

(round marks, 2-3 m. in diameter, seemingly produced by "sweeping" the chippings, which had subsequently vanished, during the night of April 14-15, as though by magic).

At about 2130 hrs., using an amateur's camera lent to him by a friend, *Monsieur Sferrazza filmed two UFOs*. The images of one of them (duration: 20 seconds) are especially interesting.

The object is round, and has a "metallic" appearance. Near its centre, a small black spot is visible, and, on the periphery, three "notches", roughly disposed in a triangle, can be seen.

What is most astonishing about this UFO filmed at Flémalle in Belgium is its extraordinary resemblance to another UFO seen by scores of people, and also filmed, at Crozia, in Southern Italy, on May 30, 1987.

A TRIANGULAR CRAFT SEEN OVER EASTERN FRANCE

ACCORDING to a report published in the Spanish newspaper *La Vanguardia* (Barcelona) for April 17, 1990, a Frenchman and his wife who were driving in their car in the region of Montbéliard, Département of Doubs, Eastern France, on the night of Sunday, April 15, 1990, had a very similar sighting to those reported so widely in Belgium of late. The witnesses, Marcel and Silvia Matzner, said: "We were

driving along when a triangular-shaped machine appeared and began to fly along at a height of twenty metres or so above us. It had powerful lights in the centre and on its sides." (The position of Montbéliard is at 47° 31 N 6° 48 E).

(Credit and thanks to FSR Consultant J. Plana Crivillén of Barcelona.)

From French magazine **PARIS-MATCH**, No. 2145, (Paris), July 5, 1990.

A UFO ON THE F16's RADAR

AUTHORIZED PUBLICATION OF DOCUMENTS FROM THE BELGIAN MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

Exclusive report for PARIS-MATCH by Marie-Thérèse de Brosses

(Translation from French. G.C.)

We are indebted to FSR Consultant J. Plana Crivillén (Barcelona) who has sent us the French text of this report. — EDITOR

WE are authorized by the Belgian Ministry of Defence to publish this documentation. It's "the scoop of the skies". These two screens (shown in the accompanying photos) are the incontestable testimony to an encounter between Science and Fiction. For the first time ever, the Belgian Air Force has agreed to divulge the radar-images of a UFO intercepted by the pilots of its *F-16s*. The recordings were registered during the night from March 30 to March 31, 1990. It was the precision and the clarity of these images that induced the Belgian Defence Ministry to deploy a considerable effort during the subsequent tremendous UFO-chase (in the event not so successful) over the entire Easter weekend of 1990.

Behind the figures and the symbols of these exceptional documents, **PARIS-MATCH** enables you to discover and to decypher the incredible performances of these flying objects, which are very real indeed, and yet which still remain "unidentified". Maybe we are not alone in the Universe.

Who says this? It is the Military, the proverbially silent Military. They are telling you that the UFOs are no myth. Today, on June 22, 1990, for the first time ever, an Air Force has consented to reveal (in part) a major portion from this file which is not Science-Fiction.

On this day, June 22, 1990, after submitting to all the Security checks, I find myself in the Headquarters of the Belgian Air Force, near Brussels. In a small room, Colonel De Brouwer, Chief of the Operations Section of the Belgian Air Force, switches on a video tape-recorder. On the video screen appears the film brought back in the "black box" of the *F-16* aircraft that, in the night of March 30/31 last, was sent up in pursuit of an unidentified flying object. (This isn't the really big chase that was to happen two weeks later, during that famous Easter weekend when the whole of Belgium tried unsuccessfully to chase the UFO. This is

in fact quite another mission, and one that until now has been kept completely secret).

Ever since November 1989, the Belgian Military have been on the alert. Numerous Gendarmerie reports are coming in daily, describing sightings of UFOs, over the national territory of Belgium. It had all begun on that crazy night of November 29, 1989, during which thirty groups of eyewitnesses (including three Gendarmerie patrols), scattered over a distance of 800 kilometres between Liège and the Belgian/German and Belgian/Dutch frontiers, observed, over a period of hours, a strange triangular and almost silent apparatus moving very slowly, and at a very low altitude, and without creating the slightest turbulence.

Like all the Air Forces in the world, the Belgian Military possess supersonic aircraft that stand ready, 24 hours a day, to take off at five minutes' notice. Here it means two single-seater *F-16s* armed with missiles.

The Air Force Headquarters are careful and cautious. On two occasions during the previous months, the two *F-16s* have been sent out in vain to investigate reported sightings. On the first occasion they detected nothing. On the second, it was simply a matter of luminous blobs produced by the lasers emanating from a night-club.

COL. DE BROUWER: "OUR DEFENCE SYSTEM IS POWERLESS AGAINST THESE MACHINES".

On this night, March 30, after receiving repeated calls — notably from a Captain Pinson of the Gendarmerie — the Air Force Headquarters will therefore carry out several preliminary checks. In addition to the simple visual sightings made by numerous eyewitnesses, two radar-stations have both already picked

up the echoes of a UFO. These are the radar post at Glons (south-east of Brussels), which forms part of the NATO defensive system, and the radar post at Semmerzake (to the west of Brussels), which controls the civil and military air traffic of the entire Belgian national territory.

