

THE "SNAILS" ARE STILL AROUND - PART 2

Ernst Berger

OUR second part of the follow-up report on the Traunstein local "flap" will deal with phenomena up to the deadline of April 20, 1975.

December 14, 1974

Between 6.45 and 7.00 p.m. CET, Hans Pritz started his car and left for Kaltenbach. The night was starry, even too starry. One especially bright "star" seemed to be out of place, twinkling 4° over the horizon. Pritz drove home to fetch his binoculars and trained them on the "star". What he saw was enough to make him drive 1.7 km. further to the south-west and park his car in a field. He cranked down the side window. Later he asked us: "Have you ever watched the beacon light of a patrol car? It was very much like that, a patch of light going round and round." The object had Jupiter brightness and was basically of yellowish tint but changed colours a little, though they were weak. The "beacon" rotated continuously counterclockwise with a frequency of about one rev. per second. With binoculars the object was also seen to be projecting a very thin motionless ray from the upper left edge straight upwards to a point some two object diameters distant, where it ended abruptly.

Suddenly Hans spotted a carmine red dot in the sky in the beacon-object's first position ($az. 114^{\circ}$), but lower, flying towards the east at the same moderate speed. "Maybe it was released from the big one and I missed it, because I looked somewhere else... It struck me they were flying so slowly - no speed compared to 1973." The whole watch lasted hardly a quarter of an hour. The red dot was finally lost in the distance and the "beacon" flew further to the west where it eventually was lost in a cloud.

December 21, 1974

While Hans Pritz was watching TV, Fichtinger arrived to tell him to come and see three objects which didn't fit into the star formations. They were the usual yellow-orange colour as bright as Jupiter and standing in a triangular formation: "A star would never twinkle as much." Through binoculars they appeared to consist of a clod of light and a peak slanting to the left a bit (see sketch). Because of the cold night, Hans returned home after 15 minutes.

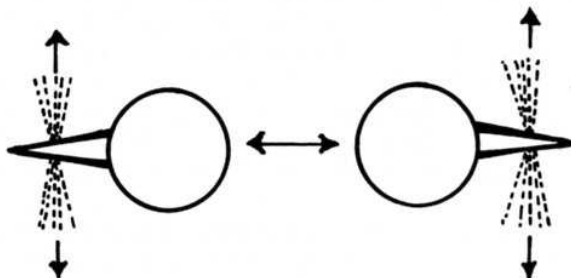
A "spark-thrower" enters the stage

The next report reached us by chance and the witness, who chose to remain anonymous, is not acquainted with the Pritz family. Mrs. X lives in a village (more correctly a few scattered houses) in an isolated wooded valley south of Poeggstall, which

lies 15 km. SSE of Traunstein. She is an old country wife in her sixties walking with a limp after a leg injury, and with reduced powers of hearing. However, she has impressive mental freshness and an interest in natural phenomena.

On a clear morning before Christmas, 1974, about 6.30 a.m., she spotted a globe, halfway up the mountain called Mt. Mandelgupf, and it was swinging to and fro gently like a pendulum. This secondary movement seemed to be superimposed on a slow, forward motion, i.e. a straight course to the east, towards the slope of Mt. Hofkogel, south of Mandelgupf. "First I said: For heaven's sake, what does it mean? Is the thing going to explode?...it was like a sword, and it changed from left to right alternately, but the ball remained the same..." From the fiery orange ball of nearly full moon diameter there extended a kind of peaked horizontal appendage (see sketch) of the same colour and brightness... "Pretty large, and the sword didn't stay long. But the most interesting to me was the sparks - beautiful, like a wonder candle (a popular piece with phosphorous for the Austrian Christmas tree which when set afire throws out showers of bright sparks - E.B.) or a blacksmith hammering a red-hot iron, but only for seconds." As soon as the "sword" achieved its full length, lots of tiny sparks "like tiny stars" sprayed out, up and downwards, from the point right in the middle of the spine, halfway from the globe to the outer tip. "It sparked, but was gone very soon each time."

