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BUZZED BY UFOs

TV crew films plane 'attack'

SYDNEY: An Australian TV news team has "captured" on film a group of UFOs which buzzed their plane at 4000m over the sea.

The 10-minute footage was today described as among the most extraordinary ever taken of unidentified flying objects.

"They're chasing us," television journalist Quentin Fogarty shouted to his crew as 16 large pulsing lights buzzed their plane.

But Channel O Melbourne cameraman, Dave Crockett, kept his viewfinder on the night scene of terror over New Zealand.

Channel O's chief of staff, Neil Fuller, said today: "What we have on film is most extraordinary."

From The News bureau

Fogarty's team were recreating a recent similar sighting in the area during their encounter on a flight from Wellington to Christchurch then back to Blenheim.

Mr. Fuller was told by Fogarty later the UFOs were oval-shaped with multi-colored flashing lights around their centre.

Oval shaped

The station has already refused a bid by a major U.S. television network, CBS, to show the footage before its screening in Australia tonight.

Wellington's flight control radar screens monitored the UFOs for more than three hours as they touched speeds of 1,600 km/h.

"He told us they all were very frightened as the things tracked then buzzed their plane," Mr. Fuller said.

Captain Bill Startup, who has been an airline pilot for 23 years says: "There was definitely something there, all right."

●Cont. Page 12

●From Page 1

"We were on a routine flight 25 miles south from Wellington when we saw five or six lights at different angles. Their presence was confirmed by Wellington radar.

"We landed at Christchurch and took off from Blenheim. Then came the most spectacular experience of all.

"We were at 4,000 m and flying over the sea. Suddenly there was this bright, very bright, light. It was like a sphere all lit up. It wasn't shining in our face like a searchlight, but the light was reflected on the sea."

In October a Melbourne pilot, 20, Frederick Valentich, and his Cessna plane, vanished in Bass Strait south of Melbourne after he reported being chased by a UFO.

Valentich radioed that an object was orbiting above him.