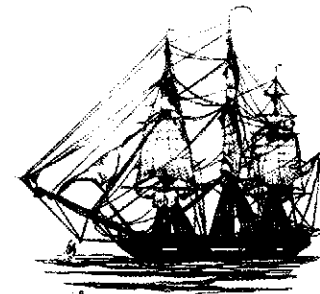
way. Sparks looked at him in astonishment.

"There, boy, what's the matter?" he asked. "Don't tell me you've lost your stomach for this act of mercy."

The seaman, barely able to talk, whispered, "I needn't repeat the name you gave me, Dr. Sparks. I mean... I mean... that I won't forget it. You see, sir, my name is Peter Richley, and the old woman you say is dying in there must be my mother, that I haven't seen since I left Yorkshire 15 years ago come this Whitsunday."

Thus one good circumstance came of this amazing saga of disaster on the high seas! Fate had brought together Sarah and Peter Richley even though it had sacrificed five vessels to do it. At the same time not a single life had been lost. All of the five captains were cited for valor and advanced in rank. All of the cargo destroyed was covered by insurance. It appears the insurance companies paid for Fate's whim.

Further, the reunion achieved more than the doctor had expected of it. Mrs. Richley was so happy to see her son that her condition immediately took a turn for the better. As a matter of fact, she lived for nearly 20 years more, in a house her long-lost son built for her in Sydney. ★



against rocks which jutted out along the coastline. Again the order "abandon ship" was given. This time two crews abandoned ship—the survivors of the ill-fated *Mermaid* and their rescuers from the *Swiftsure*. And again, all aboard were safe.

Aid was not long in coming this time. That very same day the *Governor Ready*, with a crew of 32, sailed over the horizon. The castaways were taken aboard the schooner and the *Governor Ready* clapped on sail and resumed her trip, sailing to disaster even faster than had the *Mermaid* and the *Swiftsure*. Only hours after the rescue the schooner caught fire and three sets of survivors lowered the *Governor Ready*'s longboats and rowed for safety. Around them lay hundreds of miles of water—a vast expanse through which few vessels traveled. The outlook was not bright. Nevertheless, by some miracle, the government cutter *Comet* appeared. A storm had blown her off course. Sighting the exhausted seamen she headed for them. By evening all survivors had been taken aboard.

Three ships lay at the bottom of the sea and not a single life had been lost. The crews and passengers of the *Mermaid*, *Swiftsure*, and *Governor Ready* were all aboard the *Comet*, hungry, weary, but alive.

For a week all went well. But the *Mermaid*'s crew, believing that they must have a Jonah among them, was strangely silent. The crew of the *Swiftsure* huddled in one corner while the seamen of the *Governor Ready* sat in still another place. The *Comet*'s sailors, meanwhile, shunned the company

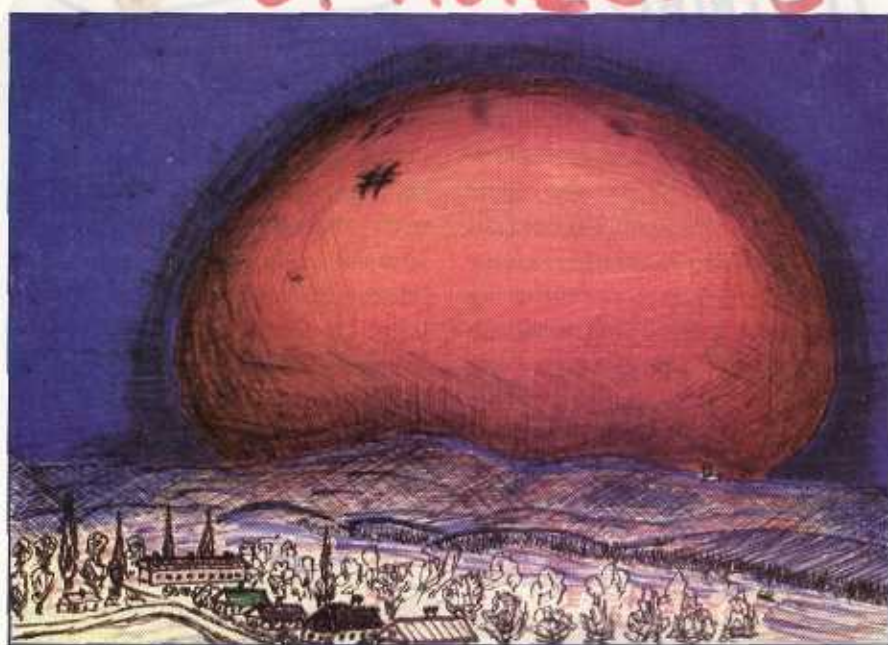
of all three crews, looking upon their guests with uneasy suspicion.

Their fears, as subsequent events proved, were justified. A sudden storm blew up and by the time the winds and the rain subsided the *Comet* was a doomed ship. Four crews now took to the water. The men aboard the *Comet* launched a longboat, while the other three crews floundered in the violent sea, desperately attempting to keep afloat on odds and ends of wreckage.

Eighteen hours passed in this fashion, 18 hours of fighting the cold sea and the hungry sharks that circled the floundering men. Hope was nearly gone when the packet *Jupiter* came up and rescued the exhausted sailors from what had seemed certain death. When the captains of the four lost vessels checked their men they discovered that for the fourth time all hands had been saved. Somehow, despite four successive disasters, the complete companies of four sunken vessels—every last man of them—were still together, still alive.

Yet, it is hard to believe, the misfortunes of the *Mermaid*'s crew and the four crews that had rescued them were not over. Two days from port the *Jupiter* struck a reef and sank. This time the *City Of Leeds* was nearby. A rescue was quickly accomplished and the *City Of Leeds* continued towards her destination.

Now misfortune of another sort appeared. This time a passenger, an elderly Englishwoman, fell gravely ill. Dr. Thomas Sparks, the ship's physician, gave her only



The first spheroid at the moment of climax.

DOMES OF WRATH

by Vladimir V. Rubtsov, Ph. D.

In January 1943, almost 1,500 German soldiers perished mysteriously not far from the town of Tikhoretsk (Kuban, south Russia). That same evening, two strange, fiery hemispheres were seen in this region. Also, UFOs flew over Kuban in the years of World War II.

Some years ago, on a warm July night, I was sitting in the carriage of a train travelling to Kuban, a southern region of Russia. Together with Anatoliy Klimenko, my old friend and one of the first and the most active grass-roots ufologists of the Soviet Union, I was going to investigate a mystery of World War II (or, as it was usually designated in the USSR, the Great Patriotic War, or just The War). Back in 1942, Anatoliy had observed a strange aircraft that he then believed to be a secret Soviet plane with incredibly advanced flight performance. Later, he began to suspect that such characteristics were incredible in the literal sense of the word, and that no aircraft of such a type had ever been built on this planet. As a result, in the 1970s, Anatoliy became a regular correspondent of Dr. Felix Zigel, the father of Soviet ufology. He collected a vast amount of information on UFO observations in the Donetsk Region of the Ukraine—in the years when the very word “UFO” was strictly prohibited by the

top Soviet authorities. It was supposed that every good Soviet citizen had to consider the UFO phenomenon as nonexistent. Anatoliy Klimenko, one of a few ufological dissidents, had not been convinced by newspaper articles signed by renowned names from the Soviet academic community. He regarded the authors of the papers as ignoramuses (in the field of ufology) and hypocrites (as regards their morality), remaining a strong adherent of the ex-

**...the descriptions
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traterrestrial hypothesis for the origin of UFOs. He hoped that having analyzed a sufficiently large set of UFO observations, it would be possible to understand the principles of flight of these spacecraft.

