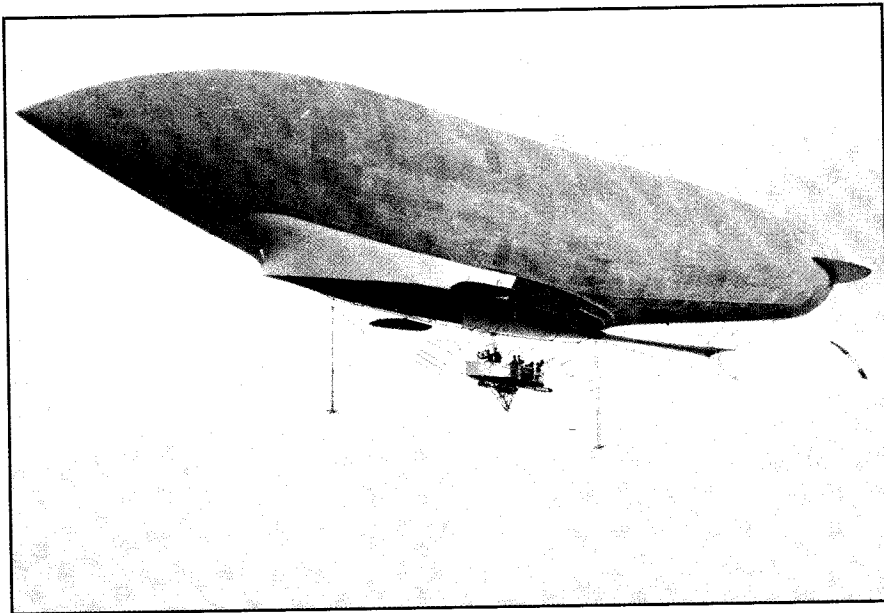


# Sinister Dirigibles over Russia



A 1907 French military dirigible.

by Paul Stonehill

Strange, cigar-shaped objects have been seen in the sky over Russian cities, villages, testing grounds, battlefields, forests, and secret installations. Surely many observations have been lost in the whirlwind of history; however, the author has been able to collect some striking reports:

## 1915

Unknown dirigibles were seen at the mouth of the Volga River, over villages and towns covering a distance of 150 kilometers. A huge, dirigible-like balloon with a roaring motor and spotlights shining down was observed in the sky over the Kazan Military District. A finned, cigar-shaped ob-

ject hovered over a village. Six humanoid shapes were seen in a "boat" under the object's "belly."

On September 26, the Kalmyk prince Iseren Badmayev saw what appeared to be a puff of black smoke appear from behind a hill and split into two parts. Each part, initially spherical, assumed an elongated shape in the blink of an eye. Both resembled gray boats. One part moved southward; the other headed west. For several minutes, the prince watched them move high above the horizon in the cloudless sky. He saw another "boat" about 40 minutes later. He reported that the vehicle in which he was traveling at the time stood still each time he saw a boat in the sky.

A search-and-capture expedition was dispatched, but the objects were not found. The unknown aircraft appeared to be harmless, and General Sandetsky, Commander of the Kazan Military District, paid little attention to the reports, though he did inform the Supreme Command General Headquarters and the Russian General Staff. When he received no response, the documents were shelved in the archives for future reference.

Similar reports came from towns more than 800 kilometers north of Astrakhan and even from the Ural Mountains. An October 9 report from the village of Baranovka mentioned a landing in the forest.

Information about the sightings, based on extracts from the files of the Central State Military Historical Archives of the USSR, was reported in the April 1991 edition of the now-defunct magazine *Soviet Soldier*.

## 1940s

Retired Col. Gherman Kolchin, a respected researcher, published an article in *NLO Magazine* in 2000. It mentioned recollections of A. Kovalchuk, a lieutenant colonel during World War II. A huge, dirigible-like object 100 to 150 meters long passed over the military airfield where Kovalchuk was stationed at an altitude of 500 meters. Air defense units fired on it with cannons and machine guns to protect the airfield. The object, which had no gondola, disappeared into the distance unharmed.

## 1953

Veniamin Dodin, a writer, military scientist, and lecturer, was in exile in Krasnoyarsk Kray, Siberia, not far from the site of the famous Tunguska explosion of 1908. On a clear night in June, while walking, Dodin heard a high-pitched noise that seemed to be coming from inside his head. He clearly saw a long, gleaming, cylindrical craft hovering over clouds about two miles away. Its rotating, drum-shaped body was girded with something that resembled a moving staircase with many steps. Dodin immediately assumed it was a dirigible, but was confused by the absence of cabins or cockpit. As the slowly rotating object approached him, its design appeared to be technologically incorrect. He assumed it had come from the testing area of the nearby top-secret Soviet research center known as "Box 26," where new types of super-powerful weapons were being developed. The flat, drum-shaped end of the object that faced him separated itself from the

to be the patron of hopeless cases." It might have started in the 1300s, when St. Bridget of Sweden, a mystic nun, claimed to have had a vision in which Jesus told her to pray to St. Jude, "because he would show himself to be most willing to help."