The appendage showed the same change as described by the Spielberg witness - it "came out" both to the left and right side of the globe reciprocally and without a stop. The sparks seemed to be dependent on full extension of the peak, for they never appeared outside this period of a few seconds. The witness went to look whether her son was awake (he lives with his wife in the next house down the slope) and he was not, unfortunately. When she



Poeggstall "spark thrower"

returned the ball had almost gone behind a patch of conifers. The observation came to an end about ten minutes after 6.30 a.m. Mrs. X asked quite a few neighbours and Poeggstall residents, including the head forester, but nobody else had watched the phenomenon in the valley. "I can trust my eyes, believe me," she remarked, "I am able to count the cows on Mt. Mandelgupf in summer (two kilometres away)."

January 12, 1975. The "defective neon tube"

At 10.30 p.m., Hans Pritz was alerted by his friend Fichtinger to a yellow-orange object in the sky "like a neon streetlight tube flickering wildly before its burn-out. Pritz, who looked at it through binoculars, commented, "It twinkled much more than an ordinary star. 'Living Light' would aptly express it. There was some kind of red waves which, — well, scurried over the surface..." The whole object looked rather flat, not globular." Two days later, on January 15, at 6.05 p.m., Pritz decided to go for a drive. At the veranda door he happened to look up and saw, in the clear sky some distance from the cloud cover's edge, a yellow-orange object following a straight trajectory (when first noticed it was at $214^{\circ}\text{az.}, 11^{\circ}\text{el.}$). Pritz hastened to the car to fetch his binoculars and was amazed to watch the object turn into a red shape — the "switch-over" typical of the Grafenschlag low-level object — at its course to the east. After a total of about a minute and a half (time test) it disappeared behind some trees beyond his neighbour's rooftop. Only a few minutes later at 6.10 p.m., another one appeared. It was different — a carmine red shade with a curved upper part and a flattened bottom, like a disc seen in profile — and following the first object's path. The apparent size of the first object was nearly the same as in the Grafenschlag case, but the second was only two thirds its size. At 6.20 p.m. a third object appeared, with the same trajectory and duration of visibility. Pritz climbed into his car shortly afterwards and drove away. He returned after 7.00 p.m. — in time to see a soundless "disc" at 7.35 p.m. "I was lucky enough to have a comparison with a light plane — one flew past between observations and gave quite an echo in the woods, I can assure you."

January 17, 1975

At 8.45 p.m., Hans Pritz and his uncle watched three sulphur-yellow objects in the northern sky over Wachstein. One object was as bright as Jupiter at $310^{\circ}\text{az.}, 13^{\circ}\text{el.}$, and two "stars" of less brilliance formed a perfect triangle, with it, one at $310^{\circ}\text{az.}, 16^{\circ}\text{el.}$ and the other a few degrees further to the north. Hans Pritz, who used his binoculars, was able to provide us with the best technical description of a "classical dogfight" we have on our records: "The big one (and upper) would go left and right (horizontally), then up and down (vertically), then do a clockwise circle — and one time I even saw it approach us in a kind of slalom race motion, wiggling and drawing back quickly...And besides you'd see it move along within the next half hour more than a star would do...The intervals between the motion periods were not always the same length, but the

periods were. For instance, it (the big one) would go left-right, hang motionless for a while, then up-down, and immediately afterwards do a circle; but on the next occasion it would perform all the figures without a stop." The two lower "stars" did not move most of the time, but always followed the big object's movement to the right after the latter had done a series of figures. Consequently, the three in their formation moved to the right, gradually, "in a hesitating way" as had the three globes of October 29, 1973. Hans Pritz watched another "dogfight" identical to this on February 27, 1975, from 7.45 to 8.00 p.m.