We became friends in the process of our joint work on UFO reports published in the first volume of the famous Samizdat book, *UFO Observations in the USSR*, authored by Dr. Zigel. (By the way, a great

part of its seven volumes, containing more than 1,000 very interesting UFO reports, still remains accessible only for those who can read the Russian language.) After we had exchanged several letters about these and other sightings, I visited Anatoliy to discuss the collected materials on the spot and to converse with other witnesses of UFO phenomena. In the summer of 1967, there was a big UFO wave in the southern regions of the USSR. Of course, we did not confine ourselves in our talks to these sightings alone. We also discussed other anomalous events about which we had happened to read or hear.

One of these events was the enigmatic death of a group of tourists in the Ural Mountains in 1959. This case was not published in the press, but rumors spread widely. For many years, it remained a popular topic of conversation in the community of Soviet ufologists and anomalists in general. Even though the exact circumstances of this event were somewhat vague, the descriptions aroused great interest and froze the blood of the audience. According to one version of the story, the faces of the victims were set in deep horror. This detail unexpectedly (for me) impressed Anatoliy very much.

“You know, Vladimir,” he said thoughtfully, “I ran into a similar case as far back

as the war. This happened in Kuban. Would you like me to tell the story?" Of course I did. And he told me one of the strangest stories I have ever heard.

The story astonished me so much that we immediately decided, when I visited Anatoliy again the following year, to leave for Kuban to try to find other possible witnesses of this incident.

And now Anatoliy and I were sitting in a carriage. He was dozing in a corner of our compartment and I was looking through the window glass at the night darkness, recalling in my mind all the details of his account...

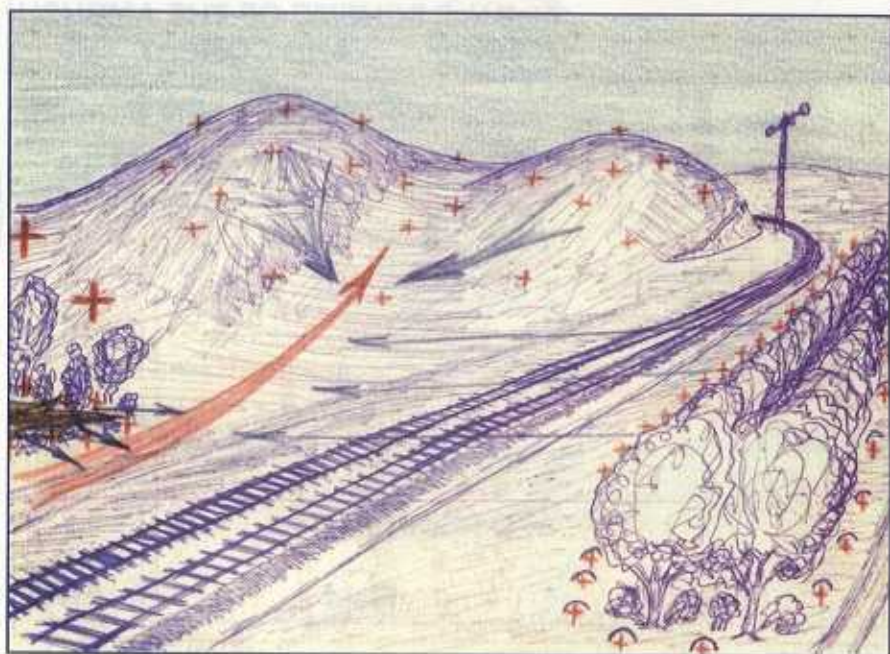
Kuban: Last Days of German Occupation

On January 29, 1943, Cossack villages and hamlets lying along the railway leading from Krasnodar to Tikhoretsk stood still in anxious anticipation.

Having started on New Year's Day, the retreat of the southern group of German troops soon turned into a panic flight. The German command made desperate attempts to stabilize the collapsing front line. Between Krasnodar and Tikhoretsk, they were building a defensive line. It was expected that heavy battles would occur in this territory. But the Stalingrad front was swiftly advancing, creating a threat of encirclement for the German armies on the Caucasus and Kuban, and on January 30 their retreat recommenced. Late in the night of January 29-30, signal shots from cannons transmitted the retreat order all along the whole front.

In the winter of 1942-1943, Anatoliy Klimenko was only 15, and he lived, together with his mother and some other relatives, at a hamlet of the Red Banner *kolkhoz* (collective farm) in Vyselki district, about seven kilometers from the *stanitsa* (Cossack village) of Berezhanskaya. Soviet troops took this region on the night of January 30-31. There was practically no fighting, fortunately for local inhabitants. But nevertheless, on the night of January 29, not far from the settlement of Chelbas, a strange incident occurred.

There was much discussion among the neighbors about this incident, and it so



General view of the battlefield. Red crosses denote German soldiers in ambush; blue arrows denote directions of German strikes; red arrow denotes the direction of movement of the Russian column.

Anatoliy Klimenko

happened that its main witness, an old carter, proved to be a distant relative of the owner of the house where Anatoliy and his family were residing.

In Soviet military reports of that time, this event would probably have been described as follows: "In the southern sector of the front, our military unit drove a wedge into enemy lines. It was suddenly attacked and, in a close-quarters battle, it completely eliminated, at the cost of heavy casualties, a larger unit of enemy forces." At least, just such an impression could have been formed at first sight based on the facts of the case. But in reality, everything proved to be much more complicated.

At midday on January 29, when German troops were still attempting to build a defensive line, the old carter went from the hamlet for hay to feed some hungry cows, but was stopped by a German patrol. An infantry regiment was entrenching itself on a high hill dominating the surroundings.

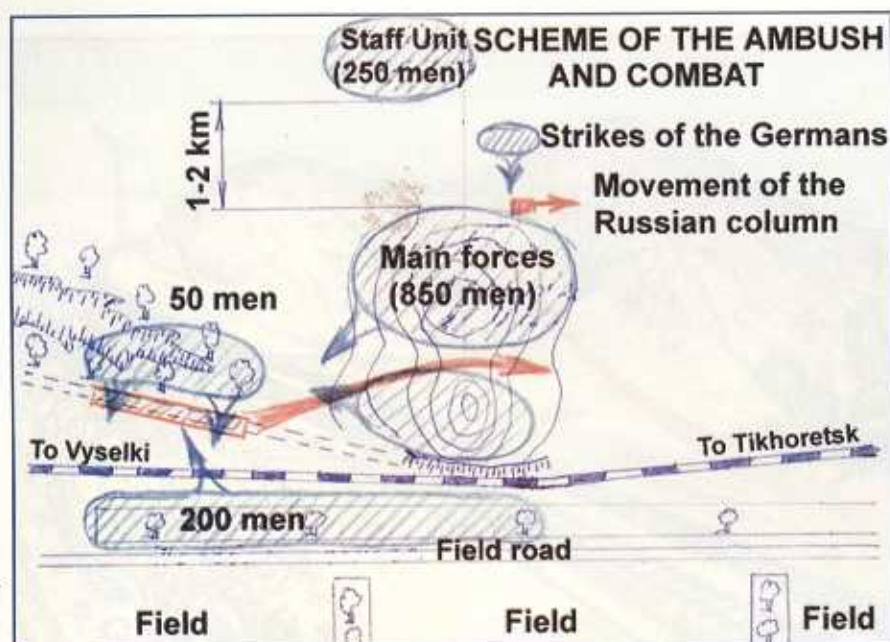
At night the signal to retreat thundered out. Having ascertained that there were no Germans at the hamlet any longer, the old man went off again for the hay. After reaching the spot where he had been stopped the day before, he discovered to his horror

that, in the morning foggy haze, he had driven into the very lines of the German military unit. Lying in the snow around him were sleeping German soldiers.

