N.E. OHIO FLAP by Richard P. Dell'Aquila

Richard P. Dell'Aquila and Dale B. Wedge, MUFON State Section Directors for Cuyahoga, Lake, Geauga and Ashtabula Counties (Ohio)

have been investigating a series of sightings, beginning about March 4, 1988 and seemingly centered around the Perry Nuclear Plant, and the CEI coal burning plant at Eastlake, both on the shore of Lake Erie, east of Cleveland, Ohio. March 4th was a clear, crisp nigh t and the stars were clearly

visible, especially to the north over the lake where there are no city

lights. Venus and Jupiter were bright and in close proximity to each other in the western sky. At about 6:30 P.M., S.B. (name and address provided to MUFON) and her children were driving home to Eastlake along the lake shore when they observed a large blimp-like object with bright white lights at each end, hovering over the lake and rocking end to end l ike a "teeter-totter." One light was brighter t han the other and was strobing. On arriving home, she asked her husband to accompany her to the beach about 200 yards north for a closer view of the object which they later described as "larger than a football held at arm's length." She and her husband walked onto the beach. The noiseless object was gun metal gray and seemed to cause the ice on the lake to rumble and crack loudly in an unusual way which frightened her. The witnesses had to shout to be heard by ea ch other, and were surpr ised that no dogs were out barking as would have been expected.

After observing the object for a while, the couple became concerned for the safety of their children in the car when the object revolved slowly about 90 degrees, coming almost overhead (about 1/4 mile high) and pointing its "front"

end down toward them. They drove the children home and continued watching the object from their living room window which fac es the lake. A neighbor was phoned and she and her son went to the beach, reporting the same thing. They took photographs which did not turn out. The object began to descend and the witnesses returned to the beach, where it was now observed to have red and blue blinking lights along its bottom edge. It emitted 5 or 6 noiseless, intensly bright yellow triangular lights from its side. They intermittently hovered around the larger object, darted and zig-zagged into the night sky at velocities far in excess of known aircraft. Mr. B stated the triangular objects we re smaller than a one-seat Cessna and "crossed 50 mile stretches low over the ice in the snap of a finger." They were said to be able to approach the shore, turn abrupt right angles due

east toward the Perry Nuclear Plant about 12 miles away, climbing rapidly and returning again, all within several seconds. By this time, a Coast Guard patrol vehicle had arrived on the beach in response to S.B.'s several phone calls. The triangular objects came closer t o the shore, causing the

witnesses to become concerned that the lights on the Coast Guard vehicle would attract the objects and the lights were turned off. The triangles continued to fly off at high speed northward over the lake and eastward toward the Perry Nuclear Plant. About an hour later, they returned one at a time into the large ship, which then landed on the ice. Several multi-colored lights now came on for about 5 minutes

on the bottom of the object "in a wave like a mo vie theater s ign" and the brighter white light on the end began strobing red and white.

When these went off, the ice stopped making noise and everything became "dead silent." The object could no longer be seen within about a half hour and it was assumed to have gone below the surface. The next day, unusually huge pieces of broken ice were observed in the area of the landing.

The Coast Guard informed Mr. and Mrs. B the followi ng day that the Army and NASA, whom S.B. had also phoned, instructed them no t to investigate the matter further or go out on the lake in their cutter to examine the ice in the area of the landing, since the matter was "out of their league and out of their hands." They informed the couple that all information was being forwarded to Wright-Patterson Air Force Base and a facility in Detroit, Michigan. In response to a Coast Guard inquiry, Wright-Patterson refused to confirm or deny any interest in these activities. O n the next night, the same witnesses observed sever al triangular objects over the lake for about 45 minutes. By the time Coast Guard personnel arrived on the scene, the objects were gone. On March 7, 1988, the Cleveland Plain Dealer and Lake County News-Herald carried articles which attributed a series of reports of large brightly lit objects over Lake Erie on the prior weekend to several witnesses' misidentification of the planets Venus and Jupiter. The newspaper accounts indicated that the Fairport Harbor Coast Guard went to the area and saw a large bright object that seemed to dispurse

smaller, bright multi-colored objects. But when they called the local air traffic controllers, they were "informed" that Jupiter and Venus were in alignment and that the colors were the result of "spontaneous gas emissions from the two planets." One article even attributed this amazing explanation

