

# NATIONAL ENQUIRER

FEBRUARY 3, 1976

Amazed Air Traffic Controllers Watch as . . .

## UFO Tails Army Copter

By JOHN M. CATHCART

A brilliantly glowing UFO tailed a U.S. Army helicopter, hovered over an airport for 5 minutes, then suddenly vanished in a cloud of green exhaust — while three air traffic controllers watched in amazement from the ground below.

Four days earlier another strange craft swooped down in front of an auto, terrifying the 19-year-old driver and her cousin — then hovered above the cousin's house where the girls sought refuge.

These were just two of the most spectacular incidents in a wave of UFO sightings witnessed by at least 24 people in northern California.

"I've never seen anything like this before," said Maj. Claude Riddle, 40 — an 11-year National Guard copter pilot with more than 5,000 hours of flying time — in describing the UFO that tailed his chopper over Stockton, Calif.

Last August 14, Riddle was approaching Stockton Airport

at 900 feet when a traffic controller warned him on the radio to take evasive action.

In the airport tower veteran Federal Aviation Agency controllers Joseph Savage, Dan Long and John-Paul Ammirata, all with military backgrounds, watched the UFO with binoculars.

Long was the first one to

spot the UFO — at 9:35 p.m.

"Through field glasses, I could make out a definite form," he said. "The object appeared disc-shaped — like a flying saucer — and its body was radiating an intense orange glow."

Controller Savage said: "I saw these flashing lights closing in on the chopper on a collision course. I radioed the copter pilot and issued evasive orders. As I did, the object turned orange and shot up to 5,000 feet, where it hovered."

Maj. Riddle, meanwhile, looked behind him. "It appeared as if a strange light was tailing my chopper a mile or so away," he said.

"As I swung my copter around, I saw it shimmering like a diamond. It was as big as a jetliner. A tremendous orange glow radiated from the top, but the bottom was dark. From the sides came two blue beams, probing out from the fat oval shape."

The object drifted slowly over the airport for 5 minutes as Riddle maneuvered his chopper to keep the UFO in sight — but at a distance.

"I wasn't really interested in getting too close," Riddle admitted. "It scared me."

"Suddenly it turned bright red and blasted off. I can't estimate the speed. It was faster than anything I've ever seen. I've observed enough rocket launchings to know we have nothing that can compare to the speed of this thing."

"Seconds before it shot out of sight, a gray mist formed around it. This was followed by a blast of green exhaust which penetrated the cloud like you'd put your finger through a smoke ring."

Controller Ammirata, watching through binoculars, said: "In 5 or 6 seconds the UFO went up to 60,000 feet and completely faded from view."

Four days earlier in the town of Gilroy, 45 miles to the southwest, another craft terrified Mrs. Terry Smith, 19, and her cousin, Imelea Lugo, 12, as they were driving to the Lugo home about 11 p.m.

"All of a sudden, this objec-



VETERAN helicopter pilot Maj. Claude Riddle, who spotted UFO on his tail — "shimmering like a diamond and as big as a jetliner."

## . . . And California Driver Is Terrorized in Wave of Sightings



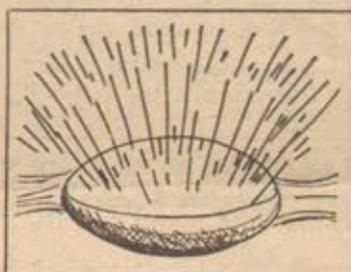
MAP shows areas where UFOs were sighted in northern California.

rushed down at us and took up a position ahead of our car about 50 feet above the road," Mrs. Smith, a housewife, said.

Mrs. Smith stopped, and as she and Imelea watched athen-faced, the UFO bobbed up and down. The two jumped out of the car, ran into the Lugo house 50 yards away and awakened Imelea's parents.

Mr and Mrs. Lugo rushed outside — and got the jolt of their lives.

"There, about 100 feet above the house, was this strange circular object with lots of



SKETCH of UFO by Maj. Riddle. The top glowed orange and beams at the sides were blue, he says.



WITNESSES Joe Savage (left) and Dan Long outside airport tower where they sighted UFO.

blinking red, blue and white lights around the center," said Jose Lugo, 45, an auto parts salesman.

"It was gray, at least twice as big as an automobile and had three legs sticking out, like landing gears with suction cups on the bottom."

Said Mrs. Lugo: "It just hung there in mid-air. It was so low I could see two square windows on top and landing gear like the tripods photographers use. The ship also had a row of metal panels on it that reflected the lights, giving it a gem-like quality."

After several minutes, the UFO disappeared, Lugo said. "Without making a sound, it moved fast toward the north. As it went, it skimmed the roofs of our neighbors' houses, clearing them just by inches."