The ranges (300 kms.) of these two radar stations suffice to cover the zone where the expected sighting will occur. The general relief of the terrain over this region shows little accentuation, and the radar coverage is perfect for any object flying at above 200 metres altitude. All the same, the Air Force Hqrs. will now proceed to carry out a series of detailed verifications, lasting a total of fifty minutes, so as to be able to eliminate any risk of error.

The two radars indicate the same position for the object. And the excellent atmospheric conditions exclude all possibility of a false echo due to a temperature inversion.

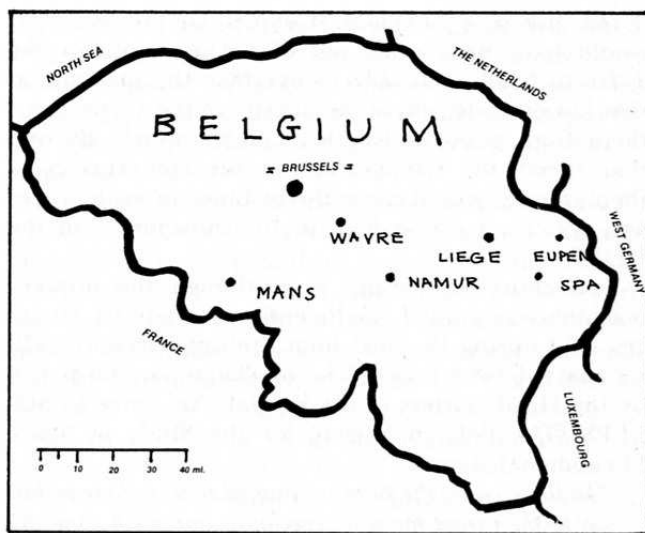
All aircraft, be they civilian or military, are equipped with an automatic radar transponder system which enables them to be identified immediately by a coded signal appearing on the radarscope. The radar echo received on the night in question resembles the echo from an aircraft travelling at a very low speed (50 kms.p.h.) and frequently changing course and changing altitude. But it furnishes no message permitting it to be identified.

The Belgian Air Force cannot allow an unidentified flying object to overfly its territory. So, at 00.05 hrs., the order is given to the two *F-16s* to take off and go and track the intruder.

The lead-pilot, and head of the patrol, keeps his eyes glued to the screen of his pursuit radarscope — his best “organ of vision” during a night mission. (The *F-16* is a highly sophisticated machine; its pursuit radarscope is not rigidly fixed in relation to the ‘plane, but permits an extremely clever search for its target, both horizontally and vertically, over a wide field of 90°.)

A few score metres behind the lead-pilot, his wingman, in the second *F-16*, follows the movements of his patrol-leader, at the same time concentrating on maintaining contact with the Operations Co-Ordinations Centre.

Suddenly the two *F-16s* “see” the intruder appear like a little bee dancing on their radarscopes. Then,



using a small lever (the ‘joystick’), as in the video games, the pilots indicate to their own on-board computers the target to be pursued. As soon as lock-on is achieved, the spot on the screen is transformed into a ‘diamond-shape’, which means that from now on the two radars of the *F-16s* will automatically remain locked-on to the target, indicating on their screens its position, its distance, and its speed. The target is in fact quite near to them . . .

On this section of the video-tape, which Colonel De Brouwer has, in such an exceptional fashion, authorized us to see, the radio exchanges between the two pilots can be followed. And we feel their excitement.

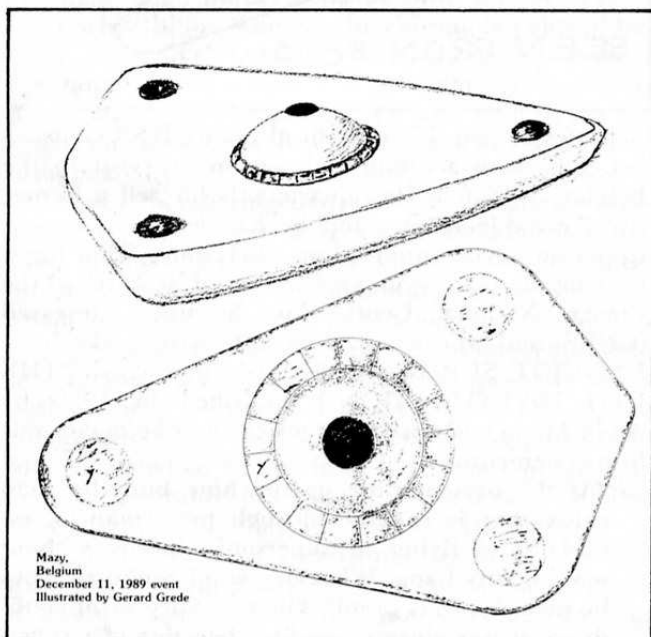
“Look!”, says Colonel De Brouwer, halting the picture and pointing to the ‘diamond’. “At this moment we have what we call, in our military jargon, a *successful interception*.”