The terrified old man started turning his horse round and suddenly saw before him recumbent soldiers in Soviet uniform, with red stars on their *ushankas* (warm caps with ear flaps). Having mastered his fright, the old man approached the prone soldiers and leaned over them. They were neither sleeping nor simply lying down. They were frozen corpses, Germans and Soviets alike.

In vain, the old man went running about across the field trying to find at least somebody who was only wounded and not dead. There was not a single living soul.

On February 5 or 6, some Soviet officers arrived at the battlefield to identify the dead soldiers. While talking with them, local inhabitants became aware that the officers were looking for a military unit that had disappeared about a week before. It did not arrive at its destination in time, and all traces of it had vanished. Identification confirmed that all the dead Soviet soldiers belonged to this military unit, so the officers left, believing the affair more or less clear. But the local residents who were burying the dead were of a different opin-



Scheme of the ambush and combat.

ion. Nobody could understand how the combat had occurred.

Judging from the positions of the corpses and additional information obtained from the above-mentioned officers, the case was as follows: A Soviet infantry battalion, while moving to its destination at the forward area, temporarily lost orientation and, after restoring it, hastened to correct its mistake and to reach the place in time. They were moving swiftly along the front line.

Time was pressing on the battalion commander, and the topography of the country made it impossible to send out side patrols. As a result, the Soviets began to ascend from a deep valley to the railway line, not even suspecting that German observers had noticed their motion and that an ambush had been laid for them. Some 300 submachine gunners lay hidden on the both sides of the road, forming a fatal fire pocket and exposing the Soviets to flanking fire from both sides at almost point-blank range. Not only that, but some 60 German soldiers had taken cover in the bushes near a ravine at about 10-12 meters from the road, and up to 250 soldiers dropped flat in two ranks in a sheltered area behind the railroad.

And when the Soviet column had drifted right into the trap, the German machine guns blazed away.

This probably happened at twilight, since in the daytime both the trenches on the hill and the gunners in the ambush would have been discovered in plenty of time.

Under the hail of submachine-gun bullets, these men had only one opportunity to escape: to go forward and break through the enemy lines. They attempted to use this, their last chance. The vanguard of the column rushed forward to a saddle near the hill. There a hand-to-hand fight occurred with a result inevitable for such an alignment of forces.

**...who destroyed
the German regiment
after the Soviet
battalion had
been annihilated?**

Thus there was in fact no combat. There was a cruel, inhuman massacre, in which one side opened up with all its fire power and almost all its adversaries fell before taking up arms. Up to this point, the picture of the event is obvious enough.

But then something truly incomprehensible happened.

The Enigma

The next moment, said Anatoliy Klimenko, all the German soldiers, both those participating in the fight and those remaining as spectators, got their deserts. They perished on the spot, all of them, every man jack of them. What is more, another unit of the same regiment, stationed in the rear, at about one or two kilometers from the battlefield, was destroyed in the same manner: all the soldiers remained in their positions.

The total German losses reached some 1,350 men. As for the Soviet soldiers, the fallen were found only on the road and in the saddle.

So, a first enigma: who destroyed the German regiment after the Soviet battalion had been annihilated? The hamlet where Anatoliy was living was liberated only one day later; until then, no Soviet troops were observed in the vicinity of it. And a second enigma, closely associated with the first one: how was it done, with what weapon? An artillery or aircraft bombardment can be ruled out: residents of the hamlet located at about three to five kilometers from the battlefield did not hear any sounds of combat. Perhaps, with broken ground in between, bursts of submachine-gun fire might not be heard. But shell bursts, as well as the roar and volleys of diving airplanes, would certainly have been noticed. A sudden tank attack was impossible; the locality is jagged with deep ravines. Besides, the tanks would have left plenty of traces.

At last—or rather, first of all—no large shell or bomb craters were discovered in either of the two sites of destruction. The corpses of Soviet soldiers had numerous bullet wounds, but the German soldiers' wounds were more consistent with sudden detonation of ammunition (in haversacks, cartridge pouches, and simply in the hand). Throughout the whole battlefield, littered with rifles and submachine guns, there was literally not a single live cartridge or hand-grenade. Every round of rifle ammunition, every hand grenade, every explosive device in the German positions had detonated spontaneously, wherever it happened to be: in rifle magazines, in the pouches of



Anatoliy Klimenko before our trip to Chelbas.



Anatoliy Klimenko with Chelbas residents.

soldiers' equipment, in the backs of vehicles, in boxes on the ground. All these munitions appeared to have exploded simultaneously. Besides, many corpses had no visible injuries at all—but the faces of the fallen were distorted with wild horror. This last feature especially bewildered the old, experienced front-line soldiers who had seen so much in their lives. None of them could recall a case when soldiers who had been killed in battle were found with such expressions on their faces.

The action of the unknown attack was most likely sudden and simultaneous for all participants of the combat, since none of them had time enough to leave his position. For example, in the sheltered area, where up to 250 submachine gunners had dropped flat, no great space was found between the soldiers. What kind of death found them so quickly and so precisely that not one of them could retreat or even move back slightly?

Of the weapons that existed in the years of World War II, only poison gases had characteristics that to some extent corresponded to these. Although, fearing retaliation by the states of the anti-Hitlerite coalition, Germany did not risk using them on a large scale, such a threat remained real until the very end of the war. But poison gases were used locally in several cases—

for instance, in the Crimea, against guerilla fighters and military units who were hiding in Crimean catacombs.

It was rumored that, at a German store of weapons in Tikhoretsk, there was a small stock of some special shells—maybe chemical ones—guarded by a special-duty squad of SS men. The fate of these shells is un-

***...the faces of
the fallen were
distorted with
wild horror.***

known, but who knows—maybe they were moved away from Tikhoretsk by the regiment participating in the above-described combat. During this combat, the shells could have detonated due to an accidental hit and manifested their killing power.

This supposition could explain some details of the event, such as the death of all living beings in a large area, the lack of injuries on the corpses, and even the horror impressed on their faces. But it does not explain everything. Normal ammunition could hardly have detonated due to poison gases. In any case, the second site

of destruction remains incomprehensible. Why such a strange synchronicity?

Anatoliy Klimenko talked with local residents in the summer of 1943, six months after the enigmatic combat. And now, 50 years later, we were going there.

Trip to Chelbas

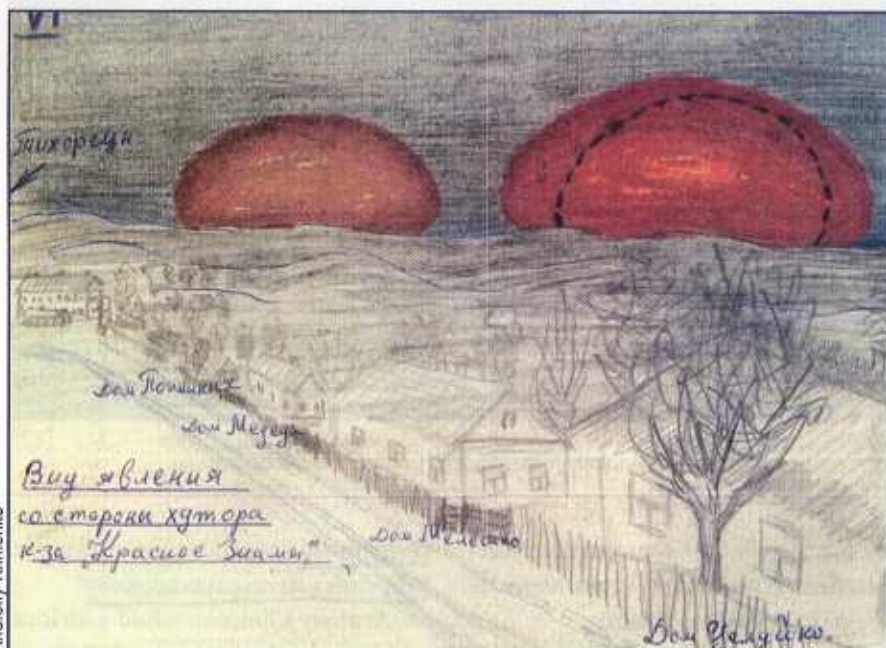
Having arrived on another summer morning in Tikhoretsk, we left by a local electric train for the settlement of Chelbas. This was where, according to Anatoliy's memories, the strange event of the last war had occurred. Decades later, the locality had certainly changed, but after a persistent search and consultations with local citizens, we did find the supposed battlefield. Of course, there were no traces of the battle, and we did not hope to find anything material. The local residents were most hospitable (we spent three nights in the home of one of them), but could help only a little. True, a few old men remembered that some combat had happened at this place, but they could not give us any details.

