

corridor. For a minute I stood there, weighing what he had said. The Pearl Harbor mystery, whatever it was, must have been dramatic. And if a space base were really circling the earth, it was tremendously important.

There might be nothing to the satellite report even though the captain had seemed convinced. Yet it could easily be true. To swing one of the large mother ships into an orbit would be no problem. We ourselves had already worked out the calculations. In a few years we hoped to have small experimental satellites, a foot or two in diameter, circling the earth under electronic control. (This was planned long before the announcement made by the White House in July of 1955.) In ten to 20 years we might have true space bases, from which rocket ships would take off for the moon and the solar-system planets.

In Russia and other countries plans for the first tiny artificial "moons" also were under way. But all of these ideas were still in the planning stage, with launching and propulsion problems still to be licked.

With such small satellites as these still only on the drawing boards, the discovery of a full-sized space base could have but one explanation. The unknown race which controlled the flying saucers was stepping up its reconnaissance of the earth.

If it were true, our government would be doing everything possible to locate and identify the space base.

But it was not until six months later that word of the armed forces' satellite search leaked out in New Mexico. Because of this leak, the Pentagon hastily admitted the "sky-sweep" project. The search was headed by Dr. Clyde Tombaugh, discoverer of the planet Pluto. (Oddly enough, Dr. Tombaugh was the only famous astronomer who had ever admitted sighting a saucer. In 1951, with other witnesses, he had reported seeing a strange oval-shaped craft—

"some unknown kind of ship"—flying faster than any jet aircraft.)

To prevent public alarm the unknown satellites were called "moonlets"—which were explained as strange natural objects supposed to be circling the earth.

The fears of what this unidentified satellite might be were carefully kept hidden. To the UFO censors the discovery of the space base was far more ominous than most of the flying-disc reports. Most of the saucers were considered to be harmless. But the American people had been warned, officially, of a satellite's destructive power.

One of the first warnings came in 1948, when Defense Secretary James Forrestal announced the Earth Satellite Vehicle Program. The Pentagon then also confirmed a Nazi scheme for a deadly "sky platform." Revealed in Germany after World War II, the plan was based on designs by Professor Hermann Oberth, a world authority on space-travel plans.*

In 1929 Oberth had designed a space base to orbit the earth every four hours, circling 600 miles out. By means of an enormous concave mirror, assembled from sections of metallic sodium and controlled from the space base, the sun's rays could be sharply focused on the earth or spread out by adjusting the mirror sections.

In friendly hands, Oberth said, it could control the weather, melting certain ice fields and evaporating water in other areas. By broadly reflecting the sun's rays during our normal night hours, it could even provide artificial daylight.

But as a weapon, Oberth warned, the giant sun mirror would be diabolical. By concentrating its force, whole cities could be burned to ashes. Water in reservoirs could be

* Professor Oberth, Rumanian-born, author of *The Rocket Into Interplanetary Space*, is now working in this country under contract with the United States government.

either dived in like a bat out of hell or gone to pieces in the air. There wasn't the slightest reason for it. The plane had just been inspected and was in perfect shape. The Trans-ocean pilots say it's a complete mystery to them. They also say that Air Force Intelligence was in on it and the CAB has clammed up."

Stone stopped, looked at me.

"Well, what do you think?" he said.

"I don't know, Ed. The radio messages certainly sound queer. But the green fireballs—could they have been flares sent up from one of the life rafts?"

"Absolutely not. That raft inflated itself *after* the wreck. From the condition of the bodies and the wreckage, nobody could have lived for a second—no matter how it occurred."

"I'll ask Caperton about this," I said. "I hope to heaven it wasn't caused by one of the missiles. That Kimross thing was bad enough, and we know that was connected with the UFO's."

Stone stood up. "I don't want it to be true either. But if there is any danger I think pilots should be told, especially when they're carrying passengers."

As Stone turned away, I went over to pick up my flight reservations. I was flying to Canada that morning. The green fireballs were missiles, I had no doubt about that. But why should one be aimed at an airliner? It would be just wanton destruction. . . .