I ask: “What does ‘*successful interception*’ mean in concrete terms?”

He replies: “Our fighter ‘planes are equipped with automatically guided missiles. Had the order been given, all that the pilots would have had to do would have been to release their salvos of missiles and these, provided already with the data furnished by the on-board computers, are smartly ‘homed in’ onto the target. (In this present case of course there was no question of their doing that. Our aim was simply to identify the intruder.)

“The pilots themselves will not have had the necessary time for initiating all this procedure. Their radars will stay locked-on to the target for just six seconds, and the object, which has meanwhile been progressively increasing its speed, and is at this moment doing 280 kms.p.h., now changes to 1,800 kms.p.h. and changes altitude from 3,000 metres to 1,700 metres — *all in the space of one second!* This fantastic acceleration corresponds to 40 *gs*. It would mean the instantaneous death of any human being on board. The limit of what a fighter pilot can stand is about 8 *gs*.¹

“The trajectory followed by the UFO is moreover extremely disconcerting. After moving to an altitude of 1,700 metres, it dives rapidly towards the ground and, at below 200 metres, it escapes simultaneously from the radars of the two *F-16s* and also from the radar installations at Glons and at Semmerzake. Over that vast suburban sprawl to the south of Brussels the ground-scene is in fact just one continuous glitter of sparkling lights, against which the pilots are incapable of distinguishing the slightest thing visually.”



“THIS CANNOT BE ANYTHING MADE BY MAN.”

"In any case", explains Colonel De Brouwer, "It would have been quite out of the question for the F-16s to have been able to overtake the machine at that low altitude, where the density of the air prevents them from going faster than 1,300 kms.p.h. Beyond that speed, the temperature in the compressors of their engines would cause the turbines to explode. So, you see, *there was a logic* in the movements of the UFO!"

The entire happening is as though the mystery machine was guided intelligently to evade its pursuers. And during the next hour the same scenario will be enacted twice more. The official report furnished by the Headquarters of the Belgian Air Force to SOBEPS (The Belgian Society for the Study of Space Phenomena) states:-

"In three cases, the pilots managed to lock their radars on to the target for a few seconds, and each time this brought about a drastic change in the behaviour of the UFO."

The UFO is literally playing hide-and-seek with the fighters. It dives towards the ground at very high speed to evade both the radars of the aircraft and the ground-radars, and then quietly climbs again at low speed a little further on, thus re-appearing once more upon the radarscopes and starting off a fresh process of attempted interception.

This staggering merry-go-round is observed from the ground by a large number of eyewitnesses (including twenty Gendarmes). They see the UFO and they see the two F-16s, *but during the entire duration of the affair (75 minutes) nobody hears the famous supersonic 'bang' that ought to have accompanied the object's passage through the sound barrier! No material damage was reported from immediately below the event, whereas, given the speed and the low altitude of the machine, its breaking of the sound-barrier ought to have led to the shattering of an incalculable number of panes of glass.*

Thus, for the first time in the world, a journalist has been authorized to see a document establishing proof of the interception of a UFO. I have observed on the screen the locking-on of the radar, the recordings of the parameters of the UFO's flight, and its staggering changes of speed.

All the details of this business are recorded in the Report that has now been passed to SOBEPS. This collaboration between the Air Force of a country and a private research group is a fact without precedent which must be counted to the credit of, and as proof of the seriousness and competence of, the members of SOBEPS, who include several high-ranking scientists, such as the physicist Léon Brenig (Professor at the Université Libre de Bruxelles) and Auguste Meessen (Professor at the Université Catholique de Louvain). The latter has been a member of SOBEPS since this body was established 18 years ago. Interviewed on the Television News, Monsieur Guy Coëme, the Belgian Minister of Defence, stated that he was authorizing the Air Force to release to SOBEPS all the information in its possession.

After viewing this shattering video-sequence, I bombarded Colonel De Brouwer with questions. Firstly: could the object have been a sonde-balloon?

Answer: "No. The object behaved as though it were totally independent of winds and air-currents, and in our investigations we have made a complete study of the meteorological conditions prevailing. That was why we did not publish our Report immediately. We made every possible verification. Our defence-system is not prepared for this sort of thing. We needed time for analyzing and interpreting the data from the com-

puters and the video-cassettes of the fighter aircraft".

