

The Greatest Flap Yet?—Part 2

By Jerome Clark

ON the afternoon of August 3, 1965, county highway department investigator Rex Heflin was driving near the Marine Corps Air Force facility at Santa Ana, California, when he was startled to see a metallic machine flying above him. Although a UFO sceptic, the sight interested him so much that he stopped his car, pulled out a Polaroid camera, and shot three pictures of the strange craft during the 15 seconds it was still visible to him.

Heflin estimated the object to be about 30 feet in diameter and 8 feet thick. It made no sound as it manoeuvred over some nearby telephone wires, flashing a beam of white light that rotated underneath it. While watching it, he tried to communicate with his supervisor but found that his two-way radio was not working, although it did later.

Heflin submitted his photographs, which showed a hat-shaped object without portholes or lights, to the Air Force. Almost two months later (on October 27) its "findings" were released. In the words of Major Hector Quintanella, current head of Project Blue Book: "We have classified it as a photographic hoax on the basis of extensive photographic analysis. Evaluation of the three photographs is based on enlargements made from copies of the original prints.¹ The camera was probably focused on a set distance and not on infinity, as the terrain background was blurred on all three photographs. The center white strip on the road, and the object, appeared to have the same sharp image. Therefore, it is believed that the object was on the same plane as the center white strip and could not possibly be the size reported by Heflin. Using the width of the road in the photograph as a measurement factor, the size of

the object was estimated to be approximately one to three feet in diameter, and 15 to 20 feet above ground".

Unperturbed, Heflin said, "It comes as no surprise to me. The Air Force has a policy of insulting every citizen who presents evidence they can't or won't explain". NICAP, which also studied the photographs, disputed the Air Force's conclusion, stating its belief that the pictures were genuine. It should be noted that Heflin, when his story was first released, offered to submit to a lie detector test to prove his honesty.²

As circumstantial evidence for his report, a 10-year old boy, Greg Oliver, sighted a strange flying object in the same general area Heflin claimed to have seen his, and on the same afternoon. The youth thought the object had just come from the Southern California Edison Company electric generating plant, apparently having flown over and observed the site. That night numerous UFOs, variously described as "green, red, silver objects" and "large spinning disc-shaped fireballs", flew over northern California. The next evening, so many of the craft were observed that a spokesman for Hamilton Air Force Base admitted jets had been scrambled to investigate; he declined, however, to say what the pilots had seen.

Radars in action—and 'jammed'

A similarly fantastic series of events was taking place over Michigan on August 4. United Press International, in a dispatch out of Houghton in that State, reported an Air Force radar base on the Keweenaw Peninsula had tracked seven to ten unidentified objects travelling in V-formation over Lake Superior. Moving out of the southwest, the UFOs were flying north-northeast at 9000 miles

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per hour at an altitude of between 5200 and 17000 feet. Three other bases—in Minnesota, North Dakota, and Canada—also contacted the machines with radar, and at the first site, over Duluth, jet interceptors chased them but were easily outdistanced. At Luther Air Station in Canada a spokesman recounted what appeared to be electronic jamming of its radar as the UFOs passed.

The Air Force's explanation: the incidents never occurred.³ By implication, the UPI, one of the nation's two leading newswire services, had invented the story.

That night flights of UFOs descended upon Arkansas. In one case, the Bill Estep family, who farm eight miles from Viney Grove, sighted "a long, narrow, silver object with lighted windows and a revolving light on top hovering in the air just above the trees". In an unusual sidelight, the couple claimed that the machine made noises—"a loud clicking" punctuated at intervals by "three short blasts on a siren". Said Mrs. Estep: "When it left it made sparks similar to a Roman candle", reminiscent of a UFO seen several days before by Deputy Sheriff Dan Carter of Canyon, Texas, and others.