Two days later, at North Bay, I talked with Flying Officer William Scott, in charge of the RCAF Filter Center. Scott told me he took the flying-saucer reports seriously.

"We've received several for which there is no normal explanation," he said. "Whatever the UFO's are, they're worth our serious consideration."

The next day at Ottawa I met W. B. Smith, head of Canada's flying-saucer Project Magnet. I had known Smith

since 1950, when he told me that Project Magnet reports indicated the saucers were interplanetary. During my visit Smith showed me the Shirley Bay flying-saucer observatory. The equipment included an ionosphere reactor, an electrical device for measuring sound, a gamma-ray detector, and a gravimeter.

During my visit I told Smith what I had learned since we last talked.

"There's one thing that bothers me," I said. "Remember, in 1950 we thought the saucers must be remote-controlled—that is the ones which made such sharp turns and speeded up so fast." I told him about the Pearl Harbor report. "This creature which the Navy pilot saw must have been able to withstand a terrific number of g's." (One g equals the normal force of gravity.)

"There have been some new developments," said Smith. "I still believe the discs are using electromagnetic power. Besides the earth's magnetic field there are tremendous forces in space which could be tapped. It has been proved now that the sun is a magnet like the earth. Undoubtedly all suns and planets are surrounded by magnetic fields. There are millions of volts in the cosmic clouds of space. This has been proved by the cosmic-ray bombardment of the earth's atmosphere."

Smith paused. "The new point is this. The discs may create their own gravitational field—that is, they could nullify the pull of the earth's gravity. If this is true, then living creatures on board could withstand sharp turns and swift accelerations. Actually, they would feel nothing unusual, for the force propelling the discs would apply simultaneously to every object and every being aboard. They could turn sharply at 5000 miles an hour and never know it."

But for Smith's background and his important position with the Canadian government I might have discredited the idea. The "anti-gravity shield" had been used as a device

in hundreds of science-fiction stories, but I had never taken it seriously. As a pilot I knew of the powerful G forces in even such ordinary maneuvers as pulling sharply out of a dive. More than once I had felt myself rammed down in my seat with my vision blurred, though I had never blacked out completely. The idea of a violent turn at 5000 miles an hour, without even feeling it, was fantastic.

Smith looked at me with a dry smile.

"Don't take my word for it. Ask some of your scientists down in the States—that is, if you can get them to talk. I think you'll find your government is working feverishly on it."

"Well, it is hard to believe," I said. "If it's true, it would certainly change the entire picture."

"Part of the picture," said Smith. "For instance, you might have a being from a planet like Jupiter, where the gravity is two and a half times the earth's. Such a creature would be accustomed to tremendous gravitational pull. Here on earth if he took a step, he might bounce 30 or 40 feet in the air, the way you might do on the moon if you didn't wear weighted shoes. But in a space ship the gravitational field could be made identical with that of any planet. So your Jupiter 'man,' or a creature used to a very light gravity like Mars, wouldn't feel any effects at all."

"Could there be any other effects?" I asked.

"Yes. There's one that ties in with the saucers' silence, why there's no sonic boom when the saucers go through the sound barrier."

"If they're fairly high," I said, "you wouldn't hear a boom anyway."

"Yes, but if the discs do have their own gravitational fields, then you wouldn't hear a sound at any altitude."

"Why?" I asked.

"Because the saucer wouldn't hit the sound barrier with a hard impact like a plane. Instead, the air close to it would

be dragged along with it by the gravitational field. So there would be a cushion of air molecules around the saucer when it came to the barrier. Beside this, I believe there will be a corona discharge ahead of the saucer caused by the electromagnetic propulsion. This would lessen the transmission of sound waves."

Next day at the Department of Transport Building I had a brief talk with Deputy Minister Baldwin. He told me that flying-saucer sightings were classified by the Canadian Defense Research Board.

"I'm surprised they didn't keep the Shirley Bay Station under wraps," I said.

"Perhaps it would have been better," said Mr. Baldwin. "It received more publicity than anyone expected."