"Well," Anatoliy said, "at least, since we are here, we can check one thing."

He took a map, a ruler, and a protractor from his knapsack and started to measure something on the map. Several minutes later, Anatoliy lifted his head and said



Successive stages of the spheroid development from its inception until decay.



Two spheroids as they were seen by Anatoliy Klimenko (depicted together for comparison; in reality, they appeared separately).

with a touch of perplexity in his voice: "You know, Vladimir, within the limits of an error of five degrees, the direction to this place coincides with...er...er...well, with the direction to the spheroids."

"Which spheroids?" I asked in amazement. And Anatoliy explained...

Fiery Hemispheres

In the tense and fearful atmosphere of wartime, he and other teenagers played the role of observers, being obliged to inform the adults about various dangers—that arose, naturally enough, rather frequently.

One evening, late in January 1943 (it was probably January 29, since the hamlet was liberated by Soviet troops the following day), Anatoliy paced up and down near the wicket gate, keeping a vigilant eye on the neighborhood, continually sweeping the horizon. The sun had set and twilight was deepening. A gray, cloudy day was fading away. The day before, bursts of fire had rung out and pillars of smoke had risen everywhere. The retreating German troops

were burning down and blowing up everything they could not take with them. But this evening was exceptionally still and dark.

Looking toward the northeast by east, somewhat to the right of Tikhoretsk, Anatoliy suddenly saw a very curious phenomenon.

Against the background of the approaching gray darkness, from behind the skyline (open in this sector of the horizon to a great distance), there appeared a low, red glow. It reached, as far as Anatoliy could judge, not less than one kilometer in length, resembling the burning of stubble on an autumn field.

For a few seconds, the glow twinkled and oscillated. Then it started to rise quickly, taking the shape of a clearly outlined shining, fiery bubble. Over a period of 10-20 seconds, this bubble increased to an enormous size, many times greater than the visible dimensions of the solar disk at sunset. The sharp, clear, ideally geometric contours of a spheroid with a well-

defined roundish, convex surface—a soft, not very bright red light somewhat resembling that of the rising moon—for the whole war, Anatoliy had seen nothing like this. He was especially astonished by the peculiar behavior of the spheroid. Having reached its maximal dimensions, it seemed to stand still for two to three minutes, continuing to glow quite evenly with red light, without any oscillations or any signs of inner movement. Neither curling flames, nor gleams of explosions, nor dark smoky streaks could be seen on its smooth, seemingly polished surface. It was exactly like a gigantic soap bubble full of fire.

Eventually, the spheroid started to change. The red tone faded and grew dimmer, being replaced here and there by whitish spots. Then the spheroid began to splinter into separate pale scraps. The decay was developing; the dark, cloudy evening sky appeared between the scraps, and the scraps themselves faded and appeared to dissolve in the surrounding space.

Finally, all of this vanished. Darkness fell again, but Anatoliy was still looking, like an enchanted person, at the place where the red glow had just been blazing. Now there was nothing at all: no glow, no spark, no smoke.

Suddenly, some three minutes later, the phenomenon reappeared, this time about two or three kilometers to the left of its former position. The dimensions of the second spheroid were not so impressive: maybe 700-800 meters at its base. A few minutes later, it too disappeared, falling apart like the first one.

A very curious feeling was evoked in Anatoliy's mind by these spheroids. Having seen many terrible things during the war, having been at the very center of heavy bombing attacks, he had never felt anything similar to that feeling. This was the sensation of a horrible disaster—relentlessly approaching, merciless, and inevitable. It was intensified by the complete lack of any sound, which—if these spheroids had been due to normal explosions—would have been heard for tens of kilometers around. On the whole, the picture was so different from anything that Anatoliy had seen during the war that he did

not even raise the alarm; he just stood near the gate looking at the horizon. But one could see not a single gleam of light or wisp of smoke in the darkness.

Aware that two German stores of ammunition were located near Tikhoretsk, Anatoliy decided that these stores were blown up that evening. Even though there was in fact no similarity between these spheroids and such explosions, this pseudo-explanation overshadows, as happens frequently, a true enigma. (In any event, the supposition proved to be wrong. One of these stores of ammunition was blown up the next day, and the other was salvaged by advancing Soviet troops.)

A Secret Weapon?

Strangely enough, until we came to the place of the enigmatic combat, Anatoliy did not associate it with these no less enigmatic spheroids. The point was not only that he lacked the precise coordinates of the battlefield or those of the spheroids; the supposition simply failed to come into his mind. Only after discovering that the first spheroid was located almost on a straight line connecting the battlefield with his "observation post" of 1943, Anatoliy realized that there might be a direct association between these two mysteries. There were two spheroids—and two sites of destruction; the lesser spheroid corresponded to the lesser site of destruction, and the greater spheroid to the greater one.

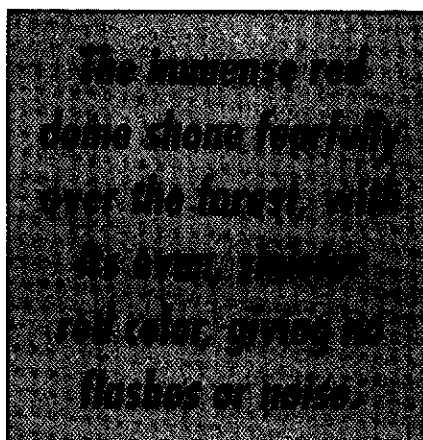
"But you said that these things looked like oceans of fire," I said. "Why then were there no traces of burning on the battlefield?"

"True," replied Anatoliy. "It can mean that the spheroids' glow was cold, luminescent. But what could it be, then?"

On our way back we were hotly discussing possible hypothetical explanations for these events. The hypothesis of a *Wunderwaffe* (miracle-weapon), which had more than once been promised by Adolf Hitler to his allies and enemies, did not seem absolutely unfounded. Perhaps an experimental prototype of such a weapon was tested near Tikhoretsk, and the result of this test proved to be, so to speak, too successful—the weapon went to work and

destroyed its users, if not its creators. What is more, an additional argument in favor of this hypothesis, though indirect, suddenly emerged just a month after my return from Chelbas to Kharkov.

Working part-time for the well-known Russian popular science magazine *Tekhnika-Molodyozhi* (TM), I communicated with those TM readers who wished to report their anomalous experiences. The number of TM copies sold reached 1,700,000 per issue, so it is understandable that we were not short of such reports. Some of them were published in a TM section specially devoted to various mysteries (its title was "Anthology of Mysterious Cases"). And lo and behold! Soon after my return to Kharkov I received in a regular set of readers' letters forwarded to me from Moscow a letter from a Nikolay Kernozhitskiy, a resident of Komsomolsk-on-Amur, a far-eastern Russian city. It was so



informative that I would like to cite it almost in full:

"This happened in August 1947, in the village of Malyshevsk [P. Osipenko district, Khabarovsk territory, Russia]. The exact date has evaporated from my memory, since I was then only seven and not yet even in school. In a small clubhouse, *kolkhozniks* [collective farmers] were watching a film. It was about 9 P.M., maybe 9.30 P.M. Suddenly somebody opened the door from outside and a woman's voice began to call everybody out to the street, shouting: 'fire, fire!'

