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UFO INVESTIGATOR

NATIONAL INVESTIGATIONS COMMITTEE ON AERIAL PHENOMENA

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Winter Months Show Most Activity

1973: YEAR OF 'MINIFLAP'

Unless present trends change within the next few months, 1973 may be remembered by students of the UFO subject as the year of the "miniflap."

In a somewhat unusual reversal of activity, the winter and spring months of this year were a period of relatively high UFO reporting, characterized by a series of geographical "hot spots" that ranged from New England to the Midwest and South. By comparison, the usually peak period of July and August was strangely quiet, with no well defined areas of activity. Since sightings normally drop in September and continue a downward trend as cold weather approaches, the flurry of reports between January and April may prove to be the dominant feature of the year.

The first "miniflap" broke in late January near the town of Lexington, Alabama (*UFO Investigator,* March 1972). By the first week in February, over 100 people had reportedly seen the multicolored lights that kept appearing over the northwest corner of the state. Local newspapers reported that a "steady stream" of visitors had converged on the Lexington garbage dump, where some of the early sightings had occurred. Night after night, cars were parked along roads in the area, occupied mainly by teenage boys with cameras, binoculars, and flashlights. Several would-be witnesses, according to news accounts, also brought guns.

While this was going on, a similar drama was unfolding in southern Rhode Island, when citizens in Wood River Junction, Bradford, and other small towns spotted circular groups of lights maneuvering in the evening sky (*UFO Investigator,* March 1973). Throughout February and into March, reports continued to come in, most describing high-flying lights. Nightly excursions were soon being made by townspeople anxious to see the UFOs for themselves. One news story described a car crowded with seven people that searched for the objects early in March. Spotting a cluster of bright white lights, the searchers stopped their car and watched in fascination, too spellbound to remember the cameras they had brought with them.

About a week before this, 1000 miles to the west, citizens in Piedmont, Missouri, were also taking to their cars in hopes of seeing a UFO — this one reported by a high school basketball coach and members of his team (*UFO Investigator,* April 1973). The object was described as a row of colored lights, with a beam of light shining downward. Following this report, a rash of sightings erupted in southeastern Missouri that continued into the summer. UFO researchers from all points of the compass descended on the area, including one college professor who set up a battery of equipment to monitor the sky (*UFO Investigator,* June 1973). One UFO publication described the scene on one Saturday night as "well attended, even though an overcast sky blotted out the stars and light rain was falling."

The same state of confusion prevailed on the East Coast, when communities throughout eastern Pennsylvania reported formations of lights crisscrossing the sky in a display reminiscent of Independence Day (*UFO Investigator,* May 1973). As early as March 1, dozens of reports began to come in from residents in the Stroudsburg region, followed by dozens more from other nearby areas. By late March, newspapers were full of stories on the epidemic of sightings, most of them describing flashing lights of various colors. One witness compared what he saw to a "flying Christmas tree." The reports continued, intermittently, into April and later.

No one has come forward with an explanation for why the first four months of 1973 should produce such a hectic series of observations at scattered locations. Of the four sighting waves, the Missouri and Pennsylvania sightings received the most publicity. During the summer, reports continued to trickle in from those two areas and surrounding states, suggesting there may have been a delayed effect from the initial outbreak of reports.

New Network of Investigators Now Established

A strong network of highly qualified men and women is taking shape across the United States as NICAP actively builds its recently announced system of Regional Investigators.

Since May, when NICAP members were first invited to apply as Investigators, applications have been received from many individuals whose backgrounds make them well suited to carry out scientific field investigations. Because of this encouraging response, a total of 35 Investigators have already been authorized, and new applications are being processed each week.

All Investigator candidates are required to fill out a detailed application form, which is available on request from the NICAP office. The form includes questions on occupation, education, and familiarity with science. Applicants are also required to sign a special agreement certifying they will abide by NICAP policy and act solely on behalf of NICAP.

To date, approximately 100 requests have been received from NICAP members for Investigator applications. Of that number, 67 felt they met the requirements and have actually applied. Of this group, 35 have received authorizations.