Elsewhere, about 11.30 p.m. August 8, a high school senior from Brighton Township, Beaver County, Pennsylvania, managed to photograph a bright disc-shaped object, "larger than a Piper Cub airplane", in full view of two witnesses. Careful analysis by three photographers for the *Beaver County Times* culminated in a statement that the image on the picture "appears to be the result of photographing a self-luminous object positioned in the field of view of the camera". NICAP investigators cross-examined the witnesses, studied the photographs, and concluded that the report was genuine.⁴

"Operators" reported

One of the very few "ufonaut" incidents recounted during the flap occurred to three girls and three unidentified men from Grand Forks, North Dakota. About 11.30 p.m. the girls—Becky Aanesstad, Becky Evanson, and Sylvia Hoialmen, all about 20 years of age—stopped their car near the Lincoln Park golf course to observe what they took to be a beautiful harvest moon, only to notice seconds later that the *real* moon was *behind* them. What they were watching was something for which nothing in their experience had prepared them. "It was a weird feeling", one of them noted later, expressing what must surely be an understatement.

Resting on the ground about a block and a half into the golf course, an unknown object "blinked black and white", revealing a transparent, circular shape. Miss Evanson said the UFO looked "just like the moon when it's huge and when real yellow—a clear yellow kind of". There was "something

.....moving inside like a silhouette".

Miss Hoialmen commented on alleged "little figures inside" which for somewhat vague reasons "could not be distinguished clearly".

Three men, none of whom the girls knew, told them they had been observing the phenomenon for about half an hour. According to Miss Evanson, "They said [they] saw this light in the sky. I don't know if they saw it come down. They talked as though they thought it came from the sky".

After five or ten minutes the girls decided to go to Miss Evanson's home to call the police. When they returned, the object had left. The men explained that one of them had run toward the UFO, but it "seemed like he never got any closer to it. All of a sudden he heard a bang, then a noise, and it just blew up....." The police could find no trace of the object, but later the girls talked with a boy and a girl on a motorcycle who had seen the thing. The cyclist stated that he had spotted a red light on top of the machine, and that when the light pointed toward one direction, "it looked like the object would bounce and roll in that direction".

"I can't believe it yet", one of the girls opined.

Halfway across the continent—near Mesa, Arizona—three astonished witnesses watched a large UFO hover near the ground. "Taking distance into consideration", said Mrs. Charles Biggs, one of the observers, "it looked as long as the Good-year balloon.....It moved, it wasn't stationary. It looked like it was glowing like white-hot metal. It moved up and down and then like in a square". The sighting occurred between 12.30 and 1 p.m. on the 9th.

Two days later, a huge object entered the atmosphere over Orange County, California, about 10 p.m. One witness, Mrs. Jerry Schultz of Fullerton, reported that the UFO "seemed to be descending" as if to land, "but after ten seconds it levelled off and disappeared". As it moved eastward, dozens of Californians saw the phenomenon. Among them were airline pilots who described it as a "large ball of fire with a tail". Apparently the same object passed over Arizona and New Mexico, finally disintegrating over the Rincon Mountains.

Unmanned monitors?

The smallest UFO of the flap, so far as is known, appeared near Woodinville, Washington, to Mrs. Herb Johnson of that city. As she drove home about 11.0 p.m., her attention was attracted to a round, glowing 18-inch object whose speed alternated between 10-15 miles per hour and very fast. "It was coming right at me about 20 feet in the air", she said. "When I turned off 228th, the object took an abrupt turn and crossed the road until it was directly above my car. It wasn't until I rolled the window down and looked outside that

it sped away. The object went straight up in the air and was out of sight in a split second". At one point, as the object was hovering over her car, she saw "a kind of X-shaped section near the back. It appeared that this is what powered the object".

Nearly identical craft, ostensibly unmanned "monitors", were later sighted in Wausau, Wisconsin (August 22), Ward Lake, Alaska (September 22), and Bexely, Ohio (October 16).⁵ The Wisconsin report adds the detail of a "burning sulphur smell", and its Alaskan counterpart "a whirring or buzzing sound, not shrill or screaming, but like a whip through the air.....'omnidirectional'".

What may have been physical evidence of UFO visitation fell on the lawn of a Texas, Maryland, resident on 10 p.m. of the 11th. Peter Tuczinski saw a brilliant flash over his home and then luminous metal particles rained down on his roof and lawn. After collecting some of them, he mailed samples to the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, whose preliminary report said the material was "not from a meteorite".