But widespread devotion to Jude did not begin until the 1800s, starting in Europe and then, in the 1920s, coming to the United States via Italian immigrants.

The unique order to publish a thank-you to Jude after he answers a prayer is unprecedented in the Catholic Church, and its origin is a mystery. Perhaps it was an effort by his devotees to rehabilitate his image. Because of Judas Iscariot, the name Judas is used as a synonym for "traitor." The public relations campaign may have been an attempt to remove the tarnish from that name and advertise the fact that the Church has a "good" Judas who's more powerful than the "bad," better-known one.

Despite his fame, Jude remains a man of mystery. Since so little is known about him, praying to him is a real leap of faith—and isn't that what prayer is all about? II

*Janet Brennan, a newspaper editor in Maine, has become fascinated with the Shroud of Turin, and is heading off to Italy to investigate it further. She'll report on this in a future issue of FATE.*



## The St. Jude Novena

Praying to St. Jude can take many forms. It can be as simple as saying "St. Jude, help me" or as complex as performing a novena complete with fasting and meditation. A novena is nine consecutive days of prayer. There are many different variations of the St. Jude novena prayer. The website [www.stjudenovena.org](http://www.stjudenovena.org) offers prayers for different needs, as well as a forum for publishing the required thank-you. The prayer below is the one I've used; it's easier to memorize than some of the more complicated ones. Say it nine times a day, and remember to publish the prayer or at least a "Thank you, St. Jude, my prayer has been answered" message after your request has been granted:

*May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be adored, glorified, loved, and preserved throughout the world now and forever. Sacred Heart of Jesus, pray for us. St. Jude, worker of miracles, pray for us. St. Jude, helper of the hopeless, pray for us.*

Say this prayer nine times a day for nine days. By the eighth day your prayer will be answered. It has never been known to fail. Publication must be promised.

cylinder and ascended rapidly, making a painful squeaking noise. Several more flat drums followed suit. Then the open end closed and the mysterious cylinder flew away. The flat drums disappeared and Dodin's earache went away.

The "dirigible" returned the following night. Dodin knew that no conventional man-made object could travel at such velocities as to instantly disappear from view. Was the object some advanced aircraft? He worried that those who ran the sinister Box 26 would come to the area. Inmates of local concentration camps and other exiles like him had heard horrible rumors about the projects of the secret research center. Knowing that if he were caught taking photographs in the forbidden Oimolon area he would be sent back to the GULAG camps or worse, Dodin nevertheless photographed the object and watched the sky for more than 40 hours as other, similar objects appeared.

The smaller, flat drums poured out of the 650-foot motherships. Each drum appeared to be about 80 feet in diameter and polished. Each mothership threw out eight perfectly smooth, flat drums. Dodin used a Zeiss theodolite to observe the strange objects. He had no other tools. The eyepiece he looked through enabled him to discern a slight luminescence emanating from the panels of the drums. The mothership did not emit any luminescence. Dodin tried to reach the site of the nearest cylinder. He failed every time. Moreover, he became ill whenever he approached the

site. Prior to the incident, Dodin was never ill in the taiga. Now he experienced sharp pains in his joints. He once again heard the same sharp, painful noises as on the first night and was forced to turn back. As soon as he came home, Dodin fell asleep for a long time.

The MVD (the KGB of the period) arrived in the area in early July, accompanied by Soviet military pilots. They confiscated Dodin's camera and film and questioned him extensively. These actions convinced Dodin that he had photographed some top-secret Soviet project, but he found out later that he was wrong. The objects had troubled Soviet military commanders in the area, too. They had tried to use radars, but had discovered that something was jamming their radar station. The super-high-frequency radiation emanating from the mothership was so great that the MVD and pilots decided to evacuate. Before fleeing the site, however, they ordered Dodin to continue his observations.

