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The
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THE MOST SENSATIONAL TRUE STORY EVER TOLD

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VISITORS *from the* VOID

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THERE have been signs, symbols and objects in the skies of earth described as snakes, swords, lights and rockets. Slow-moving so-called meteors have zig-zagged their way above the clouds, and stratospheric explosions have rocked the land below. Mysterious rays stopped airplane motors over the world's largest city as unidentified phantom planes puzzled the war departments of four nations. Ships and men were observed to drop from the heavens in isolated areas only to vanish.

This is the startling story of bewildering events that have occurred in the last few years. What relationship, if any, exists between these varied reports? Who or what lies behind them?

From Point Pleasant, W. Va., on Oct. 11, 1931, came the report that a blimp or dirigible was observed to have plunged to the earth in flames, men leaping from it in parachutes as it fell. There were many witnesses who stated that the crash had occurred in the hills south of the city. Observers at Gallipolis Ferry reported that the blimp had crossed the Ohio River and it had fallen while one man was watching it through field glasses. Described as being between a hundred and one hundred and fifty feet long, it was at an altitude of three hundred feet when it burst. White objects, believed to have been parachutes, fell with it.

Searching parties were organized. Nearby airports sent planes to assist in the all-day search. Officials at Akron, Ohio, announced that all naval blimps were safe in their hangars. And despite the extensive search and far-flung inquiries, not a single clue was turned up. The mystery remains—concealed somewhere in the West Virginia hills the solution to this puzzle is still a secret.

Then, slightly less than two months later, came a report from Hammonton, N. J. On Dec. 5, late in afternoon, an aviator was observed to fall in a parachute into the Folsom Swamp, one of the densest sections of bog and woodland in the southern part of the state, south of the city. Additional reports of witnesses came from Weymouth, a village on the other side of the swamp. Dropping from a high altitude, no plane had been observed or heard.

Led by state police, five local fire companies and witnesses, a small army of volunteers searched the swamp all night and all the next day. Airports throughout the eastern part of the country reported that all planes were accounted for. The long search was fruitless, but it was added that the swamp contains areas never penetrated before except by Indians.

A year later, on Dec. 29, 1932, it was reported that a large tri-motored airplane had been forced down in the woodlands eight miles west of New

Brunswick, N. J. Observers said that its motors were silent and that its lights were blinking when it disappeared behind the wooded hills. Time of the observation was close to midnight. Again the state police made an unsuccessful search, and again all planes throughout the east were accounted for.

These three reports were collected from the *New York Times* by David Markham, a member of the Fortean Society. According to Tiffany Thayer, secretary of the Fortean Society, Mr. Markham, who has been collecting material on maritime vanishments, has reached certain quasi-conclusions which he has asked him to *withhold temporarily as possibly too dangerous to make public*. My article "Strange Secrets of the Sea" presents the type of material referred to.

Oddly enough, these reports of men or airships dropping to earth and vanishing without a trace are not unique. The original records of the late Charles Fort contain several similar accounts. How many more lie buried in the files of obscure newspapers we can only guess.

ONE year after the New Brunswick report a mysterious plane appeared over New York City. On Dec. 26, 1933, the metropolis was blotted out from above by a snowstorm. The first telephone call to police headquarters was made at 9:30 a. m. and then the reports steadily increased. The plane could not be seen, but its progress was followed by the sound of its motor. Apparently the pilot was wandering blindly above the snow-shrouded towers of Manhattan in circles unable to find a place to land.

In the hope that the pilot had a short-wave receiver, the National Broadcasting Company tried to contact him. All airports were notified. Beacons and searchlights were lit. A ceiling of five hundred feet was reported at the Newark Airport. As the hours lengthened the ceiling rose, but the reports continued to flow in. Residents of Jersey City and the Bronx announced hearing the motor. By the middle of the afternoon, when the reports finally ceased, the visibility was set at a mile and the pilot could easily have landed at ports in New Jersey or Long Island, but all air fields in the Metropolitan area reported that there had been no flying during the day and no stray plane had appeared.

At this time a phantom plane was appearing over the Scandinavian countries. The first dispatch was released at Stockholm on Dec. 31, 1933, and it announced that Swedish army aviators had been ordered to chase a mysterious plane which had been sighted for several weeks over Lapland. Based, it was believed, somewhere in the moun-

tains, it has been making night flights, and had recently been heard flying toward Norway during a heavy snowstorm.

Another dispatch from the same city on Jan. 9, 1934, stated that the "ghost plane" had been observed over Westerboten in northern Sweden, and that the Swedish airforce had already lost two airplanes in efforts to locate the base of the mystery ship. A party of four men who had been making a ground search along the Norwegian border had vanished.

