

with several other witnesses observed the strange markings.

At Professor Thompson's suggestion, Manning asked the United Press to notify Harvard Observatory. But bad atmospheric conditions at Harvard prevented a clear view of the moon.

Unknown to Manning and Professor Thompson, the UP at New Orleans had put the story on its wires.

"Maybe it was just a coincidence," Manning told me months later, "but the next day or so a Navy captain and a couple of Intelligence officers showed up. They asked me who else saw the 'road' and a lot of other questions. They were all dead serious.

"Finally I asked what was back of all this. Up to then I hadn't called the line a 'road'—that was the UP story. So I asked the Navy captain why they were upset, if they thought maybe someone was on the moon. But they wouldn't tell me anything."

The UFO censors had good reason to be upset, for Manning's discovery could lead to exposure of the secret moon studies. So far, though several big observatories, including Palomar, were making secret observations for the government, nothing had become public. But many so-called amateur astronomers were highly experienced, and the dramatic moon-bridge announcement by Dr. H. P. Wilkins had caused hundreds of telescopes to be focused on the lunar sphere.

Early in March Dr. Wilkins had reported another surprising discovery on the moon, close to the mysterious bridge. The new discovery, he announced, was the existence of a wide ravine with vertical sides and a perfectly flat floor. This discovery, said Dr. Wilkins, was almost as surprising as that of the bridge.

"That they should exist side by side is astonishing," he added.

In view of his broadcast in December, stressing the artificial appearance of the bridge, this was as far as Wilkins

could go without flatly saying these were engineered structures.

Shortly after this, in his new book entitled *Our Moon*, Dr. Wilkins revealed his belief that a vast system of caves existed inside the moon. This huge network, he said, probably extended 30 miles below the surface.

Dr. Wilkins' assertion could not fail to suggest one startling conclusion: that an intelligent race might exist, unseen, inside the moon.

When I reached home I found a puzzling report on the Utah crater incident.

When operations began on May 3, Dr. La Paz had told reporters they would excavate until they found what had caused the crater. "If it's a meteorite," he added, "it must have been a whopper."

Three days later operations were abruptly ended. The following statement was issued:

"In the region from Clarkston to Paradise, numerous persons saw or heard the explosive phenomenon at midnight on May 1. The testimony thus obtained, and material evidence recovered as a result of subsurface investigations, has disclosed that the crater was not produced by a conventional meteorite fall. For these reasons operations have been discontinued."

But no hint was given as to what *had* caused the crater. Nor would Dr. La Paz explain what type of "material evidence" had been recovered.

Quickly rumors began to fly: It was a bomb from outer space . . . an American secret missile had gone haywire and almost crashed into Logan . . . a strange rocket ship had blasted off after landing, its exhaust-jet causing the crater.

Any one of the three would be serious. But to me the most sobering thought was that of an outer-space missile.

That it was an American missile seemed unlikely. The Defense Department would have known what caused the crater

and La Paz would not have been rushed to the scene to search for the answer. It would have been easier, simpler, to call it a meteorite and fill in the hole.

As quickly as possible, I checked several Washington contacts who would talk to me off the record. None had heard what caused the Utah crater. But they did fill me in on other recent developments. . . .

On May 4 three policemen at Canfield, Ohio, had sighted a saucer glowing orange-red as it raced out of sight. The following night another group of saucers had been seen over Cincinnati. On May 6 at Heppner, Oregon, a V-formation was seen racing silently across the noonday sky. According to Albert Lovegren, one of the witnesses, the machines were round and slightly "domed" on top. They were flying between 1200 and 1500 mph, with a typical oscillating motion. They seemed to be at least 125 feet in diameter.

That very night two flying saucers reconnoitered Washington, causing a hasty Air Defense alert. Shortly after midnight two UFO's suddenly appeared on the radarscope at Washington Airport Control Center. Speeding in from the northeast, the strange machines made a sharp turn, crossing almost above the Pentagon, and then disappeared toward the south. Forty minutes later, at 1:27 A.M., and again at 2:08 A.M., the saucers reappeared. Each time the mystery ships vanished before Air Defense fighters could approach them. Seen from the Washington Airport tower, and by Airport police, the UFO's showed clearly as large, round objects glowing with a peculiar bright light.

Next day Navy radar near Washington picked up a huge object maneuvering 90,000 feet—about 17 miles—above the capital. Before it disappeared it was tracked down to a 15-mile level—still too high to be seen from the ground. Meantime word of the airport night sightings had been "leaked" to the *Post and Times-Herald*. At first both the CAA and Bolling Air Force Base denied the sightings. But after Wash-

ington Airport police disclosed the incidents, the Air Force confirmed them.

All these reports were climaxed by one that occurred on the 14th of May. About mid-afternoon a 16-saucer formation was encountered near Dallas, Texas, by four Marine jet pilots. Flying at 15,000 feet, Major Charles Scarborough first spotted the formation as it raced in above his fighter. Amazed—he had been a complete skeptic—Scarborough hastily radioed the other pilots. An instant later Captain R. L. Jorgenson, flying at 42,000 feet, sighted the discs below. Calling orders to the other pilots, Major Scarborough climbed swiftly toward the saucers. A second later, diving steeply, Jorgenson and Major E. C. White tried to box the discs between Scarborough and his wingman, Captain Charles Stanton. But with a sudden burst of speed the 16 discs raced from under the diving jets. Still flying in formation, the strange machines vanished.