"All of us immediately poured out onto the street. We, the kids, opened our eyes and mouths in amazement. The adults talked loudly, convincing each other that

it was not a fire.

"Down the Amgun (a tributary of the Amur River), in a northeasterly direction, a red glow slowly ascended from behind the edge of the forest. A minute later, it turned into a huge, red, fiery hemisphere, inspiring horror in the minds of both children and adults.

"The immense red dome shone fearfully over the forest, with its even, sinister red color, giving no flashes or noise. As far as I can recall, one could see slight fluctuations of red light—as if there were some turbulence inside the hemisphere. But maybe it was due to turbulence of the air surrounding the hemisphere.

"Someone said that such a glow had been observed before the war at the Vesyoliy gold mine. Some women crossed themselves and sobbed, looking helplessly at the men, and the latter, in turn, exchanged glances in perplexity. The adults began to herd the kiddies into the clubhouse. We were terrified and therefore we ran into the building without a word. Then the adults also started to come back. Somebody said: 'To hell with it! What will be will be!'—'Turn the film on!'

"The projectionist started the film again. Someone closed the door with a brief comment: 'That's all, it went out. That's not a fire.'

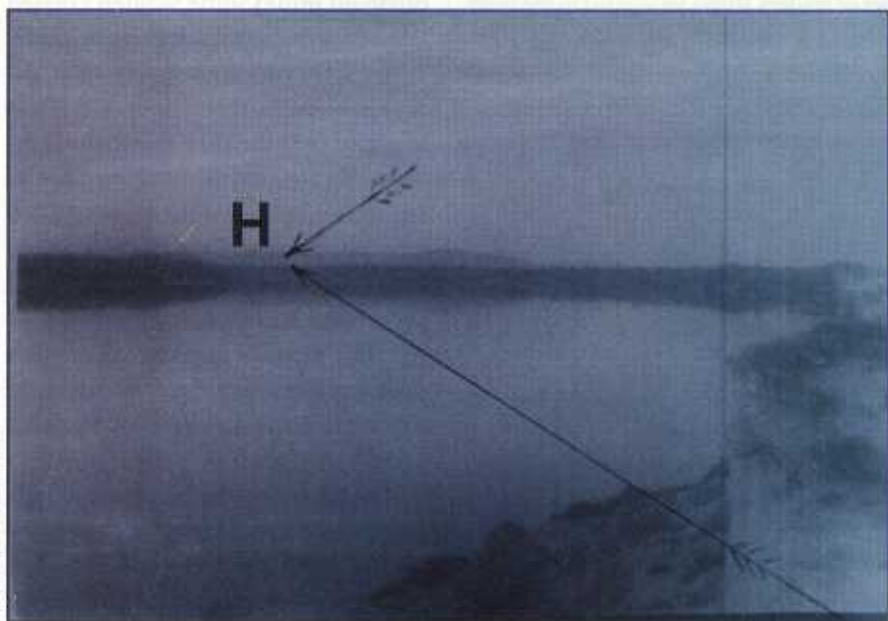
"As far as I remember, it was a dark, moonless evening. The red hemisphere was seen for about five to six minutes.

"When the film ended, all the people went out, looking in the direction where, one hour before, had shone something silent, ominous, and inexplicable. We, the children, asked the adults what this had been, but nobody was able to explain the occurrence. Some men dismissed the matter with a wave of the hand, whereas the women told us it had been God and if we were disobedient, He would punish us.

"The village of Malyshevsk had at that time 32 homesteads, or some 130 residents. About a half of them saw the red hemisphere. Many of these people live now at the settlement of P. Osipenko, 18 kilometers from Malyshevsk up the Amgun river. Others have gone away. Interestingly, no resident of P. Osipenko saw this huge hemi-



Fiery hemisphere as it was seen by Nikolay Kernozhitskiy.



The Amgun River. H denotes the place where the fiery hemisphere appeared in August 1947.

sphere when it appeared.

"Down the Amgun, 25 kilometers from Malyshevsk, there lies the way station of Gagtzinka. At that time, Gushchin, a communication technician and coachman, worked and lived there with his family. As far as I know, they did not see this phenomenon either. One can therefore conclude that the red hemisphere was seen only from Malyshevsk. This suggests that the hemisphere arose at a distance of several kilometers only, at an uninhabited place at the southern part of the Kivun mountain range. This place remains unpopulated

even at present. Perhaps, if it had been searched in time, some traces of the hemisphere would have been found. But at least one thing seems to me quite clear: This was not a forest fire. Neither could it be ball lightning. The hemisphere was too enormous, not less than 500 meters at its base."

Having compared Kernozhitskiy's picture with those drawn by Klimenko, I became certain that these phenomena were very similar in appearance. Anatoliy was of the same opinion when I showed him the picture some time later. He was amazed, and simply repeated: "What a wonderful

depiction! What an observant man!"

At my request, Nikolay Kernozhitskiy went again to the Amgun River, questioned former residents of Malyshevsk, and traversed the peninsula at the bend of the Amgun near this village. Some old people confirmed his recollections, but nothing strange was found in the *taiga*. The azimuth of the point where the hemisphere had appeared, being determined by compass, proved to be 68 degrees east of north.

In principle, if the spheroids seen by Anatoliy Klimenko in 1943 were due to a German secret weapon, the latter could have been captured by the Soviet army and tested in 1947 in the Soviet Far East. True, no information about any proving ground located near Malyshevsk is available, and it could hardly have been concealed so effectively. Besides, when Nikolay Kernozhitskiy revisited the site, he could find no traces of any unusual installations in this region. Dismantled? Who knows. But when I discussed this question with Anatoliy, he confessed that the secret weapon hypothesis seemed unconvincing to him—at least, if we mean a German secret weapon. And he reminded me about his own observation of a "strange aircraft."

A UFO of 1942

This episode happened in mid-August 1942, shortly after the Germans came to the hamlet where the Klimenkos lived. A very curious boy, Anatoliy poked his nose into all military business and spent day after day rushing about the environs. So he was once overtaken at night about a kilometer from the hamlet. Anatoliy was walking back home by a dirt road quite empty at that time of day. He was to cross a bridge over a local river, and the hamlet was on the opposite bank of the river, to the left of the bridge.

A German car was coming up behind Anatoliy, which was dangerous at night, and he hid in the maize on the roadside. The car passed some 300 meters away and stopped; the doors banged. It seemed that the people in it had come out to have a breath of fresh air. Anatoliy could distinctly hear German speech.

He left his shelter in the maize and went

on the road, intending, before he went as far as the car, to take a short cut across the field. But when Anatoliy was about 100 meters from the car, he suddenly felt something unpleasantly alarming, some queer sense of danger from behind him. This surprised him very much because, in risking his life daily, he had gotten used to dangers and thought them a kind of children's game.

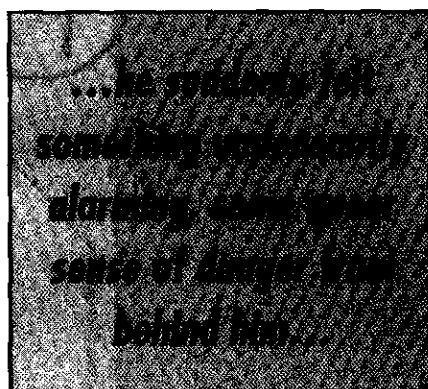
The night was quite calm and still; all sounds could be heard distinctly at a distance, but it was dead silent behind Anatoliy. He was on the alert to hear another car, which meant almost certain death at that time; therefore, he is quite sure that no sound came from behind.