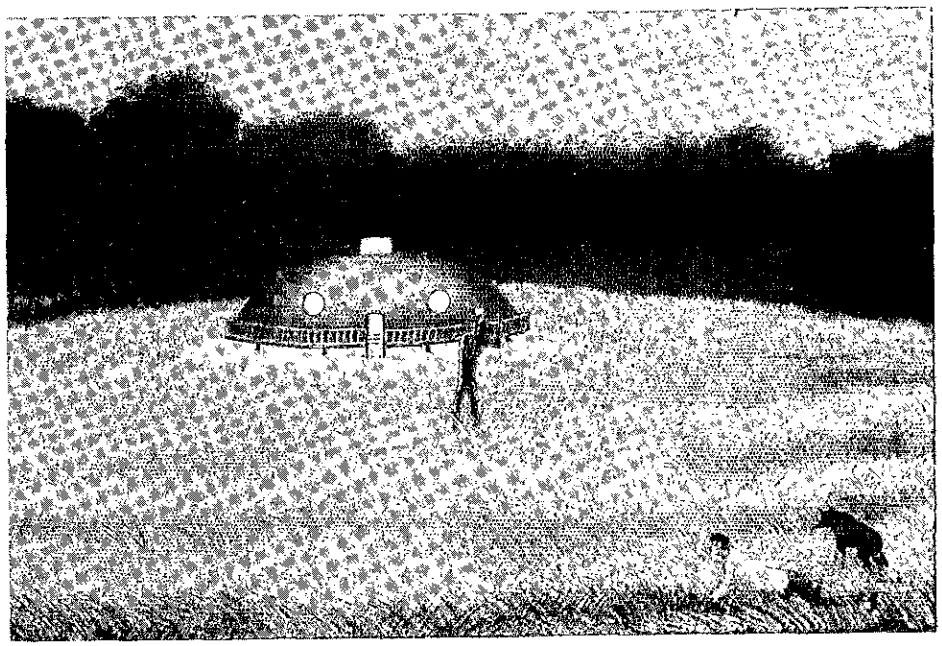
A quick survey of the Investigator network reveals the high level of skills and resources these 35 individuals represent. Among them, they have 7 PhDs, 2 MAs or MS, 23 BAs or BS, 1 AA, and 2 with college training but no degree. Occupationally, they include: 4 physical scientists, 13 engineers, 3 college professors, and 13 other specialists, including doctor, technician, computer programmer, and businessman. Five of the 35 are pilots.

Applications have also been received from NICAP members who are interested in serving as Investigator assistants. These are individuals who do not have the time or background to be Investigators but who want to help with NICAP's research program on a limited basis. Investigators choose their own assistants, who are then assigned to specific duties as needed.

(See Network, Page 4)

CASEBOOK

'VIRGINIA GIANT' CASE REMAINS UNEXPLAINED



Sketch by NICAP artist Fanny Phillips depicts encounter on Virginia farm.

The case of the "Virginia Giant" remains unresolved, despite careful checking on many points in the account by NICAP investigators.

Called one of the most interesting cases he has ever worked on by one of the investigators, the story of the "Virginia Giant" is actually a nickname for a pair of sightings, one of them involving an occupant, which occurred in late May 1971 outside a small rural Virginia community located near Fredericksburg.

According to investigators John Carlson and Bruce Maccabee, who until recently were still gathering data about the alleged sightings, the case was hampered by the very attitude that made this "occupant" case such an interesting one — the family's strong desire to avoid publicity — a characteristic not always present in cases involving an "occupant."

It was a dark, cloudy night that three boys and a German Shepherd had picked to camp out in a nearby field. Two of the youths had decided to investigate the sound of a car horn heard in the distance while the third youth and his dog "Lucky" decided to stay behind.

Walking through the large, open field, the third boy noted that he had a strange feeling that something was behind him. He turned but saw nothing. Moments later he turned again and observed a glowing "thing" over a pond located in the open field.

The object moved slowly from its position over the pond and moved towards the youth, finally stopping near the youth, and slowly settled to the ground. Before completing its descent, the object, according to the youth, extended "legs" from its underside.

After the craft landed, a door opened straight down toward him and a "man" walked out. According to the witness's description, the creature was "powerfully huge," had long arms and was shiny in appearance. In one hand it carried a "glowing box."

The creature looked around, then started moving in the youth's direction, who by this time was crouching in the tall grass. The witness's dog allegedly snarled at the "occupant" and began to approach it. The creature turned around in a "stiff, bouncing fashion" and returned to his craft. The door of the craft closed and about ten minutes later the craft "just lifted off."

