

Willow Grove, PA

File/CE1
1966

A report of seemingly high credibility which, interestingly enough, was jointly heard from the eye-witnesses by Dr. Menzel, Mr. Klass, and myself, along with several hundred editors of major American papers (April 22, 1967 session of the American Society of Newspaper Editors, Washington, D.C.) is a case in point. On the afternoon of May 21, 1966, we were told, Mr. William C. Powell and Miss Muriel McClave were flying in a Luscombe over Willow Grove, Pennsylvania, at about 4500 ft altitude, with 15-mile visibility. Powell, the pilot, has 18,000 hours to his flying record (RCAF, AAF, KLM, and executive-transport work currently). After a flight of Navy jets climbed out under his wing from Willow Grove NAS, Powell spotted an object closing on the jets from their rear. Noting absence of a vertical tail-fin, he watched more closely and saw it make an abrupt (no-bank, no-slewing) turn of about 150 to 160 degrees and head for his aircraft. He and Miss McClave watched it approach on seeming collision course at their level, until it passed their starboard wing at a distance Powell put at perhaps 100 yards. Powell said, "It was just like looking at a Cadillac." The object, no Cadillac, was described by both as a domed disc, of diameter 30 to 40 feet, with a bright white dome on a red discoid base. One can reject the testimony here, of course; but it would not seem reasonable to try to account for this as some refraction anomaly or other aberration of meteorological optics, nor is it reasonable to assert that here was some peculiar fair-weather variant of ball lightning. Examples equally difficult to force into those pigeonholes are very easily multiplied, but the time at my disposal here precludes the kind of extensive recapitulation of cases that can be adduced in support of my position (see refs. 2 and 5 for more examples).

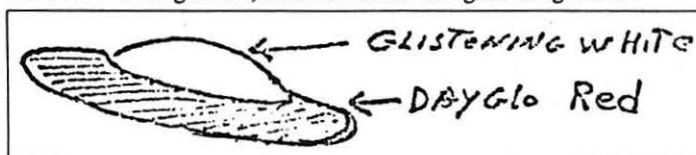
from JEM "Sci, Tech, & UFOs" 1968

(NICAP ref. on
reverse)

Near Willow Grove, Pennsylvania, May 21, 1966

An 18,000-hour pilot and his passenger made a clear daylight sighting of a disc-shaped UFO with a dome on top on the afternoon of May 21, 1966 near Willow Grove, Pa. "It was as clear as seeing a Cadillac drifting by at 100 yards," said William C. Powell. Currently active in executive-transport flying, Powell was a pilot for the Dutch KLM airlines, and before that for the U.S. Air Force and RCAF.

During a panel discussion on UFOs before an annual meeting of the American Society of Newspaper Editors in Washington, D.C. (April 22, 1967), Powell described the experience. (Additional details are taken from the first-hand report in NICAP's files). Powell was flying a Luscombe at about 4500 feet near Willow Grove, Pa., with a 15-mile visibility. At about 3:15 p.m., after seeing a flight of Navy jets climbing up from Willow Grove Naval Air Station, Powell spotted an object closing in behind the jets. Noting that the object had no protrusions like an aircraft, he watched more closely and saw it make an abrupt 150-160 degree turn and head for his aircraft. As the UFO passed under his starboard wing, Powell saw that it was a structured object. It seemed to be about 100 yards distant, and 30-40 feet in diameter. The overall configuration was discoidal; the base was bright red, and the dome was glistening white.



UFO OBSERVED BY PILOT OVER PENNSYLVANIA

Powell and his passenger, Miss Muriel McClave, turned quickly as the UFO passed and observed it briefly through the right rear window; then it abruptly vanished. Powell later called Willow Grove Naval Air Station to report the incident. He had been flying a northwest course, behind the Navy jets. The UFO crossed his windshield from left to right, made the sharp turn across his front, approached head-on and passed to his right, disappearing on a southeast course.

from UFOs: A New look
NICAP, 1969.