By mere intuition, Anatoliy spotted the point of danger: looking back over his shoulder, he saw a shower of sparks, like a burning airplane motor, approaching him. It looked like a half-smoldering, half-burning bundle of rags. This fire was flying and visibly descending. The road ran down from a hill toward the bridge, and the thing followed this feature of the ground, or maybe fell at a slightly steeper angle. One or two seconds later, the fire drew level with Anatoliy. His first thought was that this was a falling bomber with stopped motors, because he heard no noise. If it had been a falling plane, it would have hit the ground some 100 to 200 meters from him, and he threw himself into the roadside ditch, though continuing his observation. However it did not fall. By this time it became clear to Anatoliy that the flying object was not a plane. When shot down, a falling plane makes many various sounds, even with its motors off: propellers still rotating, the whistle of the air, the roar of flame, etc. There was, however, dead silence. Even the Germans at the car stopped talking, possibly struck by the vision as well. The distance from the flying object was not large, about 50-100 meters, and the altitude about the same.

But the most striking thing was the shape of the flame: it was elongated perpendicular to the plane of flight and behaved as if there were no head wind. The flame looked like a comma of fire, or rather a rumped broom, twisted a little like an arc, its shaft down. Anatoliy could distinctly

see individual "twigs," dull red strips that melted below into solid fire of the same color. There were also coarse sparks between the strips. The lower part of the glow was partly screened by something opaque. And behind the whole, there seemed to be a huge, vertical-plane body, quite different from an aircraft fuselage.

For all its dynamism, the image seemed quite motionless, as though it had been a color picture brought before Anatoliy's eyes. The sparks and strips of fire might be thought to come from a center below with great force. However it was only the whole system which in fact moved, its details being motionless.



The fire reached the river, its flight there becoming level, and began to ascend smoothly. That was obviously too much for a falling plane. Anatoliy understood that the thing was flying at a constant altitude, strictly following the terrain. Beyond the bridge, near the village of Berezhanskaya, there was a small hollow, and Anatoliy was interested to see what would happen. The object responded to it by descending a little, though the alteration of the altitude was only a few meters. He watched the object until it disappeared over the horizon about a minute later.

When the thing had disappeared and Anatoliy wanted to move on, he was stopped by excited voices from the Germans near the car. For some ten minutes, there was a fuss among them; then the car engine started, they departed, and Anatoliy could go on his way.

On reflection, he thought he had seen some new Soviet air vehicle on a reconnaissance flight. If it sensed the ground so well, then certainly it could detect ac-

cumulated machinery. And, however strange it may seem, this mysterious phenomenon increased Anatoliy's confidence in our final victory.

Doubts and Considerations

UFOs of World War II are a separate subject matter, worthy of serious consideration and investigation. The famous foo fighters are certainly not the only strange objects that were observed in wartime skies. There are many other interesting reports from both sides of the front. But is there any connection between the red spheroids of 1943, the enigmatic destruction of a German regiment, and unidentified flying objects that seem to have appeared from time to time over battlefields of the bloodiest war of the last century? Even if we suppose that UFOs are extraterrestrial probes, such a connection is at least not evident.

In general, the story itself may also be doubted in some its aspects. Anatoliy did see the spheroids, but only heard about the circumstances of the mysterious combat. What part of this information is trustworthy and what part should be considered at best as a sort of folklore remains unknown. Nonetheless, it does seem to be worthy of checking—say, in military archives, which are at present no longer secret. Being, as was said above, a strong supporter of the ET hypothesis of UFO origin, Anatoliy believes that these craft have been keeping our terrestrial civilization under observation over many decades, if not centuries. But again, where is any piece of proof of UFO involvement in these incidents?

"No," Anatoliy told me quite frankly, "I cannot prove my supposition. You may consider it as a simple play of the mind. But if these aliens were in fact flying and observing over such a long period..."

"But only flying and observing!" I said, perhaps somewhat too fervently.

"Well," he replied in a very reserved manner, "a sensitive alien could eventually get sick of being only an observer..."

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by Nick Redfern

More than half a century before terms such as dirty bombs, biological warfare, and suitcase nukes became unfortunately commonplace to post-9/11 America, aliens from across the galaxy had their own dastardly plans to inflict eerily similar terrors upon us—at least, according to the theories of a concerned citizen and doctor who did his utmost to alert the world of officialdom to the impending extraterrestrial threat.

If aliens are indeed visiting the Earth—

as quite literally thousands of people assert and have asserted for decades—then one of the biggest and most important questions that requires both asking and answering, is surely: why are they here? Even the briefest perusal of bookstores, magazine racks, and the Internet reveals a wealth of potential theories:

1. Kindly and concerned extraterrestrials are here to warn us about the threat posed by nuclear weapons and escalating environmental collapse;
2. Emotionless aliens are abducting hu-

mans as part of a bizarre gene-splicing operation to rejuvenate their dying race; or

3. We are the subjects of a lengthy scientific study coordinated under cover of extreme stealth by our cosmic cousins, who, for reasons best known to themselves, do not wish to make open contact with the human species.

More sinister rumors suggest that aliens are living deep underground in secret locations in New Mexico and have entered into an uneasy alliance with the U.S. Government that could one day evolve into an all-out intergalactic war. More than 50 years ago, however, a doctor from Indiana was certain that he had solved the mystery of the UFO presence on our world and was determined to warn the American military and government of the horrific truth: that the intelligences behind the UFOs were attempting to wipe out the human race with biological and radiological warfare.

Not only that: despite the bizarre nature of the doctor's assertions, officially declassified documentation reveals that his claims were taken very seriously by both the FBI and the U.S. Air Force.

Dr. X's Encounter

The strange saga all began on July 1, 1949, when "Dr. X" (as I will dub him, since both the FBI and the Air Force have been very careful to delete his name from the relevant, released documentation) and his wife had a close encounter of the distinctly unusual kind while vacationing in Canada.

The following account comes from a report dated on September 6, 1949, by

Agent Elbert W. Farris of the U.S. Air Force Office of Special Investigations at Scott Air Force Base, Illinois, and marked for the attention of both AFOSI headquarters and the Director of Technical Intelligence at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Dayton, Ohio: "Dr. and Mrs. X of Decatur, Indiana, were interviewed on 15 August 1949, and stated that they had seen an unidentified aerial object which they thought to be a flying saucer. The sighting took place 1 July 1949 on Highway 70 about 50-70 miles north of Ft. Francis, Ontario, Canada, and near the east side of Lake of the Woods, Canada."

Farris's report provides details based upon an interview conducted with the doctor by Special Agent Clarence A. Trumble of the AFOSI at Offutt Air Force Base: "The object was described as silvery gray in color, flying in a westerly direction and was in sight for about five seconds. No vapor trails or protruding objects were noted.... The object pursued a straight path of flight with an erratic motion comparable to that of an oblong object being thrown through the air."

Farris expanded further: "The aerial anomaly appeared to be faster than an airplane. It did not hover...and was likened to a small aircraft at two thousand feet. Dr. X observed no fins, no vapor trail and heard no sound. After passing across his line of vision, the object was lost from view behind the trees. The day was bright and sunny, and Dr. X emphasized that he had definitely observed an object in the air unlike any other known to him. Mrs. X cor-

roborated her husband's statements...."