Though the official report was secret, the UFO censors knew the story might leak out if ham operators had heard the excited pilots' radio "chatter." If the story broke, it could be hard to explain away. Ridiculing the Marine pilots would be dangerous, as General Manly had proved.

But what could they say? No one would believe four Marine pilots had had simultaneous hallucinations. To call the saucer formation a "flock of geese" would be equally ridiculous.

The Dallas sighting was still being kept from the public when the following story appeared on the UP wires:

"Amarillo, Tex., May 15—(UP)—Gen. Nathan F. Twining, the Air Force's Chief of Staff, said today that the Air Force has the best brains in the country working on 'the flying saucer problem.'

"Twining said that about 90 per cent of reports of flying saucers are pure imagination. But the Air Force can't explain the other 10 per cent.

"We just don't know about that 10 per cent," he said. "If they are from Mars and there is a people and a world that far ahead of us, I don't think we have even to worry about it."

"So far," he said, "no facts have been uncovered to show that there is anything to flying saucers. But," he said, "some very reliable" persons have reported flying objects that can't be identified."

"We are certainly working on the problem and are not discounting all these reports," he said.

"Twining spoke last night at an Armed Forces Day dinner at Amarillo Air Force Base."

For months many of the public had had the impression that the UFO investigation was only a small-scale project carried on by two or three low-ranking investigators. Now it was plain that Project Bluebook was mainly a receiving unit for UFO reports, with a large force of scientific consultants, engineers, and Intelligence officers working behind the scenes.

On Monday I was scheduled to fly to New York for a talk at Larchmont that evening. Before leaving I called Captain White and asked about Twining's statement.

"We can't comment," said White, "because we don't know what the general said."

"But it's on all the press wires—"

"They sometimes get things wrong," White broke in. "It wasn't a prepared official statement. He probably was just talking off the cuff."

On a hunch I called Henry Brennard.

"What White told you is the official line," said Brennard. "Twining's office says he will have no further statement."

My talk that night was given before a church group in Larchmont. Because of the religious aspects of the saucer problem, I had been a little uneasy. But no one in the audience seemed concerned at the thought of other inhabited worlds. However, several of the audience later asked me

about the published claims of contacts with space men. By this time there were several of these incredible stories in print, none with a shred of acceptable evidence. In my opinion they were hoaxes, delusions, or stupid practical jokes—and I told this to the audience.

Later I discussed this with John Du Barry, a personal friend whom I met after the talk. Du Barry, a former *True* editor, had helped me with my first UFO investigation.

"I don't say there haven't been contacts," I explained. "The Air Force may have secret records of communications or even landings—but I'd have to see proof to believe it."

Du Barry nodded. "So would I. As to these stories, I think they're mostly cheap fakes. Some of them have already been exposed."

"It's an easy formula. Anybody can claim he has met a space man at some secluded spot, or even ridden in a space ship. If he picks a time when nobody can prove where he was, no one can call him a liar."

"What troubles me," said Du Barry, "is the number of people who accept such faked stories. I've talked with a number of them—intelligent people, some of them successful in business—and they really believe it. At least I can see they want to—"

"That's just it, John, they *want* to believe it. I talked to the doctors and staff of Waterbury Hospital at their annual banquet in February. And a psychiatrist there gave me his explanation. He said all these 'contact' books describe kindly space people, beings like ourselves, who come from wonderful worlds where there are no wars, no struggles for existence. They have all the answers—the keys to a perfect life. No diseases, no hard work, just an ideal existence, lasting for hundreds of years."

"I get it," said Du Barry. "What these books are offering is an escape from all the troubles here—the H-bomb threat, financial problems, sickness, and so on. I can see how people

would seize on it and hope the UFO race will save them. But it's a cruel hoax."

"Of course, it could happen that way. But it would be worse than a cruel hoax if they turned out to be dangerous creatures."

Flying back to Washington the next day, I remembered my conversation with Redell. He might prove to be right. But I still clung to the idea Arthur Clark had expressed: that advanced space races would be wise and tolerant beings who long ago had abandoned all conflict. Perhaps it was idealistic. After all, what did we really know about the mysterious creatures who controlled the flying saucers?

11

Breaks in the Blackout

Thus far the secrecy policy had paid off. Apparently convinced that the Air Force was telling the truth, the AP and most of the other wire services seldom ran flying-saucer stories.

But on May 31 the spell was broken. When a glowing disc was sighted by the control-tower operators, commercial pilots, police, and residents of cities from Spokane to Portland, Associated Press put the story on its wires. Officers at McChord Air Force Base finally confirmed the report.

Next morning another wire story broke as the crew of a Trans-World airliner sighted a saucer north of Boston. The Paris-New York plane was approaching the city when the UFO raced overhead. Calling Logan Airport in Boston, Captain Charles J. Kratovil reported that a large, bright disc-like object had just passed above his ship. Moments later eight men in the Logan Airport tower also sighted the object.

If this story were to be killed, it had to be done quickly. But Captain Kratovil would be hard to silence—his radio call to the tower had not been an official CIRVIS report.

When Kratovil landed at Idlewild Airport, he was handed an Air Force statement. What he had seen, Kratovil was told, was actually a weather balloon from Grenier Air Force Base in New Hampshire. At the same time this convenient explanation was released to the press.

couleurs. "If we could one day conclude there was activity displayed by reasoning minds on Mars, what a prodigious upheaval it would cause in human thought!"

We have not demonstrated, he added, that life could *not* adapt itself to the conditions of atmosphere on Mars, which, after all, are not so different from our own.

After quoting Dr. Vaucouleurs, the *Australian Post* commented:

"This is not only a learned probe for academic information. It is also a hunt for possible enemies from space."

