

# Opposition Flap 1965

WITH an opposition of the planet Mars impending, we knew we could expect redoubled UFO activity in the early part of 1965. The 1964 "South-Western flap" in the USA was heavy enough, and that was without an "opposition". There was no slackening off of reports from South America, and many other places, and we were also "in business" in the British Isles on many occasions. It was difficult, therefore, to imagine a stepping-up of intensity this year, yet we can now report that there has been a very pronounced new flap, particularly in the area of the Eastern seaboard States of the USA.

## Opening gambit

The first report was on December 21, 1964, from Roanoke, Virginia, where a UFO landed briefly and stopped the engine of a car.

Mr. Horace Burns, a gunsmith who runs a small business on North Main Street, Harrisonburg, was driving in his stationwagon on Route 250 towards Waynesboro' in the Shenandoah Valley. It was about 5 p.m. A huge metallic object came down out of the sky from the North, and passed over the road about 200 feet ahead of him. His car's engine stopped with an abrupt jerk, whilst the UFO landed lightly, "like a bubble" in a small meadow, at a spot some 100 yards from the road.

Mr. Burns pushed his car over to the side of the road and stood there watching in amazement. He says the UFO resembled an inverted toy spinning-top, some 125 feet in diameter, and at least 80 to 90 feet high. In addition to the general cone shape, he noticed that its circular sloping sides rose in six large concentric convolutions which decreased in diameter to a dome on the top.

It was beginning to get dark, but Mr. Burns saw quite clearly that the object was metallic. It looked like aluminium. All around the perimeter at the base of the machine was a glowing bluish-coloured band about 12 to 18 inches wide. He could see no doors, windows, or portholes, and no seams or joints. Nor did there seem to be any landing gear. The machine had gently settled "flat on its bottom on the ground", although the underside was seen to be slightly curved.

No occupants showed themselves, and the UFO stayed immobile for about 60 to 90 seconds. Then, with a "whoosh", it suddenly rose straight up for several hundred feet, and at once sped away towards the North-East. The departure speed was *much* greater than the approach speed (Mr. Burns

estimated that when it arrived, it had crossed the road before him at about 15 m.p.h.)

Mr. Burns at once got back into his car, and found that it started without difficulty. An amazed man, he drove home and told his wife, but was afraid to mention the affair to anyone else until six days later, when he and Mrs. Burns heard an announcement by the local broadcasting station, WSVB, that there was a UFO investigation club at the Eastern Mennonite College in Harrisonburg. Relieved, he told his story to the announcer, Jim Shipp, who passed the news on to the College. Members of the investigation group later called over to tape Mr. Burns' statement.

## Radioactivity

On Wednesday December 30, nine days after the landing, Professor Ernest Gehman of the Eastern Mennonite College set out to examine the landing area. He had with him a Geiger counter. It is interesting to note that Mr. Burns was to have gone to the meadow with him, but was prevented from doing so at the last moment by urgent business. He was therefore only able to tell the investigator which meadow to go to. Nevertheless, Professor Gehman swiftly found the precise spot: his Geiger counter registered radioactivity of over 60,000 counts per minute! At this point he was joined by a Mr. Harry Cook, a research engineer of Duponts, and another engineer, a Mr. Funk. These two men were able to confirm the findings, and they also established that when all three of them stood near the dial of the Geiger counter, their bodies seemed to shield out many of the rays, for the needle fell back considerably. From this they concluded that the radiation was of the *alpha* type; and not of the more dangerous *gamma* type.

We understand that a closely-typed six-page report was submitted by Professor Gehman to NICAP: he has also sent Mr. Gordon Creighton a copy.

## U.S.A.F. "Investigation"

On January 12, 1965, two Air Force sergeants arrived from Wright-Patterson Air Force Base. Mr. Burns and Professor Gehman went with them to the field, and the latter noted with pleasure that the spot indicated by Mr. Burns for the landing was the precise spot found by him. Despite much rain and snow during the preceding two weeks, the Air Force men's Geiger counter still recorded radioactivity.

Professor Gehman's report to NICAP is vitally

important, because it is in this that he describes in minute detail how the two servicemen contrived to brush off and deny this evidence. It happened like this: The two N.C.Os. were Tech/Sgt D. Moody and Staff/Sgt H. Jones. It is presumed that this is the same Sgt. Moody whose somewhat flippant attitude and personal rudeness had so startled Mrs. Coral Lorenzen and her husband at the Socorro investigation, (see A.P.R.O. *Bulletin* for May, 1964).

