

TWENTY YEARS BACK

by Brinsley Le Poer Trench

ON JUNE 21, 1947, three days before Kenneth Arnold's sighting which triggered off press publicity for flying saucers, another most remarkable one occurred at Maury Island, near Tacoma, Washington.

Harold A. Dahl, a harbour patrolman, was out in his boat near Maury Island with a crew of two men and his son. Dahl's dog was also in the boat.

Suddenly, Dahl, who was at the wheel, noticed what he later described as six very large *doughnut-shaped* aircraft. Each of the craft was at least 100ft. in diameter and each one had a hole in the centre, approximately 25ft. in diameter.

Five of these craft were circling very closely around the sixth one which was stationary in the centre of the formation. The centre one appeared to be in some kind of trouble and was losing altitude fairly rapidly.

Dahl had managed to manoeuvre his boat close to the shore. He was able to take some photographs of the objects. Meanwhile, the centre craft had come down to about 500ft. above the water. Suddenly, there was a dull boom and the centre craft disgorged a large quantity of white light metal pieces. This was followed by what seemed to Dahl and his companions as a hail of blacker metal which has a similar appearance to lava rock. Dahl's son had his arm injured by one of the falling fragments and another piece killed his dog.

When this extraordinary deluge of metal ceased, all six of the craft rose and drifted out to sea. The centre object which had dropped the metal did not seem in any way disturbed as the group moved away.

Subsequently, military intelligence officers investigated the sighting and one of them, a Major Sander, pronounced that the fragments alleged to have fallen on the beach at Maury Island were ordinary slag. Never-

theless, he made sure of taking specimens away for analysis.

Project Saucer, one of the predecessors of Project Blue Book, declared the Maury Island affair to be a hoax. However, there are some interesting points to be placed on record.

(1) The sighting occurred before that of Arnold, and Dahl would not at the time of the incident have heard of flying saucers. It is noteworthy, too, that throughout his account of the objects he consistently referred to them as "aircraft".

(2) Dahl described the aircraft as *doughnut-shaped*. Now this is very important. Neither Arnold's sighting nor any of those immediately following Arnold's referred to doughnut-shaped UFOs. However, later on this type were seen and photographed. Project Blue Book actually gave them the code name "Donut Lab"!

On Sunday, May 15, 1955, Warren Siegmond saw for a period of about a minute and a half a doughnut-shaped UFO over Union Square, New York City. He managed to take several photographs of the object which were reproduced in *FLYING SAUCER REVIEW* (July/August 1955).

Another well-authenticated sighting of a doughnut-shaped object occurred on September 21, 1961, when two Boeing 707s belonging to BOAC and Pan American, respectively, encountered it over the Pacific.

If you or I were going to perpetrate a hoax three days before Arnold's sighting, is it likely that we would pick on doughnut-shaped objects which had not then been publicised? I think that the two sightings referred to above (and there have been others) go a long way to establishing that the Maury Island affair was no hoax.

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