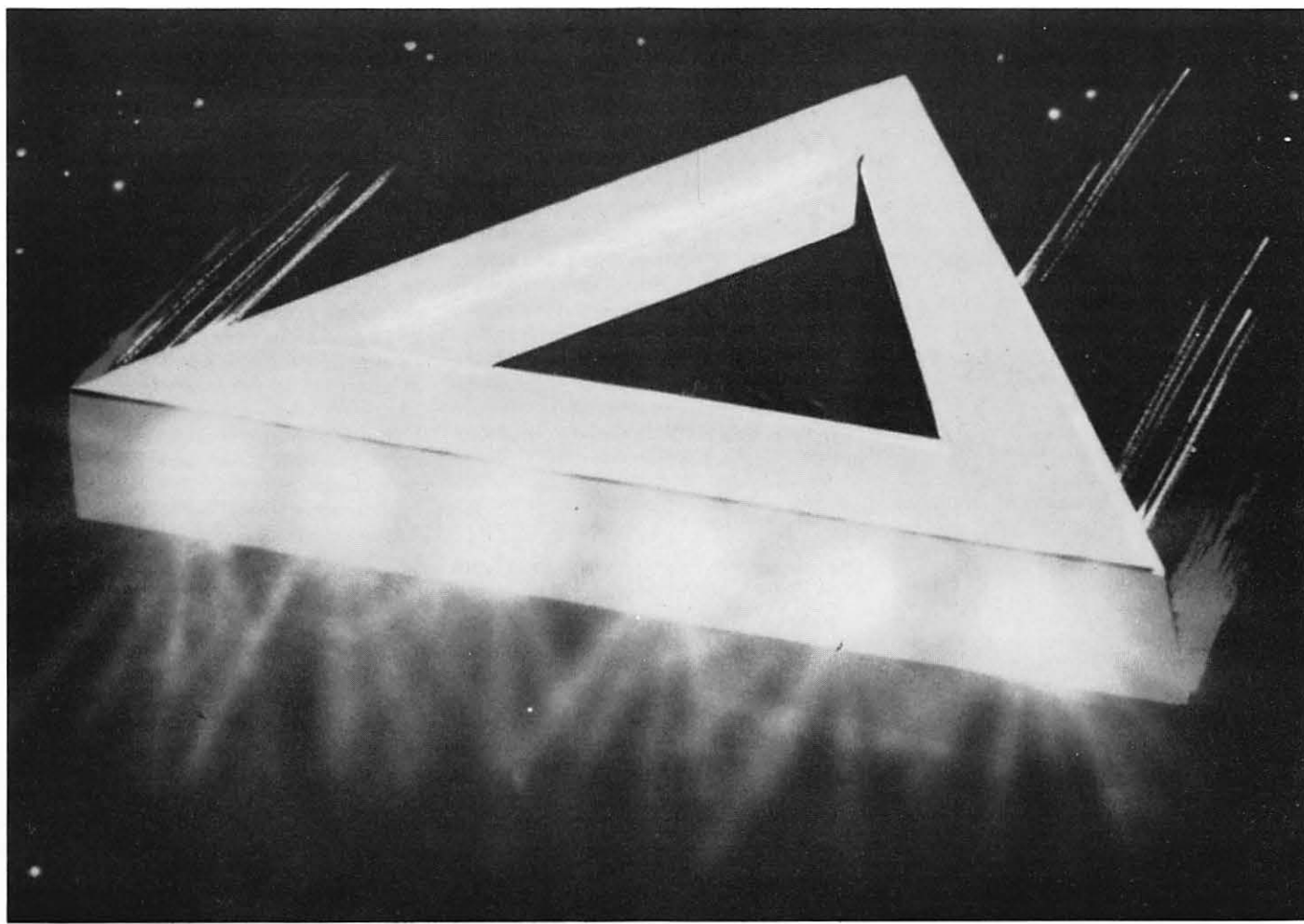


Jacksonville, FL 1967

A Huge "Open" Triangular UFO



A painting of the object sighted in this spectacular CE-1 appears above and on the cover of this issue. The original, in color, is a large framed representation made by a commercial artist from the detailed description by the primary witness, shortly after the event itself, and now hangs on the CUFOS Phoenix office wall. The UFO event was so traumatic and so indelibly impressed on the witness' mind that he went to some expense in having the painting made. He was kind enough to present it to the Center.

