

The Flying Saucer Mystery

(By MARK McDONALD)

One fateful day during the lazy American summer of 1947 an Army airfield deep in the heart of Kentucky was suddenly alerted! Radar screens had picked up a signal corresponding to that of an aircraft moving at incredible speed toward the field! The signal was baffling, for the airfield was nowhere near the normal commercial air routes and no Air Force planes were in the vicinity! All pilots were ordered to stand by while radar technicians watched the tiny signal move across the screen toward the field!

As the pilots waited in their planes for the intruder to appear, the tension grew with every second! Perhaps this was to be the spark that would set off the third world war; perhaps it was some super Russian jet carrying some horrible weapon for the destruction of the United States! Perhaps this was it!

Suddenly from the west it appeared! The pilots turned their eyes skyward as it shot overhead! It was a disc! Blue grey in colour, it travelled soundlessly, and left no vapour trail!

Captain Thomas Mantell, a fighter pilot with the U.S. Air Force, swung his plane on to the airstrip and rolled forward. Soon he was airborne, and with throttle wide open he roared in pursuit of the strange craft! A few minutes later his first radio report was received; he had sighted the stranger, and was in fast pursuit, gaining rapidly!

"I'm closer now," he said at last "I can see it quite plain-

ly; It's made of metal, and it's a tremendous size!"

Mantell went on to report his speed, and that he was now climbing. At 15,000 feet his speed was approximately 350 miles an hour, and he was directly below the object. Mantell's voice broke through the screaming atmospheric again, "I am going in for a better look!" Suddenly the radio fell silent, Mantell did not re-establish contact. They found his plane scattered miles of the Kentucky countryside! Mantell remains the first and last man to chase a flying saucer!

All this happened in 1947, when saucer reports were at their peak, since then hundreds of reports have turned to thousands, while reports which once came from U.S.A. only, now cover the entire globe! Since 1947 a Flying Saucer Investigation Committee has been set up in the United States to deal with the flood of reports that deluge Army, Navy, Airforce and Government authorities!

Flying saucer reports are not exclusive to this crazy post war world, for even as far back as 1882 an English astronomer E. Walther Maunder reported, "a strange celestial visitor." On November 17, 1882, Maunder was watching an aurora die, after a violent magnetic storm. Suddenly "A great circular disk of greenish light appeared in the E.N.E. Smoothly it moved from horizon to horizon, taking about two minutes in transit. It's round initial appearance was probably due to foreshortening," Maunder continued, "when it crossed the meridian and passed just above the moon, its form was almost of an elongated ellipse. Various observers spoke of it as, cigar shaped, like a torpedo, or a spindle or shuttle!" "Its height

shaped, like a spindle or shuttle!" "Its height was estimated as 133 miles, its speed as 10 miles per second, much slower than the average of bolides." (Bolides are giant meteoric chunks of stone or nickel-iron whose speeds have been clocked as high as 50 miles per second). Maunder's account of his "celestial visitor," certainly resembles reports of more recent years. The next report on record comes from American newspapers in 1897. Late in March of that year U.S. newspapers from coast to coast gave front-page space to a huge, cigar-shaped "air-ship" supposed to be cruising around Chicago. Then from California came the description of a "cigar-shaped object, with no motive power, certainly not steam;" it was first reported from Sacramento, then Denver, Colorado. On March 29, according to the New York Herald, the same object was seen "by a majority of the residents of Omaha, Nebraska." "It was the shape of a bright light, too big for a balloon." The New York Sun stated that Kansas City trolley cars stopped, and soon the whole population was watching it from the street and roof-tops. "The light," the newspaper went on was, "as great as that produced by twenty stars."

Stories poured into the Chicago Tribune. "Reputable citizens (of Eldora, Iowa) say they observed the gigantic air-ship. One man said it resembled an immense bird of polished silver." In Milwaukee "thousands of people saw it. The machine floated over the city until it reached directly over the city hall, where it stopped for quite a considerable time." Some witnesses claimed, "the light was suspended from a large, dark, oval shaped body."