This nation-wide publicity on Mars had raised serious questions when a humorous "space man" story gave the Air Force a break.

According to the author, he had seen a saucer land at a remote spot in New Mexico. As he cautiously walked toward it, a voice came out of nowhere.

"Don't touch the hull, pal, it's still hot."

Guided by the unseen voice, the author said, he had gone aboard and been whisked to New York and back at 8000 miles an hour. During this time the operation of the saucer was explained to him by the unseen space man—who said he was talking by remote control from a mother ship outside our atmosphere.

Reading this fantastic story, I thought of all the hidden official UFO reports—serious accounts by veteran Air Force, Navy, and Marine Corps pilots who had met these mysterious ships. For months now every effort had been made to hide these serious reports or to ridicule the pilots when the stories broke. But here on the front page of a national newspaper was this far more incredible tale, its author treated much less rudely than some veteran airmen who had reported encountering saucers.

When this story appeared, the Air Force refused to comment. Apparently they hoped it would be taken as a typical saucer tale, and thus help to nullify the serious reports.

But the effect was quickly offset by Frank Edwards' latest broadcast, which reached millions of people.

For a long time the silence group had taken Frank's broadcasts in silence, hoping to avoid an open fight. But his exposé that night was the final straw. His next step might be to tell the public of the moon and satellite discoveries. If possible, Frank Edwards had to be silenced.

Two days later I saw Frank in Washington. He had a worried look.

"I've been asked to come to the Pentagon for a private talk. I was approached through Charlie Corddry, the UP man at the Pentagon. He said an Air Force general would give me the inside story on the saucers."

"You mean for broadcast?" I exclaimed.

"No, it's to be off the record. That's what bothers me."

"Don't do it," I advised him. "Insist on having a witness and a signed statement that everything is *on* the record."

Frank nodded a sober agreement.

"Confound it, I'm not trying to needle the Air Force just for laughs. This is a serious business. And I think the public should know. Unless the Air Force can show me I'm wrong, I'm going to keep on."

As I drove home I wondered if the Air Force had ever complained to Frank's sponsors, the American Federation of Labor. No other commentator on a nation-wide network had tried to expose the secrecy policy. Most of them, accepting the Air Force statements at face value, either ignored the saucers or joked about the sightings.

That evening Frank called me.

"That Air Force 'talk' is dead. No on-the-record discussion with a witness."

"Did you find out who the general was?"

"No. Whoever he is, though, I have a hunch he was trying to gag me."

For several days I had been trying to get together with

Redell. We finally met on June 7, two days before I was due to fly to Buffalo for my last lecture of the season. At the Madrillon Restaurant we found a corner table, and I told Redell about Frank Edwards and the silence group.

"If you were in their shoes," he said, "you'd try to stop him, too, the way things are popping."

"You mean the increase in sightings?"

"No. I meant the latest discoveries about Mars. I think there may be proof it's inhabited."

I stared at him. "What kind of proof?"

"Slipher has already sent one report from Africa." Redell looked over at me solemnly. "The canals are artificial."

A couple passing by looked at Redell curiously. I waited until they were out of earshot.

"How did they find out they were artificial?"

"Some of Slipher's pictures, and others taken at Lowell Observatory, prove the canals follow great-circle courses—you know, the shortest distance between two points on a globe. If they were rivers they'd meander all around the way ours do on earth. No natural waterway could follow great circle courses like that. Also, the artificial network connects up with a lot of those dark areas which Percival Lowell called oases."

"Then this proves it!" I said. "Mars is inhabited."

"Not so fast," said Redell. "Whoever built them may have died long ago. The whole race may have gone. The canals may be filling automatically as the polar caps melt."

"But there's even a better chance that Mars is inhabited. No wonder the silence group is worried."

"I think the Mars Committee has learned a lot more," Redell added. "Lowell Observatory is using a new electronic camera. In some ways it's far better than the 200-inch at Palomar."

This camera, Redell told me, had been developed at Johns

Hopkins University where the work had begun several years before.

"I don't know exactly how it works," Redell told me. "But I do know that it amplifies even a faint light that ordinary cameras would miss. The image shows up two or three thousand times brighter than on the ordinary telescopic camera plate."

"Couldn't they use that on the satellites orbiting the earth?"

Redell looked at me oddly.

"The satellite—the other has either changed its orbit or is outside of our tracking range. At least they've lost sight of it—"

"Could it be down lower, closer to the earth?"

Redell hesitated. "I don't know. I simply heard that they'd lost it. Their tracking gear isn't fully developed, so it could be a mistake. That's why this new electronic camera can't be used on the satellites just now. It would have to be connected with special apparatus that would track the satellite at the same speed it was moving."

Before we separated, Redell showed me a Scripps-Howard story which had appeared that day. "Interest in flying saucers has reached the ho-hum stage," Captain White was quoted as saying.

"Look at the last part," said Redell.

I read the final paragraph:

"Radar operators at National Airport, who startled the nation in 1952 with reports of strange objects seen on their screens, saw several again recently. But a check revealed what they saw was a plane practicing landings at nearby Andrews Field."

"That's ridiculous," I said. "None of those CAA radar controllers could be fooled like that."

"Well, you know what it means. They've tracked saucers

ting admission, the trick answers given the *Collier's* writer, and then repeated Colonel Milani's demand for an end to secrecy.

For the second time in two days the harried Air Force PIO's were caught off guard. Colonel Milani's attack had been bad enough. But O'Mara's ill-timed slip could be ruinous. There was only one thing for the Air Force to do: brand it as false.