TYPE: CE-1
DATE: Oct. 27, 1967
TIME: 3 A.M.
DURATION: 10 minutes
WITNESSES: 4
PLACE: North of Jacksonville, Fla.

by Dr. Willy Smith

This is another of those fortuitous cases of which we learn only because of an unlikely chain of circumstances, in this instance a recent trip by Dr. Hynek to Florida, where he was tracked down by the main witness. The case has not only intrinsic interest in view of its high degree of strangeness, but also a high coefficient of credibility, considering the caliber of the witnesses; all were commercial pilots.

It seems almost a truism that the higher the "strangeness-index" of a sighting the longer it takes for it to be officially reported, and then it is finally reported only because the witness or witnesses feel they can report with dignity and without fear of ridicule. In this case the pilot-flight instructor happened

to tune in to a late night program on which Dr. Hynek was a guest and decided then, some sixteen years after the event, to make his experience known. Although related in confidence, we have his permission to publish it in these pages. The interviews took place in my home in Florida.

Course of Events

The witnesses were flying in a Piper Twin Commanche (N7942Y PA-30) from Opa-Locka, Fla., to Morristown, N.J., with a scheduled refueling stop in Wilmington, N.C., and a passenger drop-off at Philadelphia North Airport. The primary purpose of this flight was to accumulate night flying hours. The pilot at the controls was Charlie Little, a multi-engine rated flight instructor, who was instructing two other commercial pilots in multi-engine techniques. The fourth member was the Philadelphia-bound passenger.

PROFILE — Dr. Willy Smith

by J. Allen Hynek



Dr. Willy Smith

In 1980 Dr. Willy Smith decided to abandon all his other activities and devote himself full time to the study of the UFO phenomenon. Quite a decision for a professor of physics, to give up his professional career in education; he taught at the University of Michigan, where he had received his M.S. and Ph.D., and at Lycoming College in New York, and at the University of Valencia in Spain.

Dr. Smith was born in Uruguay and is fluent in Spanish and English, a talent which has made him particularly valuable to CUFOS; he is in charge of our "Latin American and Spanish Desk," acting as liaison with researchers and investigators in Spanish-speaking countries. He has been particularly helpful to me as an interpreter when we traveled together in South America. Before obtaining his graduate degrees he had spent one year working at the Atomic Energy Commission Facility in Puerto Rico.

His interest in the subject of UFOs started in the Fifties, and was strongly enhanced after a sabbatical leave in Europe in 1973, when he had the opportunity to meet and exchange ideas with leading researchers in this field in both Spain and France. Sometime after CUFOS was founded, I met Dr. Smith at Lycoming Col-

lege on the occasion of a lecture I gave there about UFOs. From that time our association grew, until in 1980 he became fully associated with the Center for UFO Studies, giving freely of his time and talents.

Dr. Smith is a frequent contributor to the *International UFO Reporter*, and is now working closely with CUFOS in a new research project involving UNICAT for which he is the database administrator. UNICAT is not to be confused with the much older and much more extensive UFOCAT, a UFO catalogue containing some 100,000 entries all told. UNICAT is a highly specialized catalogue; entries must meet stringent criteria before inclusion. Except in unusual cases, only those UFO events witnessed by several persons are included. In addition, the investigation must meet certain standards, as well as the investigator. UNICAT will serve, it is hoped, as a research tool, and unlike UFOCAT, will be made available after completion to anyone wishing to have it for serious research purposes. It will contain a short textual account of the sighting as well as a coded treatment. It will be available on computer diskettes.