In addition to Professor Gehman and Mr. Burns, Miss Claire Weaver of the College UFO group, and a newspaper reporter witnessed the tests for radioactivity made by Sgt. Moody with his model 2586 Beta-Gamma Survey Meter. The checks were made at about 8 or 10 spots, and in each case, the sergeant had to kick aside some four inches of snow. On the first two tests, the needle of the meter was seen to start rising, whereupon the Air Force N.C.O. ejaculated, and made a swift adjustment of a control. As the needle sank back, he observed: "See, no radiation here!" On the third test, the meter was plunged too sharply into a clump of grass, a thin film at the end was punctured by stubble. The needle shot up, but after examination of the punctured film and another subtle adjustment, a further application of the meter showed no reading.

Despite this apparent "wangling", the two N.C.Os. seemed impressed enough to suggest that this would be one of those rare occurrences—where the Air Force is concerned—an unexplained sighting.

It has just been made known, furthermore, that many householders in the area of the landing reported serious dimming of lights, and the complete stoppage of radio and T.V. sets for several minutes around 5 p.m. on December 21.

Nevertheless, the final Air Force report, dated January 27, 1965, finds that there had been **no sighting of a UFO by Mr. Burns, no landing, and no radioactivity.** A typical observation in the report was that there was no evidence that grass and weeds had been flattened or broken over any large area by an object of significant weight. Yet during the "investigation", no attempt was made to remove the blanket of snow to look for such evidence. It so happens that the field contained good quality, mowed grass, with no clumps of weed and long grasses with brittle stalks.

#### 4,800 m.p.h. objects

The next development, it appears, was that on December 29, 1964, at Patuxant Naval Air Station, Maryland, two UFOs were tracked by radar at 4,800 m.p.h. They approached the station, and then veered off after doing right-angle turns. This report found its way into the pages of the *Daily*

*Telegraph*, and the London *Evening Standard*, as well as many provincial newspapers. Even so, it was January 6, 1965, before it appeared. This item was quoted in the STOP PRESS column of the January/February number of the FLYING SAUCER REVIEW.

When we learned that this case had been reported to the USAF for investigation, we ventured the remark that that was the last we would hear of it. As it turned out, it was not quite the last, for Mrs. Coral Lorenzen of APRO now tells us that the USAF has reported that the Naval radar equipment at Patuxent was found to be malfunctioning. "A likely story," observes Mrs. Lorenzen: "Equipment at important stations such as this is checked very frequently, and I think this is another attempt to explain away, as usual, a very good sighting."

On January 5, an engineer reported having seen a round glowing UFO over Wallops Island, Virginia.

According to the *Buffalo Courier-Express* of February 1, two men of Richmond, Virginia, who were travelling in separate cars, each reported having seen a UFO near Williamsburg on January 23. In the Waynesboro—Staunton area a farmer, a housewife and a high school student had also reported sightings on January 15.

#### Meeting claimed with extraterrestrials

Our next report has been translated from the GEPA bulletin *Phénomènes Spatiaux* for February, 1965. It was received by Mme. Ackerman of GEPA direct from a Mr. Richard Gooch, of Lynchburg, Virginia. The report states: "About the middle of January, 1965, a witness who does not wish his name to be revealed, was cutting timber [location not stated, except that it was in Virginia]. He saw two UFOs standing on the ground, between 5.40 p.m. and 6.15 p.m. There was no sound or light from either of them. One was about 250 feet in diameter, and the other about 65 feet in diameter. From the smaller craft, which seemed to be of glass or of some very brilliant metal, three beings emerged. They were dark coloured, but their clothing was of the same colour as their craft. They approached to a point only about 12 yards from the witness. Their appearance was human, though one of them had very long fingers. Their regard was penetrating, and they emitted unintelligible sounds. After a moment or so, they turned to re-enter their craft. A door opened, and closed again after they had entered, becoming quite invisible, and seemingly merging with the wall of the craft. The machine then took off and vanished and as it rose from the ground, its interior became lip up."

Unfortunately this report nowhere mentions the

size of the three beings, but evidently it was their faces that were "dark-coloured". It certainly couldn't have been their clothing, for the report clearly states that this was of the same colour as the machine, in other words "like a very brilliant metal, or glass."