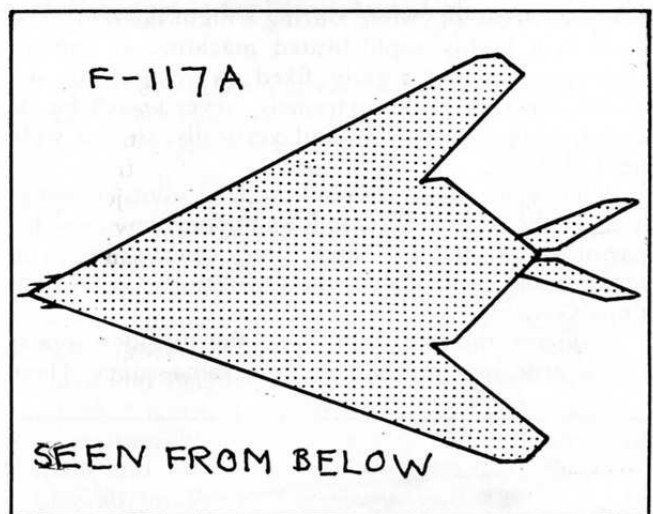
Next I asked: "Was it a natural phenomenon, or the re-entry into the Earth's atmosphere of a piece of rocket debris?"

Answer: "No. A meteorite or a rocket fragment does not penetrate our atmosphere in a zig-zag fashion. And the analysis of the radar recordings shows numerous changes of direction. Furthermore, the atmospheric conditions at the time ruled out any phenomenon of an electromagnetic nature".

— "But" — I then asked, "What about that famous F117-A, the American "Stealth" aircraft, which many people believe was this UFO?"

Answer: "THAT AIRCRAFT WAS ABSOLUTELY NOT DESIGNED FOR ANY SORT OF PENETRATION AT LOW ALTITUDE. MOREOVER, ITS MINIMUM SPEED IS 278 KMS.P.H., WHEREAS THE SPEED OF THE UFO WENT DOWN TO AS LITTLE AS 40 KMS.P.H. THE F117-A DOES NOT POSSESS SUPPORTING JETS THAT WOULD ENABLE IT TO FLY SO SLOWLY AS THAT. FURTHERMORE, NO MACHINE IS CAPABLE OF FLYING AT 1,800 KMS.P.H. SO CLOSE TO THE GROUND, IN SUCH DENSE AIR AND — *A FORTIORI* — WITHOUT EVEN MAKING ANY BANG'."

AT THIS POINT, THE MINISTER HANDS ME THE TELEX MESSAGE FROM THE MILITARY ATTACHÉ OF THE U.S. EMBASSY IN BRUSSELS TO THE BELGIAN AIR FORCE HEADQUARTERS, ATTESTING THAT THE F117-A HAS NEVER BEEN STATIONED ON THE TERRITORY OF EUROPE, NOR HAS IT EVER FLOWN ABOVE IT.



Professor Jean-Pierre Petit of France [FSR Consultant. Ed.], who accompanied me on my visit to the Belgian Air Force Headquarters, is himself a former Air Force Lieutenant, and he has served as a controller in aerial interception operations. This high-ranking physicist, who is a Director of Research at the French National Centre For Scientific Research (CNRS) and who has just recently written the book ENQUÊTE SUR LES OVNIS [— in English "THE UFO INVESTIGATION"] published in 1990 by Albin Michel, Paris), is categorical, and he makes this firm statement:-

"At the present time no machine built by man exists that is capable of such performances, especially of flying at supersonic speeds without making any bang. What degree of confidence can be placed in this proof? The same degree of confidence as was given to the first detection of a *supernova* in 1987 in the Magellanic Clouds Galaxy.

Actually, the proof of the existence of these stellar cataclysms called *supernovae* depends upon that single observation. I am firmly convinced that this sort of interception of a UFO by radar has already actually happened a great many times over the past thirty years (maybe by means just as sophisticated as those of the *F-116* and already in use by all the Air Forces of the world for more than ten years past, or, maybe, previously to that, by more primitive types of radar), and I am convinced that the Military Staffs of all the countries in question have kept this information rigorously secret out of fear of provoking panic among their populations.”² “Well, then” — I asked — “What is happening now, and what is the reason for these revelations?”

Dr Jean-Pierre Petit replied as follows:-

We are living through a period which is beginning to be an era of ‘openness’. After the Berlin Wall, now the ‘Wall of Silence’ is crumbling. As far as the UFO phenomenon is concerned, we are entering upon a phase that is totally different from the earlier phases. It is the end of commercialism and of charlatanism. The true scientists are making their entry upon the scene. Just look at the work of Professor Meessen . . .”

At SOBEPS⁽³⁾ where they have recorded over a thousand eyewitness reports on the Belgian UFO Wave, I had learned something absolutely fascinating. During the night of March 31, 1990, at a spot 30 kms. to the south of Brussels, three eyewitnesses who can be regarded as totally reliable, Lucien Clerebaut, Secretary-General of SOBEPS; Patrick Ferryn, a film-producer; and a Monsieur José Fernandez, observed a luminous phenomenon low on the horizon. This light gets bigger, and approaches. And a triangular-shaped machine with rounded angles, carrying four very powerful big lights, and numerous small lights around its periphery, *and of an apparent diameter six times that of the Moon*, passes over them at an altitude estimated at between 300 metres and 400 metres. Monsieur Ferryn takes four pictures of the object, with very high sensitivity film (1 600 ASA). A few minutes later, as a measure of control, and with the same speed and same camera aperture, he also takes some photographs of an ordinary aeroplane passing over.