Newsmen were told that Frank's report had no foundation, that O'Mara had made no such statement. To date, the Air Force angrily repeated, 1954 sightings had averaged less than 18 a month.

Undoubtedly, Intelligence by now was burning the wires to Dayton, ordering all ATIC officers, including O'Mara, to keep mum about the prodigious increase in UFO sightings.

Apparently under Colonel O'Mara's instructions, an official answer was released by Captain Charles Hardin of Project Bluebook:

"Colonel O'Mara's words were misinterpreted," Hardin told the editors of a flying-saucer publication. "What he meant to say was that if all the sightings were reported to the Air Force, they would total about 700 a week."

O'Mara's attempt to get himself off the hook proved to be another blunder, for it actually confirmed an amazing leap in flying-saucer sightings.

12 "Shadowed from Outer Space"

It was not yet midnight on June 12 when a hurried report from a Ground Observer Corps post came into the Baltimore Air Filter Center. A huge glowing object, flying at high speed, had been sighted between Washington and the Atlantic coast. Swiftly, the Filter Center came to life as other reports poured in. In a few moments another call came in—this from a GOC post in Delaware. The unknown had now stopped. It was hovering a few miles northwest of the capital.

Now, with reports from 100 miles around, it was clear this could be no aircraft flight. Hastily the Filter Center supervisor buzzed an Air Defense Command radar station a few miles from Washington. There Ground Control had already caught the unknown on its scope. One look, and they knew this was no plane.

The blip was huge, larger than that of a Constellation airliner.

The unknown was hovering at 79,000 feet. Nothing but a supersonic test plane could reach that tremendous height. And there were only a few of these in existence—tiny craft capable of but a few minutes' flight. Besides this, only a helicopter-type of aircraft could hover.

Quickly a scramble order went over the Air Defense wire. Though no jet could possibly reach that altitude, there were standing orders to pursue all UFO's.

Meanwhile, teletype reports of the sighting were clattering into the offices of the Air Defense Command, ATIC, and the Director of Intelligence at the Pentagon.

At the Filter Center another report came in, this one from a Wilmington post. The supervisor stared at the UFO marker on the big plotting board. The saucer was almost 80 miles from Wilmington. To be visible that far, it would have to be gigantic.

For nearly an hour the mysterious craft floated silently in the sky between Washington and Baltimore. At its high altitude it was in position to spy on both cities and all the nearby airfields. Finally, climbing steeply, it disappeared into the night.

Dozens of volunteer GOC spotters knew of this sighting, as well as the Filter Center plotters. Next day the UFO censors held their breath. But no one talked, and the black-out held.

From all the reports Intelligence officers knew the saucer was huge enough to be a mother ship. It could be the one which the B-29 crew had sighted over the Gulf of Mexico, or even the missing satellite.

To some that silent watch in the night was ominous. Why had the saucer hovered near Washington? Could the unknown creatures be preparing to land? ♦

The tension caused by this report had just begun to subside when, on the night of June 14, the strange visitor returned. Again reports flooded the Baltimore Air Filter Center—excited accounts of the huge object, glowing orange-red, hovering over Washington and Baltimore. Again the jets were scrambled and Air Defense Commands alerted. This time the giant saucer remained for two hours, flying between the two cities, while the jets circled helplessly far below.

Though there were Nike rocket bases from which deadly defense missiles could have been launched, not even a Nike could have reached the hovering giant.

As before, the huge craft ended its surveillance abruptly, disappearing from radarscopes before its speed could be measured.

This time the story leaked both in Washington and Baltimore, but the news did not reach the papers for almost a month. Even then the official admission was so vague and brief that few people realized the truth.

The day after the second sighting I learned of these two reports. It was not the first time that a mother ship had hovered over a large American city. Ten times, from August 19, 1949, to March 10, 1950, an enormous disc-shaped craft had been sighted over Cincinnati. Each time it had been picked up by an anti-aircraft searchlight. On three occasions the large ship was seen to launch smaller objects; in one case two groups of five saucers were picked up by the beam.*

As I thought about these sightings, I wondered—and not for the first time—if I could be wrong in probing this mystery. And yet in 1952 Air Force Intelligence had fully cooperated with me. Since then more than one Air Force officer had urged me to tell the whole story.

In spite of this I felt a growing uneasiness. Could the silence group be right after all? Had they found something too frightening to tell the public? Which was better; to close our eyes to possible danger, or to face it and perhaps find a solution?

Colonel Frank Milani had demanded an end to secrecy. And I knew that Val Peterson, Director of all Civil Defense, must have backed him up. A few months before, commenting on the H-bomb danger in *Collier's*, Peterson had said that only an informed public could hope to meet this threat. The same thing, I felt, should apply to any saucer threat.

Dangerous or not, the saucers operations were increasing rapidly.

* From the log of Sergeant Donald R. Berger. For detailed report see Volume I, No. 5, CRIFO.

By now, saucers had been sighted by the public in many states.

In the Scranton-Wilkes-Barre area, thousands of people had watched Air Force jets try to box in a flying saucer. For several minutes the disc-shaped machine circled swiftly overhead as the interceptors tried vainly to reach it. Then, changing course, it streaked off into the night.

During the next few days newspapers reported sightings in Knoxville, Tennessee; Warren, Pennsylvania; and Coldwater, Michigan. At Coldwater, police said a saucer had passed low over the town. When questioned by Intelligence officers from Selfridge Field, policemen claimed the object was 20 times brighter than the landing lights on most planes.