According to Mark I. Shevelyov, who headed the Arctic Aviation Agency, Soviet leaders quickly learned about these UFOs but decided to refrain from challenging the unknown. Stalin had died not long before, and the situation in the USSR was not very stable. However, the Soviets blinked, and on August 7, 1953, their airplanes attacked the UFOs over Ishimba. Their air-to-air missiles were inexplicably turned away from their UFO targets and fell to earth, burning a gigantic area of the taiga. Two interceptor aircraft and their pilots and

copilots vanished. All radar equipment within a 120-mile radius of the site broke down. Dodin's radio made a piercing noise and shut down. Then a horrible noise hit Dodin and he fainted. He regained consciousness at night. When he climbed outside his hut, he discovered a world painted in greenish hues. The luminescence in the area remained greenish for more than a month. It faded slowly, like radiation after a nuclear explosion. Dodin would never forget that evening.

#### 1954

At 8:12 a.m. on August 17, an unusual object was sighted by an anti-aircraft unit guarding a missile battalion very close to the Chinese border. Their radars registered strange interference. A few moments later, an object resembling a rocket was observed, but it had no stabilizers and moved horizontally at low speed. Its movement resembled that of a dirigible. Three missiles were fired at it. They exploded before reaching the target. The object rapidly ascended and soon disappeared.

A commission from the Ministry of Defense arrived the next day to investigate. Because its members found no objective reasons for missiles having been fired under the circumstances, the commanding officer of the missile battalion was removed from his position.

#### 1956

V. Fomenko (who would later become one of Russia's leading ufologists) and other

witnesses observed a gigantic, cigar-shaped UFO over a secret testing range in Krasnoarmeysk, near Moscow. The object hovered for two and a half hours. Fomenko measured its altitude at 100 kilometers, its length at about one kilometer and its diameter at approximately 100 meters.

#### 1965

A Soviet nuclear submarine was to rendezvous with a ship in the Atlantic Ocean. It arrived at the meeting place an hour and a half before the appointed time. The captain allowed the crew to come outside on deck. No ships were in the area and the sky was starry and cloudless. Then the watchman observed a cigar-shaped object moving noiselessly through the sky.

Although the submarine was in international waters, the crew assumed the object was American-made, so they prepared to dive immediately. But when onboard radar did not register anything, the captain decided to stay on the surface. When three rays suddenly shot out from the UFO, the witnesses noticed that it had no gondola and no horizontal or vertical rudders. The object was about 200 to 250 meters long. Soviet submariners were not familiar with such "dirigibles." Those used by the American Air Force were much smaller.

Then something strange took place: the UFO slowly descended to the surface of the ocean, its searchlights still on, and dived under the water about half a mile from the submarine. The submarine's sonar registered a strange, intense hissing sound of

and confirmed all the facts in the report prepared by the regiment's commander. As a result, the commander was demoted because he had issued orders to intercept without asking his superiors (*Vestnik*, Issue 3, 1992). His argument that he had been justified because the sighting took place so close to the Iranian border (a mere 100 kilometers) was not accepted.

S. N. Komlev, a Soviet scientist, was a trained meteorologist with professional experience in the observation of atmospheric meteorological phenomena and flights of weather balloons. In 1985 he sent a UFO report to a recently established commission for the study of anomalous phenomena. The incident had taken place at the end of September 1981, at about 12:15 a.m. Moscow time. Komlev, a passenger aboard a TU-134 flight from Balkhash to Moscow, observed a cigar-shaped object. The airplane at that time was flying at 800 kilometers per hour in the vicinity of the Vnukovo Airport, at an altitude of approximately 8,000 meters. The white-yellowish object was seen through the portholes by almost all of the passengers. No one could identify it. Komlev estimated that it was about the size of an airplane hull viewed from a distance of two or three kilometers. Apparently the object paced the TU-134 about 30 kilometers above it. The observers could not determine the direction of the flight. They saw no residue or inversion. No sections or components were noted and no effect on humans or onboard equipment was detected. The atmosphere at the

time was transparent; one could see the stars and the ground. The sighting lasted about two minutes, then the airplane changed course and the object was not seen again. The plane was not allowed to land for an extended period of time. Komlev believed this was a consequence of the UFO sighting.

#### 1982

M. L. Gaponov was a noted Soviet scientist involved in geophysical and biomedical research and a participant in international geophysical scientific expeditions to the North Pole. He personally observed a gigantic, cigar-shaped UFO hovering over the Gagarin Cosmonaut Training Center at Zvezdny Gorodok (Star City), the USSR's only school for cosmonauts.

#### 1987

Dalnegorsk, a small settlement in the Far East of Russia, is the site of the famous UFO crash of January 1986. On Saturday night, November 28, 1987, at 11:24 p.m., 32 flying objects appeared from nowhere. Hundreds of military and civilian witnesses saw them. The objects flew over 12 different settlements, and 13 of them flew to Dalnegorsk and the crash site. Three of these hovered over the settlement, and five illuminated the nearby mountain. The objects moved noiselessly at an altitude of 150 to 800 meters.