Meanwhile, on the same day that the Air Force became enmeshed in the controversy, the FBI Special-Agent-in-Charge (SAC) at the Bureau's Indianapolis office advised J. Edgar Hoover of much the same, adding that when Dr. X returned to his home town of Decatur, Indiana: "...he found himself in the midst of a polio epidemic and that as a result he had read as much literature as possible with respect to polio, its symptoms, diagnosis, etc. Dr. X told that in his opinion, the cases which were thought to be polio in the vicinity of Decatur, Indiana, were not polio, but possibly the result of uranium poisoning and that he felt the presence of flying saucers had direct bearing on the polio epidemic."

The Special-Agent-in-Charge at Indianapolis informed Hoover of Dr. X's unique line of thinking: "[He] pointed out that flying saucers were observed in the Carolinas in 1948 and there was a polio epidemic in the vicinity at that time. Dr. X stated he had consulted one of the physicians at the Benjamin Harrison Air Base and had also checked the records with reference to allegations concerning the sighting of flying saucers and had done a little research with respect to correlating the presence of flying saucers and any polio epidemic."

The FBI's SAC at Indianapolis also noted that—according to their investigations—Dr. X was reporting his conclusions to "the proper Air Force authorities" and

had also spoken with staff at the Indiana University Medical School, "where doctors treated the entire matters as a big joke."

Interestingly, J. Edgar Hoover was also advised: "Dr. X had heard while in Canada that there had been some rather strange events somewhere in the interior with respect to finding what might have been remains of flying saucers."

Air Force Followup

It is perhaps notable that despite the bizarre nature of the theories of Dr. X, the Air Force did not dismiss him as a crank. Indeed, Agent Farris undertook some detailed background investigations himself: "Tabulation of flying saucer sightings from the available sources of the *Indianapolis Star* and the *Indianapolis News*, reveals that the majority of sightings took place in July and August for the years 1947, 1948 and 1949."

More notable is Farris's next statement: "A responsible medical authority, confidential informant, CI-1, advised that the theory is 'interesting' and worthy of further research." The Air Force appeared to take seriously the idea that aliens could be engaged in a covert operation to poison the human species with biological or radiological warfare.

What on earth, or indeed off it, would prompt the Air Force to pursue this particularly novel (and, if true, highly disturbing) theory? Certainly, the background of Dr. X was a key contributing factor.

According to Farris, "Dr. X produced

membership cards which show him to be a member of the Masons, Scottish Rite, Knights of Pythias, Loyal Order of Moose and the Eagles. He served as a Naval officer for 14 months and also held a commission in the United States Public Health Service...he is an associate member of the Association of Medicine, Bloomington, Indiana, and he is an associate member of the Association of Military Surgeons. He is a physician and surgeon."

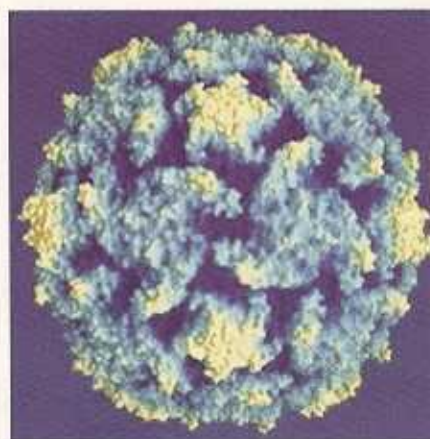
An illustrious and intriguing background, to say the least.

Farris further advised his superiors that Chief of Police James Border at Decatur had firmly vouched for the integrity of Dr. X, asserting that he was "reliable," "responsible," and "enjoys an excellent reputation in the community."

On August 17, 1949, Farris carefully perused the available UFO reports collected by the Air Force from the period of July 4, 1947, to July 26, 1949, and prepared an official report that detailed the sightings and their exact locations.

Farris's next step was to contact a person he described as a "reliable medical authority at Benjamin Harrison AFB, Indiana," in an effort to "determine whether the possibility of uranium poisoning, as expounded by Dr. X, had any basis in fact."

According to Farris: "The authority, who preferred to remain anonymous, is hereinafter known as Confidential Informant CI-1. Informant CI-1 advised the writer that the Polio period extends from April to October, with the peak months of



Polio virus microbe.

the disease being reached in July and August.... Informant CI-1 was doubtful if the answer to the question of uranium poisoning could be readily answered, and he was of the opinion that the possibility and its connection with the Polio epidemic prevalent throughout the United States had never been explored."

As a result of this, plans were initiated to approach the Aero Medical Laboratory Research Department at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base for comment: "Does uranium element produce any physiological reaction in human beings corresponding to symptoms applicable to many of the so-called Polio clinical and sub-clinical conditions?" asked Farris. "Are topographical areas where so-called Flying Disc are predominantly seen (or known uranium deposits) pinpoints of endemic areas of clinical symptoms resembling Polio?"

All In His Head?

In addition to forwarding the questions to the Aero Medical Laboratory, inquiries were also dutifully dispatched to a source at the Indiana University School of Medicine, who was described as "an authority on poison" and who was subsequently interviewed on August 25, 1949.

The source advised that, in his opinion, the "Flying-Saucers-are-poisoning-us-with-uranium" idea espoused by Dr. X was "negligible." The source further added that while he did recall Dr. X from his time as a student who had graduated from Indiana University School of Medicine in 1941 and considered him to be a "good boy," he was also of the opinion that Dr. X was "not the best student Indiana University ever turned out," and was somewhat "imaginative."

Interestingly, however, the same source recommended bringing the Atomic Energy Commission into the controversy, as he considered the AEC to be "the only Agency in the United States capable of answering this question once and for all."

As a result—and in what was certainly a highly unusual and unique scenario—the FBI, the Aero Medical Laboratory at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, the Atomic Energy Commission, and the Air Force's Office of Special Investigations all found themselves deeply embroiled in the bizarre theories of Dr. X.

On October 6, 1949, an answer to the mystery was forthcoming: In a one-page document titled "PROJECT

GRUDGE—Incident at Lake of the Woods, Ontario, Canada—1 July 1949," Major D. Lynch, Acting District Commander of the AFOSI, revealed the results of an investigation prepared by Wright-Patterson's Aero Medical Laboratory. Signed-off by Lt. Col. A.P. Cagge of Wright-Patterson, the Aero Medical Laboratory's report read thus:

"While it is true that some of the clinical symptoms of poliomyelitis may be similar to uranium poisoning, the overall clinical syndrome is quite different. Progress in the case of uranium poisoning is very dismal, with recovery unlikely. Besides the heavy metal poisoning effect of uranium poisoning, there is also the prolonged and continuous radiation effect of uranium which can be detected in the broad picture.

"This is quite a distinctive clinical feature of uranium poisoning which any physician should readily be able to recognize. It is also a feature which does not diminish with time and, hence, the patient does not recover. This results because the uranium is a long-lived radioactive isotope, which becomes fixed in the body and cannot be eliminated to any appreciable extent. Because of the above considerations, it is the opinion of this office that there is little, if any, ground for the theory that the annual poliomyelitis epidemics are related to radioactivity in any way."

As far as the most controversial aspect of the story was concerned: "It is also to be

A → TLP

RON EDWARDS, MISLED ZEPPELIN

IN APRIL 10, 1942

NO TRACE OF ITS PILOTS

emerged and drifted aimlessly over the ocean for two and a half hours.

On a beach near the Olympic Club Lakeside golf course, two surf fishermen were surprised to see a blimp coming right at them. They assumed the crew must be in trouble — the airship's two engines were stopped and the propellers were windmilling silently. When the L-8 landed, they dropped their fishing poles and grabbed its tow lines in a futile attempt to keep their captive grounded. A glance through the gondola's windows revealed nothing amiss — except that no one was aboard!

The fishermen were unable to maintain their grip, and the heavy cables slipped from their hands. Helplessly, they watched their prize dance across the beach, until its progress was blocked by a precipice. As relentless winds jostled the blimp, one of its depth bombs fell harmlessly to the ground. Now 500 pounds lighter, the L-8 again rose skyward.