to a professor of astronomy at a local university. On reading the articles,
Dell'Aquila felt it was unlikely that U.S. Coast Guard personnel, tra ined in
navigation and identification of basic celestial objects such as the planets,
could have made such a gross misidentification. Likewise, the statement
attributed to the professor of astronomy was equally unacceptable, in that no
other similar "spontaneous gas emission" from the planets cited, of the
necessary magnitude, had ever been noted, particulary on this weekend. In the
course of the follow-up investigation by Dell'Aquila

and Wedge, a Coast Guard incident report was found (p res ently in MUFON's
possession) which states that Coast Guard personnel responded to several calls
reporting UFOs over Lake Erie on the night of March 4, 1988. When the Coast
Guard arrived, the report confirms that a large object "dispersed 3-5 smaller
flying objects that were zipping around rather quickly. These objects had
red, green white, and yellow lights on them that strobed intermittently. They
also had the ability to stop and hover in mid-flight." The incident report
confirms Mr. and Mrs. B 's reports, including the abnormal cracking of the ice
as the object came closer to it and apparently landed. "The smaller objects
began hovering in the area where the large object landed (about 1/4 mile east
of the CEI power plant) and after a few minutes they began flying around
again." The report states that, "One of the

small objects turned on a spotlight where the large object had been, but [the
Coast Guard personnel] could not see anything, and then the object seemed to
disappear. Another ob ject approached [these personnel] approximately 500
yards offshore about 20 feet above the ice, and it began moving closer as [the
Coast Guard] began flashing its headlights, then it moved off to the west."

A subsequent Coast Guard report (also in possession of MUFON) prepared after the sightings of the following night attributes the sightings to misidentifications of the planets Venus and Jupiter and says, "the fla shing lights are gases in the at mosphere...Request incident closed this unit." In response to a classified advertisement placed by the investigators, other witnesses contacted Dell'Aquila and Wedge, and have been interviewed as the investigation continues. On the same night (March 4th) at about 10:00 P.M., and continuing until approximately 10:30 P.M., C.H. (name and address

provided to MUFON) also reported a UFO near her home, which is a few miles south of the lake shore and just east of the Perr y Nuclear Plant. C.H. wa s walking a puppy when she noticed the stationary triangular object in the southeasterly sky. It was much brighter than the moon, and seemed to upset the puppy, which she took back indoors. Returning outdoors, she reported that the object began sequentially flashing multi-colored lights, suspended in rows below the base of the triangle. The witness responded by flashing her cigarette lighter and the UFO's light pattern beca me more erratic. At one point, the triangle revolved clockwise, turning it s apex about 90 degrees to a horizontal position, but still flashing the rows of light. After several minutes, it turned back counter-clockwise as it simultaneously

accelerated away to the south at a high rate of speed, disappearing behind some trees. No noise or odor was reported. At about 10:30 P.M. that night T.K. (name and address provided to MUFON), took a photograph in his back yard, within a few miles of the Perry Nuclear Plant, showing a portion of a brightly lit triangular object travelling across the sky (Photograph in possession of MUFON). This object was later confirmed by Mr. and Mrs. B and C.H. to be identical to the triangular objects they were also observing

about the same time a few miles away, and is also similar to one reported to Phil Imbrogno as having been near the Indian Point Nuclear Power Plant in New York State on the same night. T.K. and his friend were outdoors on the night of March 4th, observing the stars throu gh his telescope. Venus and Jupiter were reported to be in the western sky behind a stand of trees. While looking southward through the telescope, out of the corner of his left eye, T.K. noticed a bright, moving object in the sky. He and his friend were awe-struck by the triangular object, but he did have the presence of mind to take 3 photographs with a small "snapshot" type camera loaded with Kodak 110 color film, with which they had intended to photograph stars through the telescope. Only one photograph turned out. It is the l ast in the series, taken while panning ahead of the object, and shows the front portion of the triangle. The object was described as about 3-4 inches tall at arm's length and glowing an intense yellow/orange to white, with a bright orange/red glow behind it. It seemed to pulse brighter and dimmer, moving in a roughly southwesterly direction until it was obscured by trees. As it moved, it accelerated, slowed and accelerated again. No sound or smell was noted, although his dog had a strong reaction , running in circles and tugging on T.K.'s sleeve, apparently in an attempt to urge him away from the object.

Total time of observation was a few minutes. Dell'Aquila and Wedge continue to receive reports of additional UFOs over the same period, some supported by photographs, as the sightings continue to the date of this writing.

Supplementary reports will be provided as the investigation of the flap progresses.

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