Recently, Dr. Smith has been involved with Argentinian ufologists in the organization of the World Ufological Association (WUJA) which hopes, as time goes on, to establish world-wide standards in the training of ufologists as well as to seek adoption of ethical standards of professional conduct among ufologists. Dr. Smith is also a fluent lecturer and writer; he has given over one hundred public talks on the subject and has published numerous papers about UFOs in both Spanish and English. He was a member of the Board of Consultants of STENDEK, the Spanish UFO Journal which is now unfortunately defunct. He is also State Section Director for Seminole and Orange counties in Florida for MUFON.

Dr. Smith can be reached by correspondence to his home at 1200 Murcott Ct., Longwood, FL. 32750. He welcomes serious correspondence on UFO matters, particularly from technically trained persons. Although he is an indefatigable worker there is, of course, a human limit to the mail he can personally answer. All correspondence, however, is carefully noted. It is a pity we do not have more ufologists like Dr. Smith, particularly ones who are both devoted to the subject and multilingual! □

Even though this French case involves only a single witness, the GEPAN investigation is the answer to the skeptics' query: Where is the evidence for UFOs? GEPAN's work is a landmark in the study of UFOs, perhaps the most significant investigation ever undertaken of a single UFO report. And while it does not meet eminent physicist Philip Morrison's "multiple independent link-by-link, verified chains of evidence" criteria, it comes close enough so that it might even satisfy him of the extraordinary nature of the UFO phenomenon. (One is tempted to add: if this case does not convince skeptics, just what would be convincing, short of the proverbial landing on the White House Lawn?)

MUFON is to be congratulated for making the GEPAN report available to an English-speaking audience. Yet, even if they were made aware of the evidence, it is conceivable that many scientists will continue to reject the claim that the UFO phenomenon is unexplained. Scientists often wish to have both data and hypothesis in hand before accepting one or the other. To them, data without theory are rather useless. But that is the subject of another editorial... □

The night was very clear, and at about 3 A.M. they were flying at 8,000 feet over the ocean and approaching the airway intersection known as Starfish, halfway between Jacksonville and Charleston. The plane was in radar and radio contact with the Jacksonville Air Route Traffic Control Center, but there had been no conversation on the radio from the radar controller since they had passed Jacksonville. Referring now to the typed report Mr. Little had made after their harrowing Close Encounter:

"About fifteen minutes after we passed Jacksonville, the radar controller called us:

Radar Control: 42 Yankee. This is Jacksonville Center. Over.

Charlie Little: 42 Yankee. Go Ahead.

Radar Control: 42 Yankee. I show you 10 miles east of course and going further east.

Charlie Little: Roger. I will make 10 degree correction to the west.

Radar Control: Roger.

"...I was looking up at the stars and thought I noticed a moving light, but it was difficult to tell.

Radar Control: 42 Yankee. I now show you 20 miles east of course.

Charlie Little: Roger, Jacksonville. Our VORs (Navigation devices...they had two on board) show me right on the airway, but we will make another correction to the west.

"...A few more minutes went by. I looked up and felt certain I saw a moving light." Charlie pointed out the light to his companions; they all thought it was a high-altitude air carrier heading for Miami, but then the light appeared to get closer and to be descending, as if it were to land in Jacksonville.

Meanwhile, radar control called again, and now insisted that they were 30 degrees off course! Charlie and his companions now thought that there must be something wrong with their navigation devices which, until then, had been working perfectly. They showed the plane to be on course. "Well," Charlie thought, "I can understand losing the operation of one VOR but losing both VORs at the same time is impossible." Still

they thought they had no problems: it was a clear night and they were under radar contact with Jacksonville.

Meanwhile, the approaching light had become brighter and brighter and now Charlie called Jacksonville:

Charlie Little: Jacksonville Center. This is 42 Yankee.

Radar Control: 42 Yankee. This is Jacksonville Center. Go Ahead.