More dispatches followed from Helsingfors and Stockholm. There was speculation that the planes might be Soviet flyers making test flights to arctic icebreakers or exploring a new air route from Russia to the Atlantic. Soviet authorities denied that any of their planes were over the area.

On Feb. 3 a Helsingfors dispatch announced that "continued night flights over Northern Finland, Sweden and Norway by so-called ghost aviators which have caused such apprehension here as to prompt the general staff to organize reconnoitering on a wide scale by army planes all over Northern Finland still remain a deep mystery." Although there were a large number of eyewitnesses, the plane could not be identified.

The report added that mysterious lights over Helsingfors and Viborg had caused alarm, and that the large unidentified plane had been sighted over eastern Finland where aviation experts stated "that the mysterious flyers show exceptional skill, undoubtedly superior to that of northern European aviators." The appearance of a mystery plane, the first, over London is referred to in this dispatch, and it has been pointed out that this group of reports stopped about the time of the inferior conjunction of Venus (Feb. 5, 1934).

But in March, 1935, an object described as "a large shining form resembling a gigantic snake, wriggling forth in the northwestern sky" appeared for half an hour in the early evening over southern Norway and Denmark. As observed at Grimstad by a correspondent for the *Tidens Tegn* (Norway), it had four or five curves marked off by shadows, and was in a vertical position with its "head" down toward the earth. The vision was clear. There were no clouds, and it was very brilliant. The Stavanger *Aftenblad* for March 26 published a complete description of the appearance and sketches of it made by the artist Naesheim who was a witness.

A similar object appeared three times over the city of Cruz Alta, Brazil; twice in December, 1935, and again in July, 1937. On its last appearance the "snake" had its "head" toward the earth, the head appearing as a ball of fire. In passing it might be added that there were reports of "swords" and "coffins" in the sky over the Polish-German border in 1937, but details regarding these reports are not available to the writer at this time.

Then came the mystery ray stopping airplane motors over New York City. In a Universal Service dispatch dated May 24, 1935, written by

Lou Wedemar, it was announced that pilots had asked the Department of Commerce to investigate a supposed radio ray which was stopping the motors of planes flying over the city. The planes while flying over the central part of Manhattan had experienced puzzling engine trouble. In aeronautical circles the belief had spread that some sort of short-wave had been developed by an unknown experimenter which affected the motors at which it was aimed.

Motors went suddenly dead without apparent reason, and careful examination by expert mechanics failed to reveal any reason for the phenomenon. Several disasters had almost occurred as the "magnetism" did not pass off for some time, and the planes had to be brought down to emergency landings. One example cited was the near-disaster of a cabin plane piloted by Michael Stupelli which was forced to land in the East River while carrying three passengers.

This report, too, is not unique. In October, 1930, forty automobiles were stalled for an hour on the road between Riesa and Wurzen in Germany. All motors mysteriously stopped. But earlier, in the summer of 1923, and south of this road in Saxony, Germany, French aviators reported the mysterious stopping of motors near Furth while they were flying from Strasbourg to Prague. It was believed that a German experimenter was practicing on French airplanes with newly-discovered rays. If so, his secret was never used in the late war.*

ON THE night of Nov. 24, 1935, a "flaming sword" was observed in the heavens between Palestine and Dallas, Texas. Dr. J. D. Boon, professor of astrophysics at Southern Methodist University, stated that no comet or stellar phenomenon of any kind had been scheduled to appear. One witness, a newspaper editor, described the appearance as "a narrow, bright shaft of light, absolutely stationary and vertical, an exact replica of a sword."

In February, 1936, the "phantom light of Ringold" (near Pasco, Wash.) was reported. It was a mysterious light, drifting widely and often along populated highways where it had caused motorists to drive into ditches, and many citizens of high repute had sworn to its authenticity. It vanished when approached, and all efforts to find a plausible explanation resulted in failure.

A ghost scare in a mine near Bishop, Va., was reported in dispatches of Jan. 18, 1937. Officials of the Pochahontas Fuel Company, owners of No. 34 Mine, were trying to lay the scare that had caused

* This is not true. Your editor has an eye-witness account of six B-17s crashing in the Siegfried Line, coming down without a shot being fired, all of them crashing because of a simultaneous cessation of the motors. This incident was broadcast over the American radio by a news reporter, but did not appear in any paper of the same or following day that he knows of—nor was it mentioned again on the air. It can only be assumed the information was suppressed for security reasons. It has also been rumored that German authorities have denied that they knew of such an ignition-stopping ray, or of the plane crashes mentioned.—Ed.

more than a hundred miners to desert the pits. The mine was believed haunted. For several months there had been reports of mysterious moans, shrieks, slamming of doors, and a phantom form that followed the men.