March 1, 1975

Pritz was in a car with three friends (names withheld by request), travelling from Frankenreith to Zwettl. Just before entering Gross Weissenbach there is a bend, and it was here that a red glow from an oval body was sighted. Pritz's companions urged him not to stop, to his subsequent deep regret, saying it must be due to a fire. But no flames or smoke were noticed, and on checking later no fire had been reported. Pritz also spotted three lemon-coloured globes, half the size of the full moon; they consisted of many small parts, like pieces in a jigsaw, clearly divided, and were standing in line at the same level of the fiery object, like a string of pearls. In our subsequent field investigation, triangulation showed that the "dirigible" was 50 metres in length, 10–12 metres wide and had hovered some 30 metres from the ground.

April 19, 1975. Something with a cupola

At 9.50 p.m., Frau Lilly Tham, the wife of our service station owner and witness, was on her way from Biberschlag (one kilometre east of Spielberg) to the garage. Driving her Opel car along the flat road which runs westwards across open fields, she caught sight of something in the sky, right over the garage roof, but definitely further away.

"It was round and at first going on and off like a car blinker — that's why I initially assumed it to be a plane." She stopped the car and throttled the engine: no sound... "Red and green it went on two parts simultaneously. The 'something' turned out to be a yellowish ellipse, blinking red at the upper right rim and green at the right lower edge. A dark 'hump' rose above its upper left contours." She stepped on the gas again to get her husband out of the garage.

Ernst Berger had asked them to drive by car to different positions during their next sighting to allow for triangulation, and this they did during the next five minutes. Meanwhile the lights stopped flashing and two points of light, green and red respectively, moved around the object's outer shell in concentric paths.

They rushed back across the centre of the village and in the direction of Traunstein. On the top of the hill, "Spielberg Höhe", Frau Tham hit the brakes as it seemed such a fine prospect point. Walther immediately noticed that the object appeared flatter than before and that the hump over it appeared higher. Either the object had dipped in the time it took to cross the village, or it was an effect of the observ-

ation angle. Most important, this observation made it clear that the "something" was a kind of disc with a superstructure. The lights were still travelling around anticlockwise.

Flying Tank Number Two

Questioned more closely, Tham commented that it was "like a round turret, a tank turret. Well, it really looked like a flying tank. The hump wasn't in the middle, but a distance to the left in the front third." He dropped a bombshell with this description as we had made sure by asking Herr Pritz that Tham never read about the details or saw the sketch of the "tank" of October 28/29, 1973, which had hovered near Traunstein and had been described by Pritz in nearly the same words apart from the "feelers" and illumination details: "The whole Traunstein tank was dark."* The Tham couple also noticed the same yellowish airglow around the turret which had been present around the whole "Traunstein Tank". Tham insisted that he had never talked to Pritz about it and also reminded us brutally that we had neglected a brief comment of his at our interview with him in 1973 about the turret on Tank Number One: "Maybe it wasn't in the middle." We suppressed this for no good reason and drew a perfectly symmetrical shape for FSR. This may not be correct.

The Tank's departure

The object was estimated as hovering at 330° az. and 5.5° el. Tham later calculated the horizontal diameter to be 20' in this position. "It was so impressive I felt light in my stomach," he told us.

The object stood out prominently in the starlit night. Seconds later it was left behind the trees. Breaking all speed limits, Lilly raced into Traunstein to fetch Hans Pritz from his home. A few minutes past 10.00 p.m. the trio were back, but the object was not.

* It should be mentioned that the domed disc sketch in FSR Vol.20 No.2, p.14, shows an overdimensioned turret which is about twice the size described by Pritz; also, the pointed ends of the ellipse should be erased.

In Defence of Amateurs (continued from page 23)

When the time comes that sufficient knowledge is available as to the nature of UFOs, and they can be properly classified and studied, only then will ufology be a science. The distinction of "amateur" as opposed to "scientist" as used at present is illogical.

In Southern California, the mainstream of UFO research since 1955 has been handled by small groups of dedicated persons. One of the most effective groups was the Los Angeles NICAP Subcommittee which handled the majority of Southern California sighting reports from 1959 through 1972. It included a bio-physicist, three engineers, a public relations person, a bookkeeper, a social worker and a secretary, together with various scientific and technical consultants.