Next day another story broke at Bend, California. Landing after a flight from Missoula, Montana, pilot Dudley Bolger reported seeing two saucers over Oregon. Flying parallel to his plane, they passed at terrific speed, vanishing in less than five seconds. The machines' bright glow could not have come from the sun, for heavy clouds covered the sky.

At Seattle a formation of six discs was spotted by firemen. But the UFO's were gone before jets could be alerted.

At Point Mugu Naval Base in California, an unknown machine had been seen circling high above the Santa Barbara Islands' missile installations. There was one unusual detail in the sighting. Every ten seconds the UFO gave off a dazzling orange-white light, which could be seen from Point Mugu to Los Angeles and even from ships at sea. That night Air Defense, the Coast Guard, and Civil Defense remained on the alert, but the saucer did not return.

In local papers sightings made headlines at Newburyport, Massachusetts; Beloit, Wisconsin; Harriman, Tennessee; and Coshocton, Ohio. At Point Huron, Michigan, the *Times-Herald* ran a banner headline: "Strange Light Observed in Sky," and with it a photograph of a round object seen just before dawn.

Another saucer was seen at Salt Lake City, its speed estimated at 1000 miles an hour.

A few hours later another disc appeared over Hackensack, New Jersey, and hovered there for ten minutes. On the following day sheriffs in Pierce and Skagit counties, Washington, reported that a glowing sphere had maneuvered over the area.

Just as our Air Force thought to brand saucers as illusions, the Royal Australian Air Force urged citizens to report all UFO's quickly for careful evaluation. Unknown to most Americans, sightings had also mounted in Australia, New Zealand, and New Guinea.

The RAAF request came one week after a syndicated news article in the United States had denied foreign sightings. "No other country," the article said, "is bothered with these celestial dishes."

The UFO censors were still smarting over this upset when a story cabled from England announced that British Air Marshal Lord Dowding believed the saucers to be interplanetary machines.

To attack Marshal Dowding was dangerous. As leader of the Battle of Britain in World War II, he had been one of Britain's great commanders, as well as a popular hero. To hint that he had been misled and to suggest that he had no evidence was out of the question, for it might quickly backfire. Marshal Dowding had access to the Royal Air Force UFO reports. Officially the silence group dared not comment. Privately they branded the story a rumor.

In the last week of June, Bob Stirling gave me a call.

"Did you know the armed services had men tracking asteroids?"

"They called them small moons back in March," I answered.

"I don't mean the satellite search. This is a statement from Dr. Frank Edmondson, Director of Goethe Linke Observa-

ball of fire, trailing sparks, had smashed through the steel signboard as if it were tissue paper. Then, angling upward, it streaked on, barely missing a passing automobile.

Barbieri secured a section of the signboard and attempted to get an analysis of the strange yellow deposits around the edge of the hole. Balked in his attempt, he turned the problem over to Mrs. Lorenzen and APRO. An analysis was then made by the Anderson Laboratories at Milwaukee and the Chicago Spectrographic Service Laboratory. Both confirmed that the gold-colored metal found in pits around the hole was definitely copper.

"It is my opinion," Mrs. Lorenzen wrote in sending me the analyses, "that the object was a missile of some type which had gone out of control and come too close to the ground."

Along with the analyses, Mrs. Lorenzen had sent me a section of the signboard metal and two photographs of the hole made in the billboard. The heavy-gauge steel had been torn. The edges were twisted back, curled, in proof of the terrific impact from the unknown object. Had it struck anywhere but the billboard, the results might have been disastrous.

The analyses proved that the object could not have been a meteor. It was a disquieting thought that it might have been a missile from outer space.

On December 1 a flying-saucer photograph taken in Sicily appeared in papers all over the United States. In New York the *Herald Tribune* ran it on the front page, accompanied by a story describing the careful United Press investigation which had proved this photograph was not a fake. Unexpectedly, the Air Force admitted it was investigating this important foreign sighting.

In another foreign story the following day the government of Iran reported a rush of saucer reports and added:

"If these are from other governments, please keep them at home. We already have enough trouble."

Then from Caracas came a wire service story reporting a mass sighting by most of the population. Like other reports, this showed there was an increase in foreign sightings.

That same day a puzzling report on Mars was released by the Carnegie Institution in Washington. For almost six months, the Institution revealed, it had known of a mysterious marking on Mars showing as the letter W.

Seen in motion pictures, taken in blue light, the gigantic W was found to measure 1100 miles from tip to tip. Round knobs at its apexes proved to be more than 300 miles in diameter. These huge knobs, said the Carnegie Institution, were extremely bright, almost as brilliant as Mars' white polar caps.

This enormous W was explained as "presumably a cloud formation in the upper atmosphere of the planet," which rotated at the same speed as Mars.

I was looking up the reports of strange Martian clouds when Frank Edwards phoned me.

"Have you seen that Mars W story?" he inquired.

"Yes, I was just starting to check on it."

"How the devil could any cloud form a shape like that—let alone hold it for days?" Frank demanded.

"It's no ordinary cloud, that's plain. In fact I don't believe that any kind of cloud could hold its shape and rotate at the same speed as the planet. I was just checking a statement by Walter H. Haas, Director of the Association of Lunar and Planetary Observers. He had an article on Mars in the June, '54, issue of *Sky and Telescope*. Here's what he says about Martian clouds:

"It is difficult to distinguish between true cloud projections and apparent projections caused by the irradiation of bright areas close to the edge of the disc."

Frank was silent for a moment.