The witness was found a few minutes later still crouched in the grass and apparently in shock by his two fellow campers. The witness told his companions of his encounter and all three quickly returned to their homes.

Two nights later another sighting occurred in the same vicinity. While the second sighting did not involve an occupant, it did add credence to the first sighting, according to the investigators, because of the large number of witnesses and the similarities in description of the UFO.

Two sisters of the youth who reported the "occupant" were returning home from a night class along the family's long, winding driveway when they became aware of a humming sound and red lights apparently coming from above their car.

Almost immediately, according to NICAP's file on the case, the car's engine stalled, the headlights went out, and the car radio went off. From inside the car

(See 'Virginia Giant', Page 4)



Initial sighting in Virginia was reportedly followed by another bizzare episode.

Fleeing Felon Reports Similar UFO Sighting

"I am writing you from Southern Correctional Facility near Lucasville, Ohio..." begins a letter recently received by NICAP.

The author, in prison for parole violation, wrote NICAP to relate a UFO sighting he experienced while eluding police in northern Virginia during April 1971. The letter was prompted by a radio show the inmate had heard this past July on which Stuart Nixon, executive director of NICAP, was relating portions of the "Virginia Giant" sighting.

"I was a fugitive from the law and had just eluded the police...after a lengthy chase...After running through the woods for a short period...I stopped and looked back down the way I had come to ascertain if any police were on my trail.

"Far in the distance...five or more miles away, I spotted a light flashing in the sky. At that time I assumed it was the police spotlights against the clouds. Seeing no immediate danger, I squatted down to rest and figure my next move...within seconds I had a feeling that I was being watched...I glanced upward and in the air, approximately 150-200 feet, directly overhead, I could see a motionless thing whose shape was rectangular and approximately 20 x 8 feet.

"It was just a motionless, featureless rectangular object...It appeared that I was viewing the underbelly of the object and at no other time was I able to see the sides or top. At first sight I was scared into jumping up as I thought it might be the police...just to be on the safe side I took off running, again thinking it might be some type of tracking device the police were using...I kept one eye upward and the object immediately moved as I did,

(See Fleeing Felon, Page 4)

Tear-Shaped Object Seen by N.H. Couple

A young New Hampshire couple, returning to their Springfield, N. H. farm, March 20, 1973, claim they observed a "tear-drop shaped white glowing object descending extremely slowly...to ground level where it disappeared behind trees about one-quarter of a mile away."

According to the couple, the light could be seen glowing through the trees for about four minutes before it dimmed and finally went out. The UFO, according to the husband, appeared to have landed in or near a nearby abandoned gravel pit, west of their home.

The sighting, which occurred at approximately 9:30 p.m., was reported to officials at Pease Air Force Base. The couple was told to call back the next morning for a possible explanation. Calling Pease AFB the following day, the couple was told that they had observed a flare dropped off the coast of Kittery, Maine, located approximately 100 miles east-southeast of Springfield.

The couple, however, insisted that the object they had observed had landed west of their home and appeared to be only one-quarter of a mile away when it landed.

A check of the abandoned gravel pit and the surrounding area on March 21 produced no evidence of scorching or markings that would indicate a flare had landed, according to the husband.

Scientists Complete Piedmont, Mo. Research

A UFO research team from Southeast Missouri State College is currently evaluating more than three weeks of accumulated scientific information gathered from their research station outside of Piedmont, Mo.

Piedmont, the site of hundreds of UFO reports since early February 1973 *(UFO Investigator*, May & June 1973), attracted the attention of Professor Harley D. Rutledge, head of the Physics Department at Southeast Missouri State.

Rutledge, with a team of professors and students, commenced a study of the sightings in late May. The professor, who said at the time that "I'm studying the lights from a scientific point of view," noted at an early part in the investigation that the lights appeared to have followed flight paths coinciding with radio beams used by pilots for navigation.

The research team, nicknamed "Project Identification," used telescopes, cameras equipped with telephoto lenses, and electromagnetic and color spectrum analysers in their investigation.

The findings of "Project Identification" will be presented to the scientific community this fall, according to the professor.

SIGHTING ADVISORY

Preliminary information on new reports. Details and evaluations will be published when available.