When the film is developed: **SURPRISE!** On the photographs the position-lights of the aeroplane (*flying at a much higher altitude than the UFO*) form three white blobs, whereas the enormous lights of the UFO are scarcely visible! And the general shape of the huge object, which had nevertheless been perfectly visible to the naked eye and was flying far lower, much closer to the eyewitnesses, has completely disappeared!

Then, remembering that a simple irradiation with infra-red can prevent images from showing up on a film, Professor Meessen proceeds to have an experiment carried out in his laboratory. Using a simple prism, he projects directly on to a negative colour film a spectrum (going from the red to the violet), and then he superimposes infra-red radiation upon the lower part of the photograph. Upon being developed, the colour-spectrum is perfectly visible on the part of the film not touched by the infra-red radiation, but it is very considerably attenuated, if not totally annihilated, on that part that had not been irradiated.

Professor Meessen comments: “If the UFOs are truly physical objects, and if they emit infra-red, then it would be perfectly normal that eyewitnesses who take photographs should have some surprises when they come to develop their snapshots, inasmuch as they may even find that what they had observed visu-

ally and photographed has now completely vanished. Which fact, incidentally, would account for the very limited number of photos that we have from this UFO Wave, and it accounts, generally speaking, for the quasi-impossibility of getting close-up photographs at all”.

Professor Meessen remains extremely cautious. As a good disciple of the famous French scientist Claude Bernard, he remains faithful to the scientific method, which is to observe the facts and then to propose various hypotheses which he then subjects to experimental verification. For him, it is absolutely essential that the enigmatic *dossier* on the UFO problem be studied.

He says: “Insofar as testimony is concerned, we already have far too many independent eyewitnesses, usually thoroughly trustworthy, speaking of coherent physical effects, and we have far too much agreement in the accounts of the events described for us not to take this *dossier* very seriously. If all these people are making it up, then it is a malady, a disease, *that we’ve got to understand!* But then, of course, there are the physical effects too . . . The Belgian Air Force’s Report enables us to apprehend the phenomenon in a rational and scientific fashion. The simplest hypothesis is, of course, the *extraterrestrial* one, but that also presents other problems. We are in no hurry to arrive at conclusions. We shall go on working”.

When I met Professor Meessen, he had not yet had the opportunity to see the documentation that Colonel De Brouwer had allowed me to view. The Report by the Belgian Air Force Headquarters on the successful interception of March 30 makes it clear for us why, on that famous weekend when so many tens of thousands of people were mobilized for the hunt, the Air Force had placed at the disposal of SOBEPS such extensive facilities (two *F-16* aircraft for patrolling the territory, and a twin-engined *Hawker* capable of carrying a large load of passengers plus so much monitoring equipment, including an enormous infra-red camera). **THE HIGH-UPS IN THE MILITARY ALREADY KNEW WELL ENOUGH THAT THE UFOs ARE REAL. BUT THEY WEREN’T TALKING. THEY SIMPLY WANTED TO KNOW MORE.**

At the time, the newspapers were amazed by the failure of the “Easter Chase”, but all is now explained.

Nobody can say that the UFO wasn’t there at the rendezvous. Because there were the visual sightings of it from the ground. But, if the machine stayed below an altitude of 200 metres, then it was undetectable by radar.

At present, the eyewitness reports are getting fewer. But the questions remain.

WHY OVER BELGIUM? AND WHY THE THOUSANDS OF EYEWITNESS REPORTS?

How puzzling this Belgian UFO Wave was! First of all — **WHY OVER BELGIUM! WHY THOSE THOUSANDS OF EYEWITNESS REPORTS OVER A PERIOD OF SIX MONTHS?**

Why did none of these UFOs land, whereas, in the previous decades, the eyewitnesses had talked of *landings?*

Why *triangular-shaped* machines? (More than 90% of the eyewitness reports.)

So many questions . . . And all without answers.

Summing up, Lucien Clerebaut, of SOBEPS,³ says:- “As far as we are concerned, the release to us of this

Report by the Belgian Air Force, and the confidence in us which it indicates, are worthy recompense for our 18 years of labour.”

Heedless of the disconcerting irregularity of the UFO phenomenon (waves of sightings alternating with long periods of absence), and likewise heedless of the sarcasms of a section of the world of scientific research that is violently hostile towards those sorts of investigations which are considered “unhealthy”, scientists of top calibre, such as Professors Meessen, and Brenig, and Petit, and others, will continue to beaver on.

AND THE TIME HAS NOW COME FOR THEM TO BE SUPPORTED.