Mr. Baldwin refused to tell me his opinion of the saucers. "However," he said, "this Shirley Bay Station may give us the answers. At least we're making a serious effort to learn what the saucers are."

After leaving Baldwin's office, I wondered whether I should have asked about the Kimross case, since Canadian flyers had been involved in the search. Instead, I decided to question Smith. As head of the telecommunications section, in charge of radio and TV monitoring, he was naturally an expert on radar.

First, I put it up to him as a hypothetical question.

"Suppose you saw the blips of two aircraft—both at the same altitude—suddenly merge on a scope. What would you think?"

"Obviously the two planes collided," Smith answered promptly.

"If someone told you," I said, "that the two blips were actually from objects miles apart, what would you say?"

"I'd say he didn't know anything about radar," Smith replied. "Why? What's this all about?"

Frank hesitated. "No, I'd like to have more on it first. But I'll cover everything else: the satellites, the moon discoveries, the sudden clamp on the Mars Committee report, along with all the key points of the past year. I'll call you in a couple of days to look over the final script."

"Frank, if this doesn't kill the blackout, nothing will!"

"The Air Force will *have* to talk," he said. "I privately sounded out some other commentators and a couple of wire service boys I know. They all say they'll carry it. They say it's bound to be a front-page story."

That evening, as if by perfect timing, a press report from Germany gave Frank a final punch story. Hermann Oberth, the great rocket expert and space-travel authority, had just announced his belief that the saucers were space ships. Like Air Marshal Dowding, he said he was convinced we were being visited by an advanced race from another world.

For two or three days I waited to hear from Frank Edwards. Finally he called.

"Don, it's happened," he said. "I've been muzzled!"

"*Muzzled?* You mean the Air Force—"

"I don't know. George Meany told me I'd have to have a censor at my elbow every minute."

"They must have found out about the special broadcast."

"You're probably right, though there were some other angles too. The Air Force isn't the only agency that wanted me silenced."

"Did Meany mention the saucers specifically?"

"Absolutely. He told me I was not even to mention them, except to quote press wire reports. Even then I couldn't comment on them."

"But the press wire stories have almost died out!"

"That's what I told Meany. He said, 'Never mind, that's an order, and there will be a censor at your elbow to see that you carry it out.'"

"What are you going to do?"

"I'm going to resign—that's all I can do. They knew that when they pulled this censor trick."

But though he was temporarily silenced, Frank had not abandoned hopes for his special broadcast.

"I'm talking it over next week with another network," he told me.

Then a strange thing happened. The Pentagon offered Frank a mysterious hush-hush job.

"On what?" I asked him.

"All they would tell me was that it was terrifically important. They said I'd be helping to prepare the public for something. I *know*," he said, "it sounds like the saucers, but would they actually get me off the air and then give me this? I'd be of bigger help to them on the network."

"It sounds like a trap," I said.

"I'll soon know. I'm to call this general back tomorrow."

It was two days before I heard from him again.

"I just got back from New York. That network backed down on the flying-saucer deal. I think they were told to, because at first they were all for it."

"What about the Pentagon offer?"

"I think it was an attempt to gag me," Frank said shortly.

"This general told me I'd have to sign a two-year contract. During that time I couldn't broadcast or publish a word on any subject without their permission."

Before he hung up, Frank added: "You better watch your step, Don. Those guys are playing for keeps."

14 The Burning Road

Three weeks after Frank Edwards went off the air, I made a date with Lou Corbin for a conference in Washington. When he called me from Baltimore, I told him the inside story about Frank.

"They may try to stop you too," Corbin said.

"I know that, but I've got to take that chance."

Corbin and I had been planning a meeting for some time. Then four new developments speeded it up.

On the 12th of August the Air Force had quietly declassified AFR 200-2. The Pentagon rumor was that General Twining had forced this action. The declassification was obviously linked with the Navy's July 23 directive, but there was no way of proving it.

Soon after this the British Air Ministry had reversed its policy on the BOAC case and refused to offer any further comment.