On the night of July 20, 1937, a mysterious plane was observed hovering over the Hendon Aerodrome and the heart of London. There were many witnesses. The Air Ministry was puzzled, and its investigation was fruitless. Two nights later the British steamer *Ranee*, while 500 miles off Cape Race, sighted a "mysterious plane" flying eastward. No trans-Atlantic flights were being made at the time. No planes had been reported missing. According to the crew of the vessel, two "navigation lights" were visible on the craft.

Mysterious blue flashes appeared in the southern sky of Sussex, England, on the evening of Oct. 2, 1938. These flashes were followed by a "sudden rift in the sky where a most beautiful blue-green radiance shone. Through this there appeared to drop a fiery body, vivid and lovely, which disappeared in a second. After this there was only one faint flash."

In December, 1939, another sky visitation came to Finland. According to the Finnish *Evangeliskt Vittnesbord*, the phenomenon took place close to midnight. It lasted for about a half hour. Beginning as a ball of fire which grew larger, the appearance changed from a red to a brilliant white color as sudden rays from the eastern and western horizons merged. As the light spread, a shining object, resembling a huge human-like figure, appeared for a few moments at the point where the rays merged. Then, slowly, the vision faded into the night leaving the spectators silent and bewildered.

A large light with a tail, resembling a comet, was observed in Transylvania in September, 1943. It was visible for five minutes. Witnesses reported that the head dissolved and the tail took the shape of a scimitar before vanishing.

On May 10, 1944, press dispatches told of a strange light in the sky at Mexico, Mo. A number of residents had observed it. Like a large kite moving up and down, from side to side, and sometimes almost in a circle. It was located in the northeastern sky at approximately a forty-five degree angle, visible in the early evening hours.

June 27, 1944—Brilliant red and green meteor over Cass County, Ind. A witness near Kewanna stated that it flashed across the road just above the telephone wires. Bright green with a tail of red sparks. But this object was merely a mild forerunner for the real puzzler that arrived less than two months later.

It came in the early morning hours of August 18, and so amazing were the varied reports of its appearance that astronomers in Chicago said that it was "man-made." The apparent ball of fire was visible above eastern Illinois, Indiana and western Ohio. All the reports are conflicting, and rumors of robot bombs, explosions and plane crashes followed in its trail. War plants were

checked by military authorities. It moved too fast for a plane, and too slow for a meteor. Its size was given variously, some of the reports stating that it was too large to be an airplane. It followed a zig-zag course, from west to east and from south to north. It "screamed through the air," and rattled windows. State police were besieged with calls. There were a dozen reports of its fall to earth at widely-scattered points, but with one exception no traces were found. The exception is Lyons, south of Danville, Ill., where a piece of stone about eight inches long was said to have dropped from the flaming ball. It resembled "petrified wood."

From Tierquin, Ireland, came the story of a large luminous ball, larger than the moon, moving slowly west in the sky in January, 1945. In April a light was observed at Jefferstown, Ky., in the midnight sky. In was over Fisherville, to the east, size of a large cantaloupe, glowed and receded in brilliance like a heart throb, casting its light like a lampshade over the town. After ten minutes it vanished. On May 4 in the early morning there was a flash of light and an explosion reported over six states. Visible for three seconds. Buildings shaken.

At 7:30 p. m. on the evening of June 1, 1945, something whizzed through the sky over Morganton, N. C., traveling northwest. Tubular in shape, shiny, gleaming in the light as if covered with aluminum, five or six feet long, with a blue flame spurting from its tail. It disappeared in the vicinity of the mountains near Lake James and shortly later an explosive sound was heard.

Near Morganton is Brown Mountain, scene of mysterious lights since the Civil War that are so puzzling that government geologists have conducted fruitless investigations. In my files is a long article on the Brown Mountain mystery that appeared in the *Literary Digest* for Nov. 7, 1925. These lights are about the size of a toy balloon, vary in color, move about, and appear and disappear abruptly.

The last report of a mysterious aircraft in the Scandinavian area came from Vaesterbotton, Sweden, on July 9, 1945. Its shape resembled that of a bird. It moved at great speed going south over the city at about 10,000 feet altitude. "If it was a plane, it was one the like of which the Swedish General Staff never had seen before."

Late in the afternoon of Nov. 29, 1945, a flaming object exploded and then transformed itself into a ball of fire over Modesto, Calif. It was visible throughout the San Francisco area, and was observed moving away northeast at a speed of about 800 miles per hour at an apparent low altitude. But before we decide that is was merely a freak meteor, we must add that according to the *Oakland Tribune* "it was reported sighted in western Nevada a full five hours after it was first sighted at Oakland."

No, meteors do not linger or hover in the skies of earth, nor do they resemble rockets or airplanes.