FOOTNOTES

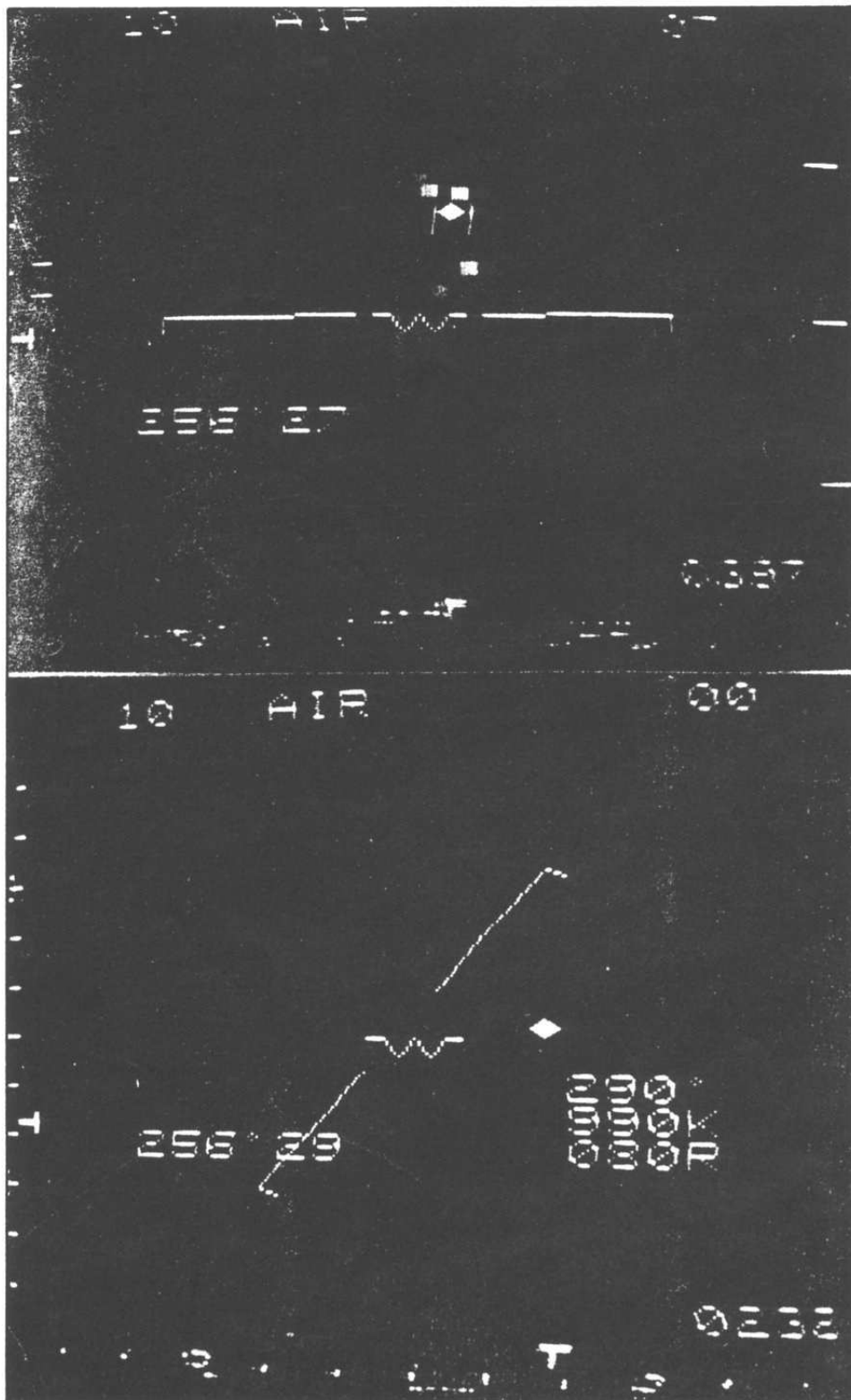
¹*g* is the unit of acceleration. 1 *g* equals the gravitational pull of the Earth; i.e., 9.81 m/s per second.

² See, in this connection, Jean Sider's book *CES OVNIS QUI FONT PEUR* [= English: *THOSE UFOS THAT TERRIFY*], published by Axis Mundi, Paris (1990).

³ The address of SOBEPS is: 74 Avenue Paul-Janson, 1070 Bruxelles, (Telephone: 19-32-2-254-28-48). Their journal, issued quarterly, is “INFORESPACE”.

COMMENT BY EDITOR, FSR

May I say that we find this “change of tune” by SOBEPS quite fascinating, and that we heartily congratulate them on this great triumph, which is a real feather in their cap! Only a few years ago, so far as I can recall, the main activity of most of the UFO investigation groups in Belgium seemed to consist of joining in the chorus of nasty remarks about FSR while proclaiming (like the famous “*Nouvelle Vague*” in France) that UFOs do not exist! — G.C.