This was quickly followed, on August 23, by a news story that jarred the UFO censors. Quoting *Aviation Week*, the AP revealed the discovery of two unknown satellites. The satellites had been labeled, however, as "natural" objects:

"Pentagon scare over the observance of two previously unobserved satellites orbiting the earth has dissipated with the identification of objects as natural, not artificial, satellites," the article said. "Dr. Lincoln La Paz, expert on extrater-

restrial bodies of the University of New Mexico, headed the identification project. One satellite is orbiting at about 400 miles out, while the other was tracked at 600 miles."

Through the AP, Dr. La Paz had immediately denied the story, even refusing to admit any connection with the satellite search. But *Aviation Week* was no fly-by-night magazine. I learned they had carefully checked the facts. I had a strong suspicion that Dr. La Paz had been told to plant the "natural object" story to offset rumors of orbiting space bases, and he had retracted his story when *Aviation Week* unexpectedly disclosed Pentagon fears over the two satellites.

The fourth incident, on September 1, came in the form of a brief announcement by Deputy Minister Baldwin in Canada.

The Shirley Bay flying-saucer observatory had been closed, he said, because no flying saucers had been recorded.

Corbin and I met at the Willard Hotel in Washington. Until then he had been to me only a vibrant voice from Baltimore. He proved to be a stockily built man, somewhere in his thirties, with an easy smile and a quick efficient manner. Over a luncheon table he produced a formidable list of questions.

"What do you know about the La Paz story in *Aviation Week*?" he said. "Why did he deny it?"

I gave him my opinion as to why it had been retracted.

"I have a hunch you're right. Anyway, I'm going to try to get the satellite answer tomorrow. Captain Howard T. Orville will appear on my program tomorrow. As you know, he's the head of the President's Weather Control Commission. I've talked to some astronomers privately, and they say it's almost impossible for two natural objects to come in like that and start orbiting the earth. I'm going to put it up to Captain Orville."

I jotted down the broadcast time as Corbin looked at his question list.

"You know W. B. Smith, the Shirley Bay Project chief," he said. "Is that closing announcement on the level?"

"I doubt it. Smith wrote me last month that they'd had a startling gravimeter reading on August 8. He said the sky was overcast so he and the staff couldn't see what caused the needle to jump. But he's positive there was a space ship overhead."

Corbin's heavy brows went up.

"So the Canadians are covering up too? Well, one final question for now, and then I've got something for you. What do you think of this burning-road mystery in California?"

The burning-road incident had occurred in Woodside, California, on August 28. At four o'clock in the afternoon farmers living near Portola Road heard a loud explosion from some unknown source. Immediately afterward a 270-foot section of Portola Road's macadam surface was found ablaze. The fire was originating from dozens of strange metal pellets.

Half an hour later, when firemen reached the scene, the surface of the road was almost boiling under the intense heat. Later, Fire Chief John A. Bolpiano tried to pick up one of the pellets. But even then—45 minutes after the fire had been discovered—the metal was too hot to handle.

The burned area was in precisely the shape of a rectangle, 70 by 270 feet. Mystified, Fire Chief Bolpiano notified the Air Force and the Army, but Intelligence officers and demolition experts could not explain the cause of the fire. A suggestion that a jet plane's turbine had exploded and showered the road was quickly abandoned when a check showed no jet had had such an accident.

For almost two days Intelligence officers and scientists admitted they were baffled. The fragments of the mysterious pellets were taken away for analysis.

Then suddenly an answer was made public—an explanation as fantastic as the mysterious fire itself.

According to the story given the press, a tar bucket had fallen from a truck and shattered, the fragments of hot metal starting the fire.

"I just don't believe it," I said to Corbin. "A fall from a truck couldn't possibly shatter the contents of a tar bucket over 270 feet. It would have to be dropped from a height of at least 100 feet. Even then the pieces would scatter in a circle, not in a rectangle. And no tar bucket ever got hot enough to set that road on fire."

"Okay, it's a cover-up," said Corbin. "Then what really caused it?"