"I get it," he said. "You think this W may have been laid out on the ground with some kind of material that would radiate light?"

"Well, at least it's possible. Maybe there is some natural answer, but it's curious that the W never showed up before. It could be an artificial construction. It could even be some kind of signal, though I suppose most people would think that was silly."

"Sure. But it's not any sillier than the idea of a rigidly shaped cloud, 1100 miles long, rotating around Mars."

At 1:40 A.M. the day after the W announcement the town of East Lansing, Michigan, was shaken by a mysterious sky blast. The detonation woke most of the town and brought hundreds running out-of-doors. At first it was rumored that a sonic boom from a jet had caused the explosive effect. But Selfridge Air Force Base denied that this was the answer. According to Major Maxwell Gruman, no jets were in central Michigan at that hour. He added that pilots had strict orders not to break the sound barrier.

A few days later at a press conference President Eisenhower was asked about the flying saucers.

"Recent news reports," said Garnett D. Horner of the *Washington Star*, "indicate that some European governments are seriously investigating the flying-saucer problem."

Then he asked the President if the Air Force believed some of these flying objects were of extraterrestrial origin.

President Eisenhower's answer, paraphrased under press-conference rules, was as follows: The last time he had talked on this subject, a man whom he trusted from the Air Force had said that it was, as far as he knew, inaccurate to believe that the objects were coming from another planet.

Apparently the question had taken the President by sur-

prise. He treated the subject solemnly and made no attempt to explain what the saucers might be.

As soon as I heard this was on the press wires, I phoned Captain White.

"On May 15," I said, "General Twining implied that the saucers may be coming from Mars. Does the President's statement mean that General Twining and the Air Force now deny this possibility?"

"Not at all," answered White. "President Eisenhower was speaking entirely for himself. What he said is not to be construed as an official Air Force statement. The situation is exactly as it was before."

"Let's clear that up," I suggested. "Three or four times—once in a statement given to *See* magazine—the Air Force has said it is quite possible we could be visited by beings from other worlds. Also, the Air Force has said that they never denied this possibility."

"That's true," agreed White, "but our official stand is this: We still have no authentic physical evidence that we're being visited by space ships."

"Meaning you don't have any captured or crashed saucers, or bodies of space creatures?"

"Right," said White. He added that the UFO investigation was continuing just as General Twining had reported on May 15.

Knowing the seriousness of the problem, I could understand President Eisenhower's public statement. Many times high government officials, from the President on down, had been forced to evade questions bearing on the national interest, as in the H-bomb situation. Moreover, the President's curiously worded answer was not a flat denial of the interplanetary explanation. If he had wished to kill off the space-ship answer once and for all, it would have been an easy matter to have said:

"As Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces I have been

given all the evidence. On this basis I hereby announce that the flying saucers absolutely are not interplanetary machines."

Instead, soon after this press conference, President Eisenhower asked the Air Force for a full briefing on all the latest UFO developments. This was admitted by Air Force Secretary Harold Talbott in a talk at the Press Club. Afterward Talbott tried to offset the admission by quoting a crackpot letter from a man who claimed to have come from Venus. But the ridicule policy was now wearing thin, as additional foreign sightings became public.

The very day after the President's remarks the Australian Navy released a top-secret UFO report they had withheld since September. During a routine flight a Royal Australian Navy pilot had encountered two glowing objects while flying at 15,000 feet. As the two saucers flashed past his "Sea Fury"—a propeller-driven fighter—he hastily radioed Nowra Naval Air Station. When the station radar-control officers checked their scopes, three moving objects were visible. Calling the pilot, they directed him to make a sharp turn. When he complied, one blip was identified as that of his plane. The other objects, continuing ahead at high speed, were then officially confirmed as "unidentified flying objects."

As a result of this and other sightings, a special radar watch was established. All Australian Air Force and Navy pilots were ordered to be on the alert for flying saucers.

When this Navy report was released, it was announced as the "first authenticated information" that flying saucers existed.

Meantime a series of far more disturbing stories had startled South America. Though none of these stories appeared in the United States press, they were headlined in Venezuelan newspapers. In addition, a representative of

APRO made a personal investigation, reporting his findings to the director.

When the first story was relayed to me, I took it to be just another imaginary "creature" tale. And there is still no proof that the stories are true. But even if they are groundless, they have played a large part in building up fear of the saucers in South American countries.

The first encounter is supposed to have been at Petare, a suburb of Caracas. At 2:00 A.M. on November 28, two Venezuelans, Gustavo Gonzales and José Ponce, were driving their truck to Caracas markets to purchase food stuffs for delivery.

Suddenly, they said, they were startled to see a luminous sphere about ten feet in diameter blocking a side street. It appeared to be suspended about six feet above the ground. As the two men climbed out of their truck they reported a dwarfish figure came toward them. According to Gonzales, when he seized the creature he found its body was oddly unyielding and covered with stiff hair.

To his amazement, ~~the Venezuelan story ran~~, the little creature gave him a violent push, knocking him 15 feet. On seeing this, Ponce took to his heels and ran to a nearby traffic inspector's office.

Gonzales, drawing a knife, lunged at the creature which was approaching him with extended claws. But the blade glanced off the dwarf's shoulder, as if it had struck a hard surface. *with*

By this time two or three more of the strange creatures had appeared. One of them, Gonzales reported, focused a blinding light on him for a moment. Then they all jumped into the sphere, which rose swiftly out of sight.