### Sheriff's warning

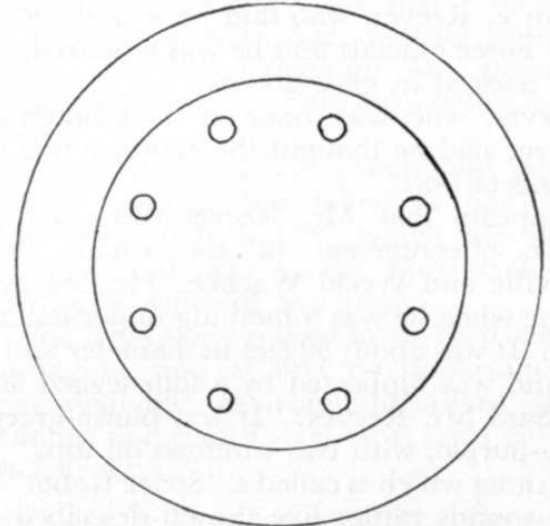
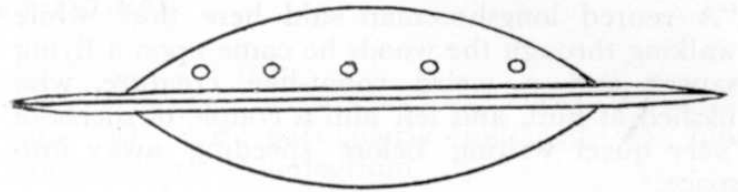
The last week of January seems to have brought a veritable rash of sightings from all over Virginia, and it was at this time that Sheriff John E. Kent of Augusta County, Virginia, made his famous request. It should be remembered that the sheriff was primarily concerned with people who were flashing firearms without the necessary licence. Apart from American newspapers, the *Daily Express* (January 30) and the *Evening Standard* of London, whose headlines read: DON'T SHOOT THE LITTLE GREEN MEN, and IT'S NOT RIGHT TO MOW 'EM DOWN, (February 3), both carried the report of the sheriff's appeal. It was the latter newspaper's item that we featured in the STOP PRESS column of the March/April edition of the REVIEW. The report went on to say that sightings were coming in almost every day from all over the State, and that in many cases people had said that they had seen "little Martians" walking around!

### The Marion Saucer

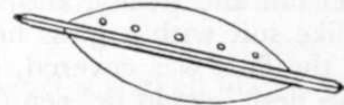
It was during this period, on the evening of January 26, at 8.55 p.m. E.S.T., that the Rev. H. Preston Robinson, assistant pastor of the Church of God at Chilhowie, Virginia, saw a flying saucer hovering at a height of about 600 feet above the town of Marion. In separate letters to both Dr. Bernard Finch and to Gordon Creighton, he furnished sketches which we reproduce on these pages. The machine was flying on a slant when it appeared, "nose down" as it were. It seems to have come from the West, and to have vanished towards the East just before the Echo II satellite passed over; it then returned and hovered over Marion. A row of five portholes was visible at a time on the upper part, and lights were shining down towards the ground from its base.

The Rev. Robinson makes no reference to the saucer's estimated size, but said that it made a sound which he describes variously as "buzzing", "swirling" or "fluttering". When in flight, and also when hovering, it was spinning in an anti-clockwise manner. Its passage through the sky was in much the same direction as the course followed by the Echo II satellite a few minutes later. When the UFO returned again after the passage of Echo II, it was at a higher altitude than before. Then, after hovering over Marion, it finally disappeared towards the East, dropping a sort of fire-ball, or bright red light to the ground as it went.

Artist's impression of the UFO seen over Marion, taken from sketches provided by Rev. H. Preston Robinson



Bright lights showing from underneath



When moving, UFO "flew" at an angle

Four other members of the Robinson family also saw this UFO.

Gordon Creighton has made the interesting suggestions that this UFO both sounds, and looks very much like the one in the famous "Brazilian photograph".

As regards the "little men", allegedly seen in some places, the Rev. Robinson writes that these reports are authentic, and accordingly, we have asked him to help us obtain first-hand accounts. It should be noted that Professor Gehman takes a different stand, for he doubts whether any of the "little men" were actually seen at all, and he seems to think that this group of reports, including presumably that of the three beings, are all bogus.

We had just reached this stage in the writing of this report when yet another sensational item reached us.

### "Space Robot's" manuscripts

The following account has been culled from a report which appeared in the U.S. Army weekly *Stars & Stripes*. Our extract does not bear a date, but as the report was from the UPI agency, we have ascertained that it went out on the tapes on March 3. Note that the locality of this incident was

in Florida, not over-far from Cape Kennedy, the space-vehicle launching base. The article carries the headline: FLYING SAUCER RIDER LEFT WRITING. It continues: Brooksville, Florida. "A retired longshoreman said here that while walking through the woods he came upon a flying saucer and a weird robot-like creature who flashed at him, and left him a couple of sheets of 'very queer writing' before speeding away into space.