Charlie Little: Do you have any traffic out here for us?

Radar Control: Negative.

Charlie Little: Are you sure? I have traffic out here one o'clock, 15 miles high.

Radar Control: Wait a minute, let me turn up my primary. (Pause)

Radar Control: You are the only aircraft on my radar scope.

"I couldn't understand why he hadn't picked him up on his radar scope. I explained again the aircraft's position in relation to mine."

Charlie Little: I say again, one o'clock, now 10 miles high, southbound.

Radar Control: I don't have anything.

"Puzzled, I merely replied: 'Roger.' Even though it seemed impossible, we could only assume that the Radar Center had made a mistake. We then turned on our landing and taxi lights so the aircraft could better see us. As the light came closer and closer, it was very apparent that we were going to pass very close and that the aircraft was not making any move to avoid us. In desperation I quickly picked up the microphone:

Charlie Little: Jacksonville Center, this is 42 Yankee. We may need a lower altitude immediately.

Radar Control: Roger, 42 Yankee, maintain 7000.

Charlie Little: We may need all the way to the deck immediately.

Radar Control: Roger, maintain any altitude you want!

"I immediately disengaged the autopilot, pulled the throttle back and pushed the wheel forward trying to avoid a head-on collision. We descended to 6,500 feet but the lights came closer and closer. Staring at the bright light we were surprised to discover that what had appeared to be just one light was, in fact, six bright white lights in a line.

"A collision seemed imminent. Panicking, I yelled, 'We can't get away from him!' The situation seemed hopeless; there was no way to avoid him. We were all going to die because the pilot in the other craft wasn't paying attention. His aircraft was obviously much faster than ours. At that moment, I was certain that we were going to die, and my whole life passed in front of me." (*In our interview, Charlie was questioned as to whether he really meant that statement literally, and he replied affirmatively.*)

"The lights were so bright that I had to hold my hand over my eyes. I peeked through my fingers to watch. Suddenly, a soft green light was all over our cockpit." (This is certainly reminiscent of the famous Coyne helicopter case of Oct. 18, 1973, Mansfield, Ohio, in which a green light diffused all through the helicopter cockpit).

In his interview, Charlie Little was questioned closely as to the exact train of events, since after the passage of years it is only too well known that memories "alter." Little, however, maintained stoutly that this event had been so dramatically vivid that it was indelibly stamped upon him for life.

The UFO descended somewhat below them at this instant but still remained in front of them. At the instant collision seemed inevitable the craft made an unbanked 180 degree turn, remained ahead for a few seconds and then "took off and disappeared like a flash bulb."

"I immediately started leveling out our airplane to slowly ease back on the air speed to get it out of the yellow. As the air speed fell into the green, I pushed the throttle back forward to cruise speed, let go of the wheel, and grabbed Jeff's (the pilot closest to him) arm and shook him real hard and said, 'I want you to tell me exactly what you saw!' He answered, 'It was a gray triangle with six white lights.' I said, 'That's exactly what I saw.' "

(continued on page 6)

“Open” Triangle — cont.

They had had a clear view of the front lights, left side, top, inside of the right side, and the hole in the middle, which was so large that when mid-air collision seemed imminent, Charlie Little had gauged the possibility of flying right through it! The object was a triangle with sides at least 200 feet long and as high as a two story house, according to Charlie. While the outside edges were sharp and well-defined, the edges toward the triangular central hole were camber. The equilateral triangle was gray, perfectly smooth, with no rivets, doors, antennas, windows or other visible features. It was totally silent.

The object flew with one side forward (against all aerodynamic principles) and had on that side six very large and blinding white lights (see cover). In spite of its size the object demonstrated a high maneuverability and was able to come to a stop and reverse directly almost instantaneously.

“As a pilot, I did not believe in UFOs but we had just had a near mid-air collision with one! I looked at the altimeter. We were at 5,500 feet. I picked up the microphone:

Charlie Little: Jacksonville Center. This is 42 Yankee. We're at 5,500 feet ready to go back to 8,000.