Another report came from the British barque "Lady of the

the British barque "Lady of the Lake" in 1870. Just before nightfall on March 22, 1870, the vessel was moving in mid Atlantic, a few degrees over the equator, when Captain Frederick Banner and the crew observed a curious cloud, light grey in colour, circular in form and transparent, but distinctly defined. It came up obliquely against the wind, turned at a right angle into the teeth of the wind, and "finally settled down right in the wind's eye" before it was lost in darkness. An extract from the ship's log later published in the "Quarterly Journal of the Royal Meteorological Society," reproduced the Captain's sketch. Strangely enough the sketch bears startling resemblance to the saucer drawings made by

supposed witnesses in the United States in recent years.

The final reports come from an American naval Lt., Frank Schofield who reported the affair of three meteors sighted on February 28, 1904. He claimed, "the leading meteor, which had the area of about six suns, was egg shaped. The smaller seemed round. They appeared to be travelling in echelon, and so continued as long as in sight. The subsequent flight away from the surface appear most remarkable." The other report came from Canada, across part of the United States to Bermuda. Right across this area, people reported sighting flights of "furnace-red bodies" which emerged from the horizon in V formation, took a perfectly horizontal path, and "simply disappeared in the distance." It was later reported, "many observers compared them with a fleet of airships with lights on either side and forward and aft: others likened them to

on either side and foreward and aft; others likened them to great battleships attended by cruisers and destroyers." In 1932 after many years research into strange reports Charles H. Fort concluded that super-creatures from somewhere in space have been visiting our Earth for centuries. Whether his theory is right or not the old reports he investigated certainly resemble the stories we read in our newspapers from day to day.

Today the term "flying saucer" has been accepted as a part of everyday life, yet it still has not been scientifically proved or excepted! Numerous theories have been presented, but none have been satisfactory. U.S. Naval authorities claimed they were weather balloons used to determine long range forecasts, other experts were firmly convinced they were Russian or American jet planes. An American journalist even wrote a book, in which he made the startling statements that he knew what they were, and their origin! He then went on to tell his story of how these fantastic objects came from outer space, controlled by "super bee's," ants and other insects with brains far superior to human beings! Although generally considered unfounded bunk, his theories were nevertheless quite interesting!

At various times newspapers have published actual photographs of flying saucers, the best coming from Brazil, where two newspaper reporters saw and photographed a flying disc over the remote district of Ilha dos Amores. Another group of photographs came from a sixteen year old youth in Nevada. This series of photographs revealed the mysterious saucer in very different circumstances; this time there was an entire flight of saucers all flying in perfect formation. They ap-

pearances at night. Observers were prompted to keep a night long vigil with the lad. True to his word the lights did appear, and none of the watchers could explain them adequately!

Saucer reports are not restricted to the United States, they have been sighted in Canada, England, France, Germany, Italy, Brazil, South Africa and even Australia! Most of the reports received have been similar in their description, even to small details withheld by authorities appeared in many new reports! Last year the very conservative R.A.F. released an account of two jet pilots who sighted a flying saucer over the North Sea. Both pilots gave chase to the saucer but it shot away from them at such a speed that it left the two pilots in their Vampire jets hanging in space as if stationary!

In Australia, airline pilots on the routine flight to Brisbane reported seeing a strange aircraft, "shaped like a cigar." In

Sydney, 11 ex-servicemen and 17 other people reported seeing "a luminous cigar-shaped aircraft," over the Northern suburbs soon after 6 p.m., May 6, 1952. Recently reports of strange objects "shaped like cigars" have been received from Wahroonga and Taree. An engineer familiar to jet aircraft sighted the Wahroonga mystery at 6.10 p.m. on July 15. He said, "the object was travelling in a straight line from west to east, and disappeared seaward. The yellow light it carried was three or four times as

ward. The yellow light it carried was three or four times as big as that of a jet exhaust at such an altitude, and the speed of the object was about three or four times that of a jet," the engineer concluded.

A Taree report on the same day claimed residents saw a cigar-shaped object travelling at a "terrific speed" just before dusk. Both these reports baffled R.A.A.F. experts who said that all jet aircraft were out of the sky by 4 p.m.!

Residents of Batlow (N.S.W.) reported sighting balloon like, spinning objects which were luminous and appeared seven times between May 18 and July 6 of this year. The objects were high in the sky, and glowed red as they moved backwards and forwards at high speed! These reports bring the flying saucer mystery very close to home, indeed!