News of Kenneth Arnold

In the midst of all these goings-on, a reporter for the Minneapolis, Minnesota, *Star* interviewed the man who, in 1947, for good or ill, coined the term "flying saucer": Kenneth Arnold, now 50 years old and the president of a fire control company in Boise, Idaho. Arnold, though still a believer, maintains, rather incredibly, that "these things are not machines, but something alive that has enough intelligence.....that they are as aware of you as you are of them".

On the night of the 11th, the pilot of a chartered two-engine aircraft, Ray Hoffman, together with two passengers, was flying between Wilkes-Barre and Hazleton, Pennsylvania, when he sighted "a bright light, large in size and certainly not like any aircraft". He manoeuvred his plane until it was pointed toward the UFO, then followed it. When he had got within five miles of it, the craft suddenly accelerated and sped northeast "at a speed three times as fast as we could travel". Hoffman's plane was going about 230 m.p.h. at the time.

"We followed it toward Red Rock", he said, "and I had the throttle of my plane wide open..... and couldn't catch up with it.

"I'm very satisfied to believe that it was not any kind of reflection".

Two days later, two Renton, Washington, girls purportedly encountered three peculiar beings who may have been ufonauts, although they did not see a UFO. As they alighted from a car at 7 a.m. to work at a bean field, Ellen Grace Ryerson, 16, and Laura Jean Ryerson, 13, observed three "strange persons" who approached them and caused the girls

to flee. After running 50 feet, they looked back, only to see the "creatures" had disappeared. Telling their story to sceptical policemen and an amused newspaper reporter, they described the strangers as slightly less than 5½ feet in height, with "white tops" instead of hair on their heads, with very large pores and a large protrusion on the back of the head. The eyes were huge and protruding, and the faces held no expression. The beings sported purple armless v-neck jerseys with white shirts underneath, they said.⁶

On the afternoon of the 15th, Coast Guardsmen James Gilman and Claude Van Werry sighted a large, silver-coloured cylinder-shaped object streaking out of the sky and then hovering over a 340 feet television tower in Portsmouth, Virginia. It did not move for 30 seconds: finally it flashed away and vanished within seconds. Early the next morning—at 5.30—after a UFO passed over U.S. Highway 58, the engines of a dozen automobiles mysteriously shut off, then started again half a minute later.

Landing in New York State

Two landings—one in New York and the other in North Carolina—occurred within hours of each other on the night of the 19th and the early morning of the 20th. In the first, as 16-year old Harold Butcher operated a milking machine in his father's dairy barn near Cherry Creek, he heard the radio suddenly become blurred with static. Then the tractor which ran the milking machine stopped, and a Holstein bull tied outside began to bellow and tried to pull at the pole to which it was tied.

Running to the door, the youth was startled to see a large object, shaped like two bowls placed face to face, hovering just above the ground a fourth of a mile away. He hurried toward the UFO and was about 50 to 75 feet from it when it emitted a reddish vapour which "bounced" as it hit the ground, and then, after making a "beeping" sound, the machine shot upward into the clouds. Then Butcher heard an explosion—"like dynamite".

He telephoned the house, and when the other witnesses came outside, they smelled a peculiar odour in the air, and also noticed that the cloud into which the saucer had flown had begun to glow a greenish colour. The bull in its terror had actually managed to bend the bar that held it.

Half an hour later, the UFO returned, and circled the area, prompting Harold Butcher's mother to call the state police. Two troopers investigated briefly, and notified the Air Force. The next day, Captain James Dorsey, Operations Officer, 461st AF Group, and four technicians examined the ground carefully. Their findings: a purple liquid substance, burned grass and foliage, and small impressions in the ground two inches

wide and two inches apart.

A NICAP member managed to obtain samples of the liquid material and the singed grass, and submitted them to a chemical firm for study. "Spectrographic analysis", said its subsequent report, "showed the main elements of the liquid to be aluminum, iron and silicon. Some phosphorous was found in the weed samples, which.....might cause a phosphine smell, explaining the odd odour".⁷

(This was not the last UFO activity scheduled for New York state. The next night State Trooper Richard Ward sighted a saucer with eight portholes flying only a few miles from the Butcher Farm. A similar machine was in fact seen by Harold Butcher, Richard Butcher, 25, and John Butcher, 11, on the evening of the 23rd, as it rose out of a wooded area in which it seemed to have landed. The same night, three teenaged boys and an elderly man observed a "touch" landing near Kiantone. Another sighting, involving a near-landing, took place at Jamestown on the 24th).