"John F. Reeves, who said he is past sixty, told the Air Force officials that he was so scared, he just 'stared back at its glass dome'.

"Reeves, who was once a longshoreman in Brooklyn, said he thought the creature was taking snapshots of him."

It appears that Mr. Reeves came across the peculiar phenomenon in the woods between Brooksville and Weeki Wachee. He first saw the machine when he was something under half a mile from it. It was about 30 feet in diameter and 6 feet high, and was supported by a four-legged landing gear. Said Mr. Reeves: "It was bluish-green and reddish-purple, with two windows on top."

The thing which is called a "Space Robot" in the report, sounds rather like the oft-described entity wearing space uniform. Whatever it was, it was about five feet tall and stocky, and was wearing a grey canvas-like suit with a glass helmet. Everything except the face was covered, but it seemed that "dark tan flesh" could be seen (strange that a robot should have flesh). "The eyes were farther apart, and the chin was more pointed than in the case of a human being," observed Mr. Reeves, who continued: "It walked over to within about 15 feet of me, and looked straight at me. I just stared back at his glass dome. It didn't make a sound, and just stared at me. I just couldn't even blink an eye, I was so scared."

It was at this stage that the creature lifted a black, six-inch diameter object, (which Mr. Reeves thinks was a camera), placed it to its chin and pointed it at him. The object emitted a flash. As it flashed a second time, Mr. Reeves took off for the bushes. There was one more flash, and then the strange entity returned to its machine. As it went, it dropped two pieces of cloth-like paper. When Mr. Reeves later retrieved these, he found them to be covered with unintelligible writing.

After the so-called robot had entered the machine, the witness said that blades on the rim worked open and shut like Venetian blinds. "Then", he said, "The rim started going round in an anti-clockwise direction. There was a whistling and a rumbling noise, and the saucer started straight up. It was out of sight in 10 seconds. I would say it went at 5,000 m.p.h., or even faster."

Mr. Reeves gave the papers, which the creature

had left for him, to an investigating team from MacDill Air Force Base at Tampa, Florida. After talking to Reeves, the team visited the woods, and said later that they would report to Project Bluebook at Wright-Patterson AFB in Dayton, Ohio. It was stressed that the investigation was routine, of the type made whenever there was a report of an aerial phenomenon.

This article had already been written when we received a letter from Mrs. Lorenzen, in which she kindly gave further details of the Weeki-Wachee case.

The date of Mr. Reeves' encounter was March 2. The flashing instrument was carried at the creature's left side. It seems, furthermore, that the craft stood on four legs, with a round cylinder protruding from underneath. It was through this that the being entered his craft, and "little flaps" pulled up one at a time behind him as he climbed aboard.

We learn too that the gear retracted as the craft was just starting to rise. Markings left by the landing gear were very much in evidence. They were four inches deep and four to five inches across. Other tracked marks looked like figure eights and resembled those in the Zamora case at Socorro.

The "paper" was similar to face tissue, but very strong, and the "writing" bore a slight resemblance to Chinese (that could mean anything) and included many circles and dots.

#### Postscript

From the February number of *Phénomènes Spatiaux* we learn that Mme. Ackerman has had another letter from Mr. Gooch of Lynchburg. It was dated January 14. Mr. Gooch states that during the last two firings which at that time had been made from the Cape Kennedy site, "flying saucers grouped themselves in formation around the rockets as they flew, and in one case, followed the device through the whole of its trajectory."

Finally, but perhaps most important of all, it is to be noted that a £3,000,000 Atlas-Centaur rocket exploded on its launching pad (see *Daily Telegraph*, and other newspapers of March 5), just as it was about to "lift off" at Cape Kennedy. It had risen barely three feet when the two first-stage Atlas engines stopped, for reasons "yet to be determined".

If there is any truth in Major Donald Keyhoe's report about the UFO "pacing" of the unmanned Gemini capsule, and in the German report that the three Russian cosmonauts were forced down by a UFO, then in the light of this great new Opposition of Mars "flap", and with some concern about the reports of UFO interest in rockets, and about the tremendous accident at Cape Kennedy, we venture the suggestion that our relations with the Unknowns could well be entering a new and crucial phase.

C.B., G.C.