In 1952, two scientists at a Government research station at Malvern Hills, England, reported seeing "a strange circular object with a halo," about 1.30 a.m., May 9. They said it was about 2,500 feet above the earth!

In Washington on July 29, 1952, civil aviation radar operators reported mysterious objects—up to twelve at once—on radar screens in the early hours of the morning. They appeared to be travelling from 90 to 150 miles an hour. There was no official explanation.

Now here is how two reliable American airline pilots, Captain Clarence S. Chiles and Pilot John B. Whitted, described their encounter with a flying saucer. They were flying over Montgomery, Alabama. It was 1.45 in the morning—a bright moonlit night with scattered clouds. "Suddenly," reports Captain Chiles, "a brilliant fast-moving object appeared overhead. It flashed down to-

overhead. It flashed down toward us. We veered to the left. It veered sharply too. It passed about 700 feet above us. The thing was about a hundred feet long, cigar-shaped and wingless. It was as bright as a magnesium flare. Its exhaust was red-orange, flaming. An intense glow came from the side edge and ran down the entire length of the fuselage—like a fluorescent factory light. The thing zoomed into the clouds at incredible speed. Its jet wash (from its rear flames) rocked our Douglas DC-3 airliner."

That was Captain Chiles' and Pilot Whitted's signed statement. They were "utterly reliable men," said Captain Eddie Rickenbacker.

1952 was a year of constant saucer reports, one of which came from a scoutmaster, Mr. S. J. Desvergers of West Palm Beach, Florida, U.S.A. Desvergers investigated flashing lights on the edge of the Florida everglades. He claimed he found an object 10 feet high, 30 feet wide, shaped like a rubber ball. As he approached, the object shot "a ball of fire at him," singeing his hair! Scouts with Desvergers said they saw him fall down after a "reddish-white ball of fire, like a Roman candle came down from the sky!"

Desvergers said later, that he and high ranking Washington officials were "substantially" in agreement on what the object was, but he refused to say more!

The most amusing report of them all came from Racine, Wisconsin, U.S.A. The local Journal-Times of that town reported that a Racine man told the story of a "mammoth space

ship" which did not land on his farm. In an interview with a reporter the eyewitness gave

a reporter the eyewitness gave the following account: "I got out of bed and raised the window shade. Suddenly it dawned on me that I couldn't hear or see a thing unusual outside. There was no ear-splitting crash nor any blinding flash of light. Looking toward the North I could see no sign of a circular-shaped space ship about 60 feet in diameter. It would have been about 14 feet high, I figure, if I had seen it!

Pulling the shade down quickly, I climbed back into bed. I could see right off that no one would believe me, anyhow, so I'm not going to tell a living soul anything about it!"

While these and similar reports continue to pour in from all over the world, there is still no really tangible proof of their existence. Nothing has been scientifically proved, although "flying saucers" have been scientifically considered for eight years at least.

The most important contribution toward final proof of their existence are the photographs taken by two newspaper reporters in the Ilha dos Amores district of Brazil. The two men, Ed Keffel and Joao Martins were doing an illustrated feature for their paper "O Cruzeiro" in May 1952. It was about 4 o'clock in the afternoon when a strange aircraft shot into view from behind a hill. One of the men automatically lifted his camera and took a picture. Both men realised that was no ordinary aircraft; in the first place it was a disc! Completely forgetting the original assignment, the two men rushed back to their office in Rio de Janeiro and developed their film. Brazilian and American experts were called in to examine the prints. They could offer no explanation, but they were convinced that the pictures were authentic!

that the pictures were authentic! The U.S. Military Attache in Washington, Colonel Hughes was among the first to examine the precious pictures, and at his request, copies were sent to Washington! Keffel and Martins said the strange craft was about 3,000 feet up, and twice the size of a Douglas DC-3 transport plane.

Flying toward them, the object looked like an ordinary plane head-on, but flying sideways. At one point in its brief appearance, the craft appeared to slow down and drop a little. As it banked the watchers had a brief glimpse of a dome on top, smooth contours and terrific speed!

The pictures taken by Keffel and Martins were proven authentic, the negatives had not been tampered with, and were vouched for by all the experts who saw them. Also the saucer in the pictures was identical to eye-witness accounts of them from different parts of the world.

(The concluding portion of this article in which Mr. McDonald sums up the question of whether flying saucers exist will be published in next issue).