The alarming Schumaker Case

Elsewhere, at 3 a.m. August 20, Mrs. T. E. Schumaker, visiting her mother near Mount Airy, North Carolina, was awakened from her sleep by a loud "humming" sound.

"I could hear the whirring noise of air and the air currents hitting the house", she later told a reporter for the *Winston-Salem Journal*. "I could hear the air in a pine tree near the window. I thought about what I should do. I rose and started to call my husband, but I couldn't speak. I couldn't move. I was frightened, but I don't think I was that frightened. I think it did something to me that prevented me from moving".⁸

After some effort she made it to the window, drew the shades, and looked outward to the northwest sky. There, rising at an angle from south to north, was a luminous cigar-shaped object. It stood on end at a 90° angle with the earth.

"It moved to the right, then to the left, then back, then up. Then it moved down and to the left and disappeared behind the trees along the driveway".

The next morning, when Mrs. Schumaker told her husband, he laughed—until he went out into the yard. In the back was a six-inch band of crushed grass running in a perfect circle exactly 12 feet across. The driveway, situated on a north-south line, was covered with leaves from a line of oak trees; the leaves still on the trees were in total

disarray, their pale undersides turned up.

The day before, it developed, a man in nearby Thomasville had reported seeing a metallic cylinder-like machine with purple lights hover 200 feet above the ground making sounds like those of a sewing machine. The witness estimated its size to be between 75 to 100 feet in length.

On August 21, a laboratory technician named James R. Peek, intending to film the Gemini 5 launch, found himself instead photographing an unidentified craft that "looked like a sliver of brilliant green phosphorescent light, just east of the contrail left by the rocket. It made a sort of S-turn in and around the contrail, became almost elliptical in shape as it turned, then changed into a clearly defined shape".

Some question has been raised concerning the authenticity of the report, in that so far as is known no one else sighted the UFO, which should have been quite conspicuous. Those who have viewed the film, however, concede that it shows *three* discs (two of them apparently unnoticed by Peek) going through the manoeuvres Peek described. At the time of writing, the movie is undergoing analysis.

During the week of the 22nd, a huge saucer hovered in the sky over Hyder, Alaska, for the incredible space of 8½ hours, first appearing at 2 o'clock in the afternoon and flashing away at over 800 miles per hour at 10.30 in the evening. Dozens of witnesses saw the phenomenon, and one of them, John J. Eckhart of *The Catholic Northwest Progress*, later wrote, "We were inexorably forced to the conclusion [that].....we had observed, and been observed by, something or someone in possession of a scientific technology that is as yet unknown on Earth".

NOTES

1. i.e., newspaper pictures. "It was impossible" the Air Force had already admitted to the Los Angeles *Herald-Examiner* (September 24), "to be absolutely certain about size or distance".
2. Prompting ufologist Robert J. Gribble to suggest a lie detector test for both Heflin and Major Quintanella.
3. *Saucer News*, December 1965 p. 18.
4. *The U.F.O. Investigator*, August-September 1965, p.2.
5. *N.I.C.A.P. Reporter*, (Gribble), December 1965, pp.4-5.
6. According to the Kent, Washington, *News-Journal*, the girls gave two different descriptions of the lower parts of the faces to police. "In one report the girls said the lower face appeared to be very tanned. In a report to the Washington State Patrol they said the faces were grey like stone". The implication is, of course, that the girls were lying, although the short duration of the incident and the excitement it generated in the witnesses might account for this contradiction.
7. *U.F.O. Investigator*, *op. cit.*, p.7.
8. Compare this with M. Dewilde's account: "I.....tried to yell, but I couldn't, it was just as if I had been paralyzed". See Michel's *Flying Saucers and the Straight-Line Mystery* (Criterion, 1958), p. 45.

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