When Gonzales and Ponce told traffic inspectors this fantastic story, the police—not unreasonably—assumed they were either drunk or out of their minds. But an examination by doctors proved they were sane and sober, though in a highly

nervous state. In addition, Gonzales' torn clothing and scratched arms indicated some kind of struggle.

This was the first actual report of hostility, though there had been other recent "creature" tales from abroad.

According to one Italian report, a flying disc had landed on a sports field one night in early November. By the bright glow the disc cast over the ground, villagers could see three or four small creatures wearing transparent helmets. Several of the Italians said they could see one creature's face, which looked to them like a "little elephant." When the villagers charged the saucer, the strange creatures quickly entered the machine and took off.

Since there had already been one publicized saucer hoax in Italy, I put this down as another wild account. But by mid-November other "space-creature" stories were beginning to spread in Paraguay and Brazil. And from Ethiopia came a report that people in scores of villages had been frightened by the "sky dragons."

Though Venezuelan police and most of the public discounted the Petare incident, new sightings, followed by more creature reports, caused this bizarre story to be re-examined.

On December 1 a Catholic priest, Father Jesús Hernandez Chapellin, reported sighting a luminous disc over Coro, Falcon State. A few hours after this, another glowing UFO was seen hovering just above the ground at Borburata, Venezuela. Next day a third saucer shot directly across the path of a plane piloted by Saul Paez Paredes. So close was the UFO that its violent passage threw the plane almost out of control. Badly frightened, Paredes hurriedly returned to his take-off point at Maracaibo.

Then the "hairy dwarfs" story broke into print again with an even more sensational report. Here is the story that was given to the Venezuelan public:

On December 9, two young Venezuelan peasants, Lorenzo Flores and Jesús Gomez, were hunting in an area near the

Trans-Andean Highway, between Chico and Corro de las Torros. Suddenly they spied a bright light, which they thought at first came from a car on the nearby road. As they approached, they saw a round object "like two washbowls placed on top of each other." Hovering a few feet from the ground, the machine appeared to be about nine feet in diameter. The brilliant glow came from the underside.

"Then we saw four little men coming out of it," Flores said later. "They were about three feet tall. When they realized we were there, they got Gomez and tried to drag him toward the object."

During the struggle Gomez dropped his machete. Flores, swinging his unloaded shotgun, struck at one dwarf with the butt. As though it had hit solid rock, the shotgun broke in two.

At this moment the lights of a car came in sight from the highway. The dwarfs quickly released Gomez and all four of the creatures raced toward the saucer.

Without waiting to see what happened, the two youngsters fled. Scratched and bruised, their shirts torn to shreds, they hurried into Carora and told police their story.

A few minutes later a truck driver also came in to report sighting a glowing disc-shaped object. From his report it appeared the UFO had risen from the spot where the dwarfs had been seen.

When an armed police squad hurried to the scene, they found signs of a struggle. Nearby lay the machete and the broken shotgun.

When the story quickly spread, causing near-panic in Carora, the two boys were jailed. Then a commission of doctors and psychiatrists was sent from Caracas to examine them. Afterward, during prolonged questioning by the police, Flores and Gomez were said to have retracted part of the story. But later, when reporters questioned them, they insisted they had told the truth.

When an APRO representative queried one of the psychiatrists, the doctor told him the commission had found Gomez and Flores perfectly sane and healthy. On further investigation he learned of a point that carried weight with many Venezuelans. To peasants, he was told, a shotgun is a treasured object.

"No peasant in his right senses would ever think of deliberately breaking his shotgun to fake a saucer sighting—especially two boys who would gain nothing by it."

If the boys had been crazy, the APRO representative wrote, they would have been promptly interned in a mental hospital or asylum. If they had been lying, they would have been jailed for months or fined for creating public disorder. But instead they were soon released by the police.

Other reports quickly increased the hysteria. On December 10 a Caracas physician and his father reported seeing two dwarfish creatures running toward a glowing UFO in the vicinity of La Floresta. Two other bizarre reports added fuel to the flames.

At Barquisimeto a Venezuelan professor told police that a gleaming disc had chased his car on the highway to Guanaro. As he was approaching Guanaro, the professor said, a round white object swept down over the road. Panic-stricken, he took out his gun and fired at the object as it circled around his car.

Then, pushing the accelerator to the floor, he raced toward the town. When he returned with the sheriff and a policeman, the disc was flying southward, leaving a bluish trail.

Another hairy-dwarf attack story was made public on December 16. As reported to police, this latest encounter occurred in the Exposition Park at San Carlos, Venezuela.

It was about mid-evening when Jesús Paz and two friends drove to the park. A little later, when Paz had momentarily separated from his friends, they heard him scream. Rushing toward the spot, they found Paz unconscious on the ground.

Nearby, they said, a hairy dwarf was running toward a flat, shiny craft which hovered close to the ground. One of the men, Luis Mejia, hurled a stone at the saucer as it rose swiftly into the air.

When Paz was taken to a hospital, doctors found several long, deep scratches in his right side and back, as if he had been savagely clawed. Next day when he recovered from a severe state of shock, Paz told police he had been set upon too quickly to see the strange creature closely. But his comrades, under intensive grilling by the police, stubbornly stuck to their story.

Though they still seemed incredible, these "creature" stories gained credence with additional Venezuelans when, on December 19, another report came in:

At Valencia an 18-year-old jockey, José Parra, told police he had seen six small hairy creatures near a saucer which floated silently near the ground. According to Parra, one of the creatures transfixed him with a bright violet-colored light. Then the dwarfs ran to the mysterious craft, which quickly rose into the sky.