August 14, 1973 — Traverse City, Mich. A 19-year-old Lake Ann, Mich. resident and his companion claim they observed a cylindrically-shaped object, about 50 feet in length, pass in front of their car around 10:30 p.m. near Boardman Lake off Cass Road. According to the couple, the object, traveling in a north to south direction, passed within 20 feet of the vehicle and appeared to have approximately 10 lights located on the underside of the craft. The lights flashed on and off and appeared blue, pink and green. The sighting lasted approximately eight seconds, they said.

July 22, 1973 — LaFollette, Tenn. Dozens of local residents reported a round, orange-colored light moving a few hundred feet off the ground in a north-to-south direction around 9:50 p.m. One witness, a lawyer, said it looked like a "large ball of fire." Similar sightings have reportedly occurred on numerous other evenings, according to many local citizens.

June 29, 1973 — Bayview, Idaho Thirteen UFOs, which appeared as "steady white lights," were reported over Lake Pend Oreille by a local family. According to one of the witnesses, the objects were in view for approximately one hour and were seen passing over the lake in all directions. They moved swiftly but emitted no apparent noise, according to the family.

July 25, 1973 — Marble Falls, Tex. Three adults, including an aeronautical engineer, claim they watched a bright object move rapidly about the sky for more than 45 minutes. According to the engineer, the UFO made several "east-west excursions between 70 degrees and about 30 degrees above the horizon." On at least two occasions the UFO "described a small circle at the top of its track," according to the witnesses.

June 19, 1973 — Lompoc, Calif. Local military and civilian police received a flurry of calls during the early morning hours from local residents reporting a pulsating light hovering and maneuvering above Pine Canyon. One witness told police the UFO appeared at one point to land in Pine Canyon. Local police investigated but could find nothing.

April 19, 1973 — Los Molinas, Calif. A 31-year-old Los Molinas resident claims he watched for several minutes two large, white lights, about three times brighter than Venus, hovering on the horizon above the distant mountain skyline. Each light, according to the witness, had an aura or halo effect around it. He lost sight of the lights when his attention was called away by friends.

March 11, 1973 — Russelville, Ala. A number of local residents continue to be puzzled about a bright, glowing object they spotted in the eastern sky about 10:30 p.m. At times, according to some witnesses, red and green lights could be seen coming from the UFO as it moved about the sky.

February 3, 1973 — Mount Airy, N. C. A father and his 14-year-old son reported seeing a "blood-red circular object" which appeared to be giving off smoke or exhaust at its outer edges near their home. According to the witnesses, they were attracted outside by a "sudden flash of brilliant red light that lit up the inside of their home from one end to the other." Another local family made a similar report.

December 2, 1972 — Saline, Mich. An Ann Arbor, Michigan couple returning home via Saline around 10:15 p.m. claims a dull metallic object with a long yellow tail flew across the highway in front of their car at an altitude of approximately 30 feet. According to the couple, the object appeared to follow a rough semicircle from right to left before "winking out like a light." The couple estimated the object was only 200 feet from the car when it crossed the highway in front of them.

Q/A

Q. What is the corporate structure of NICAP?

Michael Trombetta
Riverdale, Illinois

A. NICAP is a nonprofit association incorporated in Washington, D. C., in 1956. Primary responsibility for policy and control resides with a Board of Governors, which meets several times a year to review the organization's plans and programs. An Executive Committee made up of Board members meets between Board meetings and is responsible to the Board. Day-to-day management is performed by the corporation's officers, who include a President, Vice President, and Secretary-Treasurer, who are also, responsible to the Board. A small staff of paid and volunteer personnel completes the corporate structure.

Q. Did NICAP make a final determination on the report of strange objects picked up on radar in 1966 near Guam?

Daniel Louderback
South Bend, Washington

A. In 1967, NICAP asked the late Dr. James McDonald, an atmospheric physicist, to review published accounts concerning anomalous radar targets tracked in August 1966 by operators at Anderson Air Force Base, Guam. This review was published in the October 1967 issue of the *UFO Investigator*. Briefly, Dr. McDonald concluded the targets were "second-return echoes" from C-141 aircraft flying just outside the normal range of the radar. The aircraft were equipped with a new type of radio transponder, which emitted standard IFF codes. These were apparently misinterpreted by radar personnel as originating from unidentified sources. No UFOs were sighted.