As the objects flew over houses, they created television interference. Ministry of Internal Affairs officers testified later that

very short duration as the UFO submerged. All the witnesses were ordered to report the details and provide drawings to the Special Department (i.e., naval intelligence).

### 1970

One night after secret launches of new rockets at the Kapustin Yar test range, the shouts of alarmed sentries awoke others. A gigantic, dirigible-like object was hovering in the clear, starry sky over the remaining rockets. It emitted a thin, green, needle-like ray, as if sensing the rocket positions. When a sentry panicked and fired at the UFO, the ray vanished and several soldiers screamed in pain with horrible headaches.

### 1970s

Col.-Gen. Gennady Reshetnikov, Chief of the top Command Academy of the Air Defense Forces, is a former Commander of the Air Defense Forces of the Soviet Far East. Valery Uvarov, a Russian ufologist, interviewed him for the Russian newspaper *Anomaliya* (Issue 3, January 30, 1996). Reshetnikov mentioned several interesting incidents when aircraft were scrambled after UFOs. He investigated the sighting of a cigar-shaped craft with portholes that occurred in the late 1970s over the Arctic area of Norilsk. It visited the area several times, alarming the military.

Reports issued by Adm. V. A. Domislowsky, chief of the Pacific Fleet's Intelligence Department, described a gigantic cylindrical object sighted by the Soviet Navy

in "faraway" regions of the Pacific Ocean. The object was 800 to 900 meters long. When it hovered over the ocean, smaller objects exited from one of its ends like bees from a beehive and descended into the water. Some time later they reentered the gigantic UFO, which flew away and disappeared over the horizon.

### 1981

Mark Shteynberg, a Russian-American journalist and a former Soviet officer, reported that a gigantic UFO appeared over the air-defense regiment of the Soviet 12th Army in August. The area is close to the Iranian border, in the town of Kizil-Arvat. The Russians were vigilant and nervous because Iraqi forces were fighting the Iranians; this was also during the Soviet-Afghan war.

The strange elliptical object hovered at an altitude of seven kilometers. Two MIG-27 jets were dispatched to pursue it. The UFO slowly and noiselessly moved northward. The radar registered it without any problem. The captain who flew the leading interceptor told ground control that he had the UFO in sight. Ground control ordered him to fire two missiles at the target. The UFO disappeared at great speed.

The leading interceptor and the missiles it had fired also vanished instantly. No traces of the plane or its missiles were ever found on the ground.

The cigar-shaped UFO was approximately 100 to 200 meters long. A special commission investigated the incident

they observed the objects from a street. One was a cylindrical object the width of a five-story building and 200 to 300 meters long. It flew straight at the quarry, its front part lit up like burning metal. Quarry workers were afraid it would crash on them. A quarry manager named Levakov observed it slowly moving at an altitude of 300 meters. He stated that he was well acquainted with aerodynamics, but never knew that a body could fly noiselessly without any wings or engines.

### 1989

Phobos 1, the Soviet space probe sent to Mars in 1988, was lost that September on its way to the red planet. Phobos 2 arrived in orbit around Mars in January 1989. On March 28, 1989, TASS, the official Soviet news agency, announced that Phobos 2 had failed to communicate with Earth as scheduled after completing an operation around the Martian moon Phobos, and was lost. Marina Popovich, a famous Russian test pilot, author, and researcher, while visiting Los Angeles in 1991, showed this

author a photograph that Phobos 2 had taken just before its demise. It depicts a cylindrical object approximately 25 kilometers long. After that last frame was radio-transmitted back to Earth, the probe disappeared.

In 1919, man crossed the Atlantic in a dirigible, a journey of 5,800 kilometers, but even today no man-made dirigible is capable of separating itself into two autonomous craft. And we certainly do not have dirigible 25 kilometers long that are capable of space flights to Mars!

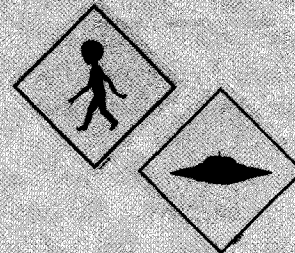
Where do the mysterious cylinders come from? Where do they fly away to?

II

*Paul Stonehill is the author of The Soviet UFO Files (1998) and co-author (with Philip Mantle) of Mysterious Sky: Soviet UFO Phenomenon (2006).*



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