We worked in fruitful unison for more than twelve years. Since 1973, when it transferred its resources

Evaluating our azimuth rays we found out that the disc very likely moved towards the west every time the observers changed their position by car, but stopped when Lilly Tham did. There is no other explanation than this for two parallel azimuth lines from two locations 500 metres distant. If we assume a true distance of 750 metres, which is also approved by the Tham couple, the true diameter would have been five metres across horizontally, the disc being 80 metres off the ground.

April 20, Traunstein again

At about 3.00 a.m., Gerhard Pritz was walking home (sober) from an extended visit in central Traunstein, totally ignorant of his brother's sighting four hours earlier. "I stopped for a while down there, near the lamp (where the Pritz driveway enters the road—E.B.), and smoked a cigarette, gazing at the stars. Suddenly something approached. I first thought of an aeroplane, but there were two things, not one. The first one stopped, and the second flew right over it and then stopped too. I watched them for quite three quarters of an hour from this moment. They didn't move. It was a red shape in the starry night, all quiet — and completely silent too. Later on I watched an aeroplane fly past — audibly."

Both objects were 15' wide in the sky, egg-shaped, with clear outlines and rather dark carmine red in colour. Not knowing this would be the very last chance for months, Gerhard forgot to immediately inform his brother, who was fast asleep in his room with a camera from Ernst Berger and a high speed-negative film in his drawer! The Pritz brothers got no second chance for some time. The photo-shunning "snails" had fled the area. Later, there were two sightings at Spielberg, on October 31 and December 28, 1975. Although the Traunstein region seems not to have lost its visitors, the real "flap" had its deadline in April, 1975, and we may close our study with a few statistics.

[The discussion will follow in Part III— EDITOR]

to MUFON, the group has grown manifold, pulling in scientists in varied disciplines and other experts of widely disparate skills. The only thing required of each individual is that he/she loves the subject and is competent in research and field investigation of UFOs.

This is the only reasonable way in which UFO research can be done. It makes no difference *what* skills and training a UFO researcher possesses. The field is so complex that every learned, intelligent, and properly motivated person can contribute to it in a unique way.

If we remember that no one holds within his grasp the ability to explore the *whole* field, we can rid the literature forever of the word "amateur" and the mental picture it invokes of a lay ufologist, nursing his mashed thumb.

MAIL BAG

Travis Walton replies

Dear Mr. Bowen,—I read your article *The Snowflake Story: a Commentary* in the February issue of FSR. Although your treatment of the material you had was quite fair, I'm afraid you've been the victim of some false reportings. Some of these result from mistakes made by newsmen, but the majority of the false statements come from Bill Spaulding of GSW.

Mr. Spaulding gave the same impressions to MUFON's *Skylook* magazine, and as many newspapers as would hear him. This was done in keeping with his promise printed in the papers which said; "We're gonna blow this whole thing out today!" which he made after being miffed when APRO took over investigation of the case. He has tried to carry out his threat to destroy the credibility of this case but has succeeded only in hurting his own credibility, for in the words of Dr. J. Allen Hynek of the Center for UFO Studies: "I guess I sent the wrong man in on this one." It was Dr. Hynek, not the police, who sent for Spaulding because Spaulding was closer, being in Arizona.

I'm enclosing comments on the articles in *Skylook*, and a new clipping, because to clear up the misunderstandings GSW has created would require covering that same ground anyway.

In your article you asked: "Is Duane Smith Travis's brother?" Dwayne Smith is not my brother but Duane Walton is. My brother Duane was not at work with us at the time of the encounter, but was 180 miles away in Phoenix where he shoes horses for a living.

My brother Duane was very angry at the men who ran and left me lying on the ground that November 5th. I myself have no hard feelings about that. It's quite understandable now, after seeing the awesome power demonstrated by that blue beam, those men would flee. Any attempts at heroics would possibly have only resulted in a similar fate for those who thought I had been killed and was beyond help anyway. I can't say I would have done any differently faced with apparent hostility from intelligences far superior to our own.