After detectives from Valencia examined the spot, they reported finding tracks which they were unable to identify.

Before the Venezuelan dwarf reports there had been very little similarity between any of the "creature" stories. Most of them were such obvious fakes they were not even worth considering. Some of the Venezuelan reports also had a suspicious sound. Yet APRO's on-the-scene investigator was convinced that the story told by Gomez and Flores, at least, was true.

The existence of these hairy dwarfs was hard for me to accept, even though the Ituri pygmies of Africa come close to fitting their description. This pygmy race, existing in East Africa's Ituri forest, was almost unknown until it was studied by the Reverend Dr. Martin Guisinde, professor of anthropology at the Catholic University of America. Father

Guisinde, who for years has studied small-sized beings in many parts of the world, found that the Ituri pygmies had clay-yellow bodies covered with thick, dark brown hair. Small creatures—less than five feet high and weighing less than 90 pounds—these pygmies maneuver through the forest as expertly as monkeys, swinging from branch to branch.

Since the towering jungle trees completely hide the sky at all times, the Ituri pygmies live out their lives in a dimly lighted world. So accustomed are they to this semi-darkness that they actually fear the sunlight. Even if they dared venture outside the forest, their strange eyes, conditioned to darkness, would be almost blinded by the sun's glare.

As I examined the curious evidence, something inside me fought against acceptance of the hairy-dwarf idea. My feeling was, I realized, a subconscious longing—the same thing which John Du Barry and I had discussed that night at Larchmont. I knew now that I hoped the UFO race would *not* be unlike our own.

In the light of evolution, however, the chances seemed to be against such a similarity. These odds, I remembered, had been summed up in *McLean's* magazine by a Canadian zoologist, Professor Norman J. Berrill, of McGill University. Answering the question, "Are We Alone in the Universe?" Professor Berrill had agreed with Dr. Harlow Shapley that a huge number of planets must be inhabited.

"Well-placed planets," said Professor Berrill, "will evolve life, and life sooner or later evolves mind."

But each life-bearing planet, he had said, must be unique. Some would be larger, some smaller, than the earth. There would be different atmospheres and many varying factors.

"Human beings with our shape and size are to be found only upon this earth . . . never on any other planet, from here to Eternity. Almost certainly there will be beings of kinds unaccountable that possess intelligence and power, deep emotion, beauty in essence, and wisdom grown perhaps

far beyond our own. In all that really matters we are almost certainly not alone."

Never on another planet, from here to Eternity . . .

If Berrill were right, it meant an end to all hope of someday meeting beings like ourselves. But even the greatest of scientists sometimes were wrong.

And even if the hairy-dwarf stories were true, I realized it still need not drop the curtain upon our dreams. There might be more than one race involved in the long worldwide surveillance by the flying saucers.

The various South American reports, many of them accompanied by front-page newspaper stories, did make one point clear. In Venezuela and Brazil, at least, officials were not ridiculing the actual saucer reports. On the contrary, the Brazilian Air Force in a public statement had requested the aid of all nations in solving the UFO problem. Following this, Brazilian Air Force officers had been briefed on saucers by Colonel Jao Adil Oliveira. Factual observations and photographs of saucers, said Colonel Oliveira, proved that this problem merited serious attention and study.

But even though there was no blackout in South America, few of their sightings were published in this country.

When I saw Bob Stirling at the end of '54, I told him about the Venezuelan reports.

"Why hasn't the UP carried those stories?" I asked him. Stirling shook his head.

"They weren't stopped by the UP. I haven't seen a word about any 'dwarf' stories from Venezuela."

"They're not censored in Venezuela—I can show you the front-page stories. Would it be possible for the silence group to block them down there?"

"I don't know," replied Stirling. Then he paused. "But this hairy-dwarf business—I've got something to tell you. I got it from a Navy man I've known personally for years."

He gave me the name in confidence, a source I couldn't question.

"You may think it's silly," Stirling went on, "but this man swears that a Navy pilot got a close look at a saucer one night, so close he could see a strange creature inside it."

I stared at him for a second.

"All right, I told you it might sound silly," said Stirling.

"It's not exactly that." Then I told him about the Pearl Harbor "creature" report.

"Don, it sounds as if it might be true. Do you know what the thing looked like?"

"No," I said. "Only that it evidently scared the pilot."

"Do you think this hairy-dwarf business could be the answer?" asked Stirling.

"I suppose it could be, Bob," I said slowly, "but I hope to heaven those stories turn out to be hoaxes."

17 Oberth and the G-Field

After talking with Bob Stirling I remembered my plan to draw up a master chart for a final analysis of all the UFO riddles. But before I could start, there was a series of new developments that changed the picture.

As the 1955 New Year began, foreign reports continued to hold the spotlight. On January 1 a five-saucer formation was sighted at Lima, Peru. For five minutes, seen by many witnesses, the discs hovered over the city, giving off an intense silvery light.

The next day two Venezuelan airline crews encountered a luminous disc while en route to Maracaibo. During the next week similar reports came from a dozen other countries.

Then, toward mid-January, the Directorate of Air Force Intelligence was badly jolted by a collision report from California. At approximately 5:30 P.M., on January 14, a large fiery object was seen dropping from the sky near Idyllwild. Immediately afterward, a radio flash from a B-47 jet bomber electrified Intelligence officers at March Field.

"An unknown object just hit our wing!" the bomber captain reported.

Fortunately the damaged wing did not crumple, and the pilot carefully nursed the plane down to an emergency landing. For several hours Intelligence officers and Air Force special investigators searched the area in a hunt for the