Fifteen minutes later the airship exceeded its pressure height and began descending when its safety valves opened automatically. The blimp continued to lose altitude while approaching Daly City, a suburb of San Francisco.

As it drifted toward the ground, observers noticed that its engines were not running and assumed the pilot was making an emergency landing.

Fifty feet from its eventual touchdown, the L-8 provided onlookers with a spectacular display of sparkling pyrotechnics as it ripped through telephone lines. Deep scratches were etched across the tops of several parked cars as the partially deflated blimp continued its descent. Finally, it plopped onto the pavement and came to rest against a utility pole on Bellevue Avenue.

Curious neighbors rushed from their homes. Someone called the police while others opened the blimp's narrow door. Hopefully the crew was not injured.

The anxious would-be rescuers were shocked to find the gondola empty.

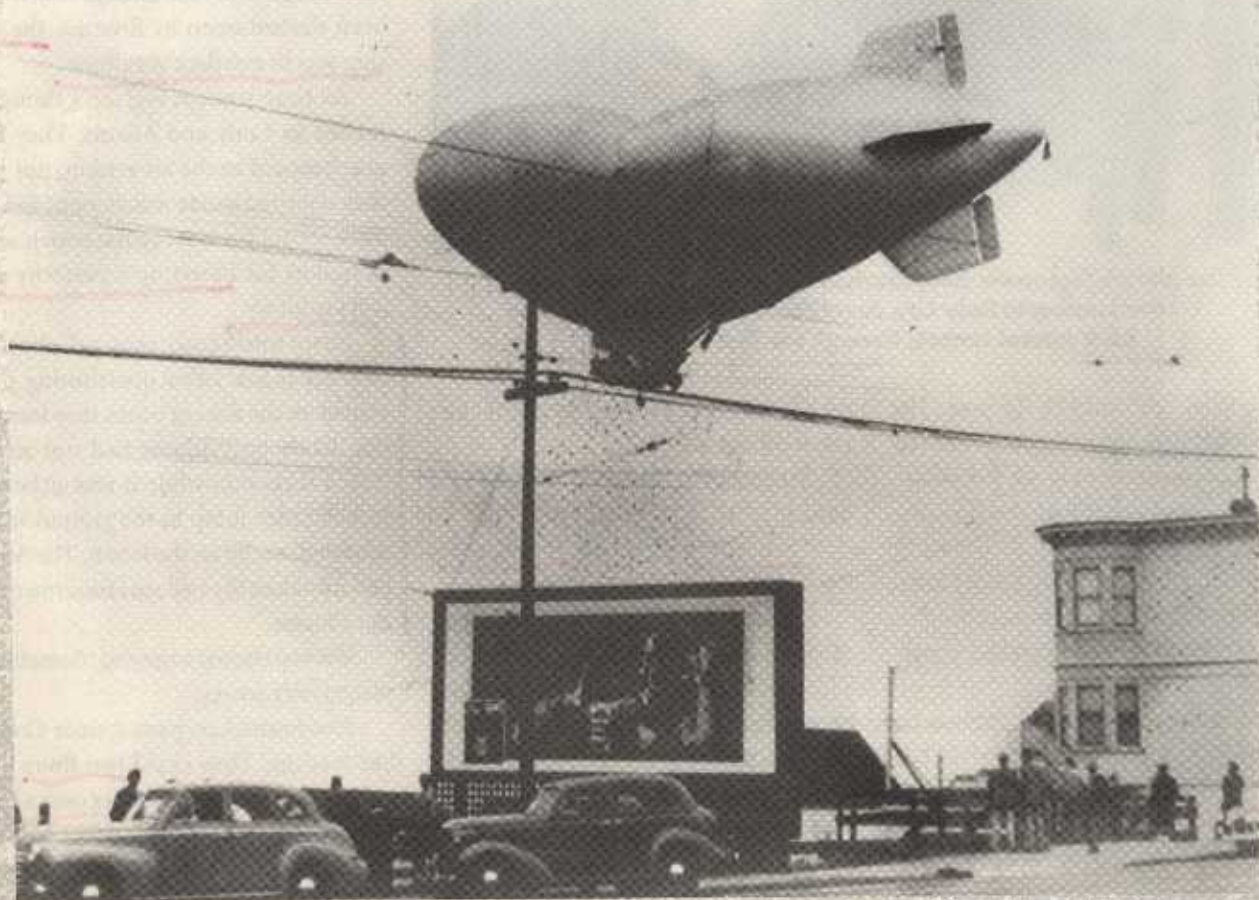
When emergency vehicles arrived minutes later, firemen quickly slashed the huge airbag but found no one trapped inside. None of the confused witnesses could understand how the L-8 had made its approach and landing with no one at the controls.

The View from the Ground

Meanwhile, operations personnel at Moffett Field had lost contact with Flight 101. The last message they received was Cody's mention of the oil slick. There was no follow-up call, nor was there the routine position report due at 8:00 A.M.

Authorities were puzzled but not alarmed. They attributed Cody's silence to radio failure. After all, the weather was clear, both flyers were airship veterans, and they were not due back until 10:30.

When Cody failed to report at 9:30, Lt. Comdr. George F. Watson sent an alert



Opposite: Ground crew prepares the L-8 blimp for departure from Treasure Island Naval Air Station.
Above: The blimp slashes power lines during its descent over Daly City, California.

DE → VCU

DESA PARICIONES



The blimp's flightcrew compartment rests against a utility pole after landing in Daly City. An officer's cap can be seen on a control console through the first window.

to all planes and ships in the area. The commanding officer of Squadron 32 was sure that someone would see the elusive blimp. Alameda Naval Air Station dispatched four OS2U Kingfisher scout planes that joined Navy and Coast Guard vessels looking for the missing airship.

At 10:50, a Pan American World Airways pilot spotted the L-8.

Ten minutes later it was spotted by one of the OS2U pilots. He said it "seemed to be under control." Before he could get a closer look, the aerial nomad was swallowed by the overcast.

Twenty-five minutes later the Army Coast Artillery Station at Fort Funston called Moffett Field. A blimp had landed

on a beach, bounced against a cliff, then taken off again.

"Any news of the crew?" Watson said quickly.

"Two men jumped off when she hit the beach," replied the soldier.

Commander Watson breathed a sigh of relief. At least the crew was safe. But why would Cody and Adams leave the blimp unattended? Both men were highly experienced and knew the balloon tradition to "stay with the ship." There was no apparent reason to believe they had faced grave danger.

A phone call from the Daly City police department interrupted Watson's speculation. A blimp had just landed on a

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residential street, but a search failed to find any trace of the crew. Watson told him the crew had been seen uninjured on a beach about a mile from Fort Funston.

When Watson arrived in Daly City, he examined the L-8. Watson's quest for answers was rewarded with more riddles. Aside from the airbag, which had been slashed open by firemen, the airship was in excellent condition.

As time passed, Watson's thoughts turned to Cody and Adams. They had not returned to the air station, nor had they reported in. He was anxious to hear their reason for leaving the search area, as well as for deserting a perfectly air-worthy blimp.

Naval Intelligence soon called with a new dilemma. After questioning personnel on the fishing boats, they learned that Cody and Adams had not abandoned their ship while it was airborne. Nor did they jump to the ground when it landed briefly on the beach. The Army had mistaken the two surf fishermen for the aircrew.

Watson started worrying. Something was terribly wrong.

Five hours had passed since Cody's last message. How could two flyers disappear from a blimp cruising over a harbor full of boats? The situation seemed like the plot of a science fiction movie.

An extensive search by Army, Navy, Coast Guard, and state highway patrolers yielded nothing. Frustrated search-