Sirius Mystery (continued from page 25)

field. But the relatively lightweight stories which have recently been written, and the heavyweight technologies which have been developed in the U.S.A. and U.S.S.R. during the past 25 years have prepared the public mind for accepting something previously

Correspondence is invited from our readers, but they are asked to keep their letters short. Unless letters give the sender's full name and address (not necessarily for publication) they cannot be considered. The Editor would like to remind correspondents that it is not always possible to acknowledge every letter personally, so he takes this opportunity of thanking all who write to him.

All of us would prefer to imagine ourselves as more gallant, but I think that fleeing was their only sensible choice under those circumstances.

I had my own share of fear and was scared into returning to the truck by the sudden sound of the saucer, but I was quickly prevented from doing so by that ray. Perhaps my curious approach was foolhardy but for all concerned I can only say, what's been done is done.

I haven't read one account of this that was totally correct but maybe these letters will help correct some misconceptions. The first APRO Bulletin on the case had some minor errors but the new one should clear everything up. Thank you for your interest.

Sincerely,
Travis C. Walton
Box 1072, Snowflake, Arizona,
85937, U.S.A.
April 12, 1976

Charles Bowen comments ...

Travis Walton's neatly typed letter arrived a few days before I was due to leave for America to attend the Chicago conference of Dr. Hynek's Center for UFO Studies. FSR Vol.22 No.1 had been pushed forward in preparation at that time, so the letter has had to await this issue for publication. We do not have sufficient space to print the comments on the Skylook article but, in fairness, I will extract one relevant observation from the copy of a letter (which could have been typed on the same machine as Travis Walton's letter) sent by Mr. Michael H. Rogers to Mr. Dwight Connelly, Editor of Skylook, on April 11, 1976:—

"In your report from GSW, Spaulding says Travis's mother showed no emotion during her son's disappearance. However, I find in the February issue of *Flying Saucer Review* Spaulding says that she told him, crying, that her son was 'with God in a UFO.' What is the matter with this man? Neither of his conflicting statements is true. I know Mrs. Walton was terribly upset, as I was the one who first broke the news to

her that night. After a few days of fruitless search she realised Travis had to be on the UFO but she did not say he was 'with God in a UFO.' "

I presume the Michael M. Rogers who wrote the letter is the man who was crew boss of the logging team when Travis is said to have encountered the UFO. It now remains to conclude this item with a re-printing of the news cutting which Travis sent me, an article in the "Phoenix Gazette" of March 23, 1976:—

"There is 'no substantiation in fact' for the hoax accusations brought against a young Snowflake man who claims to have been abducted by an unidentified flying object last fall, according to the nation's leading authority on UFOs.

"Dr. J. Allen Hynek, a Northwestern University astronomer and head of the Center for UFO Studies, said today he had interviewed Travis Walton and believes he is 'not hoaxing.'

"He has been made the subject of a lot of unnecessary and unfounded accusations,' Hynek said. 'There seems to be little support for the accusations made against him.'

"The professor who has interviewed hundreds of UFO witnesses since he began studying the phenomenon in 1948, said Walton had successfully completed a polygraph test of his story three weeks ago.

"Walton, 22, disappeared for five days in early November after he and six logging companions reportedly sighted a UFO on the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest near Heber. When he reappeared, he claimed he had been taken aboard the craft, examined and held captive.

"After the incident, observers claimed the entire event was a hoax, or that Walton had been hallucinating on drugs. Navajo County police authorities suggested the idea had originated with a television show which was aired shortly before the incident.

"Hynek today cast doubts on all those stories.

"He noted nighttime temperatures in the Heber area at the time hovered around 8 degrees, and loggers in the area agree there are 'grave doubts' a

undreamed of about the initiation of civilisation on this planet. It is to be hoped, therefore, that FSR readers will not be slow to study the work of this bright young man, Robert Temple, who is likely to be of great significance in years to come.