Q. What is NICAP's opinion of the Ministry of Universal Wisdom in California?

Nicholas Vrettos
Acharnai, Greece

A. The activities of this group are directed largely toward sensational aspects of the UFO subject, such as alleged contacts with space people, and toward areas not related to UFOs, such as religious teachings and medical "rejuvenation." NICAP believes these activities play little or no part in serious UFO research.

Q. Does NICAP sell photographs or slides of UFOs?

L. Kruis
The Hague, Holland

A. NICAP does not offer UFO pictures, due to the high cost of reproducing these items and the scarcity of photographs that have been fully authenticated. Members who want pictures for a school project or similar use may write NICAP for permission to reproduce artwork that appears in NICAP publications. This artwork is protected by copyright and may not be reproduced without written approval from NICAP.

FEEDBACK/Readers write

Dear Editor:

Robert John Allen of Lubbock, Texas, whose letter appeared in *UFO Investigator* for July, 1973, is disgruntled by estimates of sizes and heights of UFOs.

There are at least two sorts of reports whereby the estimates can be computed reasonably well.

One type of report is when a UFO can be observed against a background of known objects such as hills, trees, buildings, etc.

The other type of report involves at least two observers, each at a remote point from the other. The exact timing of the sighting by each is very important. Notes of the UFO (preferably not in motion) such as angular elevation, apparent size and the azimuth, should be compared by each observer. The exact straight line distance between these observers must be known. This is called parallax. One such report was made by Mrs. Coral Lorenzen who called a friend to see if he had also sighted the UFO. In this case he had. The computations involve trigonometry. It is almost impossible to get this sort of observation and can be made by relatively few people.

To sum it all up, Mr. Allen has stated a fact that applies to almost all sightings. There is, indeed, something going on where UFOs are involved, of which we know practically nothing. I am not overly pessimistic when I state that perhaps we shall never solve this mystery. All is evidently not known about physics as Dr. J. Allen Hynek hints. A new fact exists.

H. Francis Jonsberg
Newton Center, Mass.

Dear Editor;

In answer to Mr. Robert Allen: I too am a member, and it seems to me, if an ordinary person sees an object and has ruled out all known possibilities, he can only say what he sees because he is describing an unknown. So the object is "x" amount of miles up from where he is, and he is describing it, or rather comparing it, to what he does know.... Being an unknown, it is virtually impossible to be exact. I think, at this point, I would question the validity of an absolutely accurate description. We can only estimate an unknown, otherwise it wouldn't be an unknown, now, would it?

Yvonne Latimer
New York City

Network

(Continued from page 1)

Assistants are given letters of introduction for these assignments but are not issued Investigator credentials. Members interested in becoming an assistant must fill out the same application form used by Investigators.

A NICAP member who is not qualified to be an Investigator may submit the name of a qualified candidate or advise qualified persons to contact NICAP. Openings for Investigator still exist in many sections of the country, and NICAP is interested in hearing from any person who meets the necessary criteria and is willing to serve in a volunteer capacity. (See May 1973 *Investigator* for further details.)

'Virginia Giant'

(Continued from page 2)

the girls said they could see a disc-shaped, glowing white object hovering approximately 50 feet above their tree-lined driveway. After about five minutes the girls were able to start the car and race the remaining few yards towards home — as they did, the craft continued to follow them.

Attracted outside by the sounds of a car racing up the driveway, two brothers rushed outside to investigate and observed a "gigantic saucer-shaped thing" following their sister's car up the driveway. The object followed the car up to the house and continued to hover above it for a few minutes before finally drifting off and out of sight over the horizon.

Fleeing Felon

(Continued from page 2)

staying directly overhead...I did have a distinct feeling/impression that someone was watching me. The full distance that I ran was more than 10 miles total and during that time it was in wooded areas, fields and across a small shallow body of water... Toward the end of my journey, as I was thinking of stopping and resting, the object suddenly seemed to swell and in less than two seconds had completely disappeared...its route appeared to be straight up. But my impression was not of it going up but of it dwindling away, sort of an implosion rather than a going out."

The author ends the letter's narrative portion with, "Needless to say I did elude the police and did make my getaway."

Reflecting on the incident and the end of his letter, the author comments: "Is it possible that whoever was in it (if anyone was) knew that I was a fugitive and thus didn't want to give my location away? What I am getting at is the possibility of telepathic inference. To this day I am constantly wondering what the object was, and why it hung over me that way."

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