THESE photographs are extracted from the radar recordings of the *F-16s* sent up in pursuit of a UFO during the night of March 30/31, 1990. The two pictures formed on the screens with an interval between them of some seconds. On the first photograph the successive previous positions of the UFO are shown by small squares. The pilot having locked-in his radar onto the intruder, the symbol representing the UFO has now become a diamond-shaped lozenge. The small vertical lines framing it indicate that the pilot has signalled to his computer the target to be pursued, and the radar will henceforward stay automatically directed onto it. In the centre of the picture the “W” indicates the axis of the flight-path of the *F-16*, with its course, 256° 29 (west/south-west) indicated below. The lines on each side of the “W” represent the artificial horizon. The word “AIR” at the top-centre of the screen means that the radar is programmed for an air-to-air search, namely the detection of everything at an altitude of over 200 metres. The UFO is at a height of 2,000 metres, recorded at the top-right of the photo by the figures 07 (7,000 ft.). The full video sequence shows that the UFO then dives towards the ground in one second.

In the second picture, the figures 00 (top-right of the screen) show that the UFO is below the height of 200 metres. The line of the artificial horizon falls away; the aircraft starts to bank to the right in order to line up on the diving UFO. The column of figures beneath the diamond lozenge gives the speed of the object in knots, or 1,830 kms./p.h. (Mach 1.5)!

Finally, the 08OR indicates the nature of the target in coded language. This figure indicates that the target corresponds to no known identification.

The UFO went through the sound-barrier without producing any bang. In one second, it will be lost for the pilot.

HOW TO “READ” THE RADAR IMAGES

FURTHER BRITISH PRESS COMMENT ON THE "BELGIAN WAVE"

By Gordon Creighton

As we indicated some time ago in our discussions of the Soviet reports of 1989 about UFO sightings and UFO landings, the journalists of the English-speaking world dealt with the problem by wrapping it up in a fog of general buffoonery which is so far unparalleled. If time and space permit we intend in due course to supply a detailed analysis of this remarkable operation.

Not too much has been said yet in Britain about the Belgian affair. "Mum" is clearly the word on *that!* But Britain's *Daily Mail* of October 11, 1990, has given us a nice piece in the buffoon tradition, with the buffoon headline carefully selected so as to cast ridicule on the entire report:-

HOW THEY TOOK THE NEWS FROM MARS TO GHENT

Daily Mail Reporter

Have the lords of the universe chosen their first colony on Earth? If they have, their subject people could be ... the Belgians.

The question is exercising the minds not only of the Belgian scientific establishment but also of the air force and police.

UFO freaks can forget all that stuff about flying saucers, according to a series of sightings over the tiny country more often concerned with eating, drinking, and minding its own business.

The mysterious visitors are appearing in flying pyramids.

Belgian police have logged more than 2,600 sightings of a triangular object, with three huge lights, hovering in the night sky — including reports from at least 20 of their own gendarmes. And UFO-spotters are euphoric after the latest sighting was apparently backed up by the Belgian Air Force's own radar log.

According to a physicist at Brussels Free University, Professor Léon Brenig, two *F-16* fighters scrambled from Ghent after reports from the public of another UFO.

He says their radar locked on to an object which accelerated away before they could see it.

The pilots have been forbidden to say anything. But Air Force Colonel Willfried De Brouwer, in charge of an official investigation into the incident, admitted: "They are convinced it was something special".

Professor Brénig, formerly an unbeliever, now claims to have seen a UFO himself.

He is hoping the analysis of photographs and radar echoes of earlier episodes will be ready this week and will be discussed at a gathering of the country's scientists later this month.

He is also arranging a UFO hunt for members of the Belgian Society for the Study of Space Phenomena, with the backing of the Belgian Army and Air Force, he says.

"No country has ever taken UFO sightings so seriously", he said. "I am a sceptical man, but I feel that something is happening which is very strange ..."

A DRAMATIC AND FULMINATING SOLUTION!

By Gordon Creighton

ONLY two days later (October 13, 1990), after all the hours that we had put into reporting and translating these stories from Belgium, we find, in one of Britain's most prestigious newspapers, the *Daily Telegraph*, the authoritative report which has finally put paid to all our nonsensical efforts over these past forty years in attempting to pander so much rubbish about so-called "flying saucers" and "UFOs" and so on.

Already, as our readers will be aware, we had seen, in the summer of 1990, the announcement from BUFORA, the world's leading authority on all these matters, that all UFO research was now at an end, and that all so-called "UFO reports" and "flying saucer reports", and all tales of close encounters with alien beings, have been conclusively and effectively explained away as due to the simple phenomenon of *plasma vortices*. (This ruling has received the official imprimatur of J. Randles, the leading world authority in all these questions and Britain's only professional writer since Wm. Shekspir).

(Inevitably the startling news puts the future of such a journal as ours in much jeopardy, and we shall shortly be discussing the problem of whether we ought to pack up or, conceivably, find some other theme on which we might continue to pontificate.)