I shook my head. "I don't know, but it sounds as though it must have been intelligently directed to make that rectangle."

"Even so," said Corbin, "there's no proof it's linked with the saucers."

"Let's hope it isn't . . ." I replied.

Corbin paused for a moment. Then, "I have a strange report for you," he said. "There was a jet crash near Chesapeake Bay about two weeks ago. It was a queer thing. While a crash boat searched for the pilot's body, its captain sighted a UFO overhead. Right after that the pilot of an F-51 search plane bailed out, after yelling on his radio that he had hit something and was spinning around.

"As you know, I've got a lot of Air Force contacts, so I heard about this next morning. Now here's the queer part. The pilot's squadron commander swore he'd hit another F-51 in mid-air. Yet even though the first F-51 was almost demolished, this squadron commander said the other fighter had only a few scratches on it. When I called to ask him about it, he refused to let me talk with either pilot. 'It's a classified inquiry,' he snapped and banged down the phone."

"You think they may have put a few scratches on an F-51 just to back up the story?" I asked.

"I won't say that," replied Corbin. "But it's certainly a peculiar affair."

The next day Corbin followed his plan to question Captain Howard Orville about the satellites. Captain Orville, a retired U. S. Navy officer, was warned that his answer would be recorded. Corbin asked:

"Do you know of any condition under which two such objects could enter the earth's atmosphere and pick up orbits 400 and 600 miles out?"

"No, not that I know," answered Captain Orville. "Your doubts are well justified."

"If there are two bodies circling," Corbin went on, "then they would be unnatural, or not natural?"

"If that should be true," replied Orville, "military security would prevent discussion."

After reminding the captain that his replies were "on the record," Corbin asked: "Then it's not impossible that the two bodies, if they are there, might well be space stations?"

"Well, that's an interesting thought," Orville responded. Then he amplified his first answer. "I don't know of any set of circumstances that would account for two bodies orbiting around the earth."

"But we still have the puzzle of *something* circling the earth?" Corbin persisted.

"Yes—yes," Orville told him.

When word of Captain Orville's statement reached the Pentagon, the UFO censors expected a big news break. But this time luck was on their side. Apparently none of the Baltimore papers had caught the broadcast.

"I could have tipped off the papers," Corbin told me later, "but I didn't want Orville to think it was a frame-up."

For two weeks after this there was an odd lull in saucer reports. Then, in mid-September, the UFO's returned in full force.

At 9:00 P.M. on September 18 one of the strange green

fireballs streaked over the Southwest, frightening thousands of citizens. Racing at about 20,000 feet, the brilliant green missile threw a weird emerald glow over Colorado, New Mexico, and parts of Texas. At Albuquerque the AP reported that the mysterious fireball had fouled up radio and TV transmission, rattled airplanes flying through its trail, and "scared the wits out of many New Mexicans." Skies were reported to have been as bright as day when the missile flashed overhead. Blinding as a searchlight at its greatest intensity, the object left a luminous cloud visible for 30 seconds.

Dr. La Paz, the foremost expert on the green fireballs, confirmed the queer radio and TV interference.

"This was no ordinary meteorite," he said. "It was something unusual."

Like all the other green fireballs, the strange missile had silently exploded without leaving a trace.

Two nights later at Knoxville, Tennessee, a large disc and two smaller ones were sighted as they flew overhead in formation.

The same night another three-disc formation was seen at Ionia, Michigan, by two amateur astronomers, William R. McLaughlin and Clark Burgeon. Both believed the unknown machines were under intelligent control. Identical sightings at Caledonia and Grand Rapids were also reported to Air Defense.

At approximately the same hour an oval-shaped saucer was sighted near Ramore, Ontario, by Constable Florian Giabowski of the Ontario Provincial Police. As he watched from his patrol car, the saucer seemed to disintegrate in a shower of brilliant particles. The constable's report was confirmed by a pilot flying in the same area. Immediately after the incident an odd blue rain began to fall. Samples tested later by the Defense Research Board proved to be moderately radioactive.