Radar Control: 42 Yankee. Roger. Maintain 8000.

“We climbed back to 8,000 feet, engaged the auto pilot, picked up the microphone, called Jacksonville Center and tried to explain to the radar controller about the flying gray triangle. He responded sarcastically, ‘Sure, 42 Yankee.’

“I became very angry and threw the microphone on the floor instead of hanging it on the clip. ‘I'm never going to speak to him again,’ I told Jeff. We all knew we had just seen a UFO but we didn't know what to say. We were afraid that if we told anybody we would lose our pilot's licenses. This was very important to us because we were all hoping to become commercial airline pilots. It could be the end of our careers.

“Ten minutes went by. Then:

Radar Control: 42 Yankee. This is Jacksonville Center. Over.

“I didn't want to talk to him, and told Jeff so. I was angry. Again...

Radar Control: 42 Yankee. This is Jacksonville Center. Over.

Again I told Jeff I wasn't going to talk to him. Then...

Radar Control: 42 Yankee. Could you tell me any more about that flying triangle you were talking about?

So I picked the microphone off the floor:

Charlie Little: It was a gray triangle with six white lights on the front...wait a minute! A few minutes ago you didn't believe us and now you want to know all about it. Why?

Radar Control: A controller in Washington Center just called and said a United 727 captain had just reported the same thing over Washington. Do you want to file a report?

Charlie Little: Definitely not!

(Ed. comment: Attempts to locate the other two pilots have failed and so this remains a one-witness case. We have gone against our general principle of not including single-witness cases because Dr. Smith's and my long interviews, together and separately, have left no doubt in our minds that this event had been a very real and a very traumatic experience in the flight career of Charlie Little. We admit it reads like science fiction, but then, so do many other UFO accounts. Its science fiction aspect is not lessened by the fact that a rough calculation, based on the estimated time between the Charlie Little sighting and the one by the United Airlines pilot, leads to a speed of some 4,000 miles per hour, assuming both were sightings of the same object.)

Yes, it would be simpler just to dismiss cases like this as being “beyond belief” but would it be scientifically responsible to do so? We think not. □

by Philip J. Imborgno

After the March 24, 1983, flap we thought we had seen the last of the mysterious visitor reported in the skies over southern New York and southwestern Connecticut. Thus I was surprised when on June 14, 1984, I received a call from Peter Gersten, of Peekskill, N.Y., reporting new multiple sightings by independent witnesses. What they reported, once again, was a large V-shaped formation of up to 20 multicolored lights.

These sightings occurred between the end of May and about June 25, with the bulk on May 31, June 11 and June 14. Mr. Gersten and I together searched for witnesses and between the two of us received well over 90 reports.

The majority of the sightings came from the middle of Westchester county, but some also came from Fishkill, N.Y., in Putnam county. They described a large formation of lights, flashing from red to white to blue to green, with a dark mass behind the lights. The formation was reported to hover and to make either no sound or, at times, a faint, low-pitched hum. The lights were always in a V-formation, with the distance between the lights remaining constant even as the object turned. The sightings demanded investigation, particularly because of their similarity to those of 1983. So with the help of field investigators Chris Clark and George Lesnick, an investigation was begun. This time we had the assistance of MUFON member Lee O'Conner, of Danbury, Conn.

On May 31, 25 witnesses contacted us from the towns of Yorktown, Hawthorne, Bedford and Peekskill and an additional 10 excellent sighting reports came from Fishkill. Space will permit us to focus only on several accounts from first-rate witnesses.

May 31, 1984, 8:15 P.M.

John Burdett, a corporate executive for IBM with a B.S. in computer science, and his family were out on their deck, which overlooks the northern section of the sky in Hawthorne. Looking northward, they noticed approaching them a bright string of white lights, low on the horizon. At first they thought it was a large jet, perhaps a 747, in trouble.