We give below the all-important press item from

the London *Daily Telegraph* of October 13, 1990, in which, as readers will see, Mr Adrian Berry, Britain's top scientific writer, rallies to the support of Mr Ian Ridpath, Britain's most distinguished living astronomer, in giving the true explanation for the absurd stream of tales that have been coming out of Belgium for almost a year past. In this particular case, admittedly, it seems that the ridiculous error has been due to the simple misinterpretation of an *astronomical* phenomenon (to wit the planet Mars) and not due to the misinterpretation of a *plasma vortex* phenomenon, but that does not alter the fact that the daft lunacy of thousands of simple-minded Belgian citizens — not to mention the daft lunacy of some of the top officials of their much-vaunted Belgian Air Force — now stands plainly revealed for all to see. (Incidentally, we here in Britain have the Belgians among our Allies in NATO! And — horror of horrors — NATO actually has its *Headquarters* in Belgium — of all places! The mind boggles at the depth of the dangerous incompetence which this scandal has now revealed. What can be the possible use of such nincompoops as this Belgian Air Force within NATO? Surely all of us who are concerned about the future of NATO and of Western Europe will feel eternally indebted to Messrs Adrian Berry and Ian Ridpath for

having prised the lid off such a veritable can of worms!)

Here is their Report:-

DAILY TELEGRAPH, October 13, 1990 (page 7).

BELGIAN UFO SPOTTERS ARE 'LEFT SEEING STARS'

by Adrian Berry, Science Correspondent

THOUSANDS of Belgians have reported UFO sightings unaware that they are looking at the planet Mars, a British astronomer said yesterday.

More than 2,600 people claim to have seen a strange triangular object with three huge lights hovering in the night sky. Pilots of two *F-16* fighters, scrambled to investigate, reported that it accelerated away from them as they approached.

But Ian Ridpath, Editor-in-Chief of *Popular Astronomy*, claimed the alien presence was nothing more than an illusion created by *Mars*, now unusually bright and close to the Earth, and by certain other stars.

"I don't want to say anything rude about the ignorance of Belgians" — he said — "since people in many countries have mistaken *Mars* for a UFO .

"What they are seeing is almost certainly a triangle in the night sky in the constellation of Taurus, formed by *Mars* and two other bright stars, one of which is probably the bright orange star *Aldebaran*, 65 light-years away".

"The description by the fighter pilots of the object accelerating away is exactly consistent with what a planet or a star would appear to do. This illusion has been the cause of thousands of false UFO sightings."

"Next month, *Mars* will be even brighter, and for this reason NATIONAL ASTRONOMY WEEK is being held to educate the British public about the night sky and ensure that they don't make idiots of themselves like the Belgians."

Other astronomers agree with Ian Ridpath that people need educating, noting that, during blackouts at the time of the 1972 miners' strike, dozens of people looked at the stars and demanded to know why "those people" were still getting electricity.

Jimmy Carter, the former U.S. president, once mistook the bright planet *Venus* for a UFO, and during the war several pilots tried to chase the two planets, *Mars* and *Venus*, thinking they were enemy aircraft.

NOTE BY EDITOR, FSR

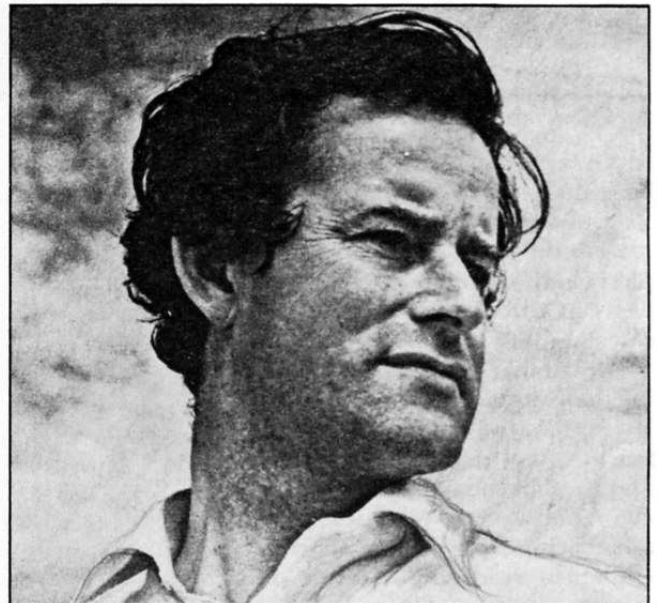
Our readers will no doubt recall with admiration the sagacity and skill displayed by Ian Ridpath a few years ago at the time of the absurd story about a UFO having been seen in Rendlesham Forest, Suffolk. It was he who solved the matter by pointing out that what had been seen by the American Commanding Officer and other U.S.A.F. officers was simply the Orford Ness lighthouse flashing through the trees. These American imbeciles, some of whom had already been stationed there for months or even several years, had not even noticed the lighthouse until that evening, and did not even know that it was there! So naturally the poor fools concluded that it was a "UFO"!

THE CROP CIRCLES IN 1990

By George Wingfield, M.A. Hons. (Natural Sciences), FSR Consultant

THE Crop Circles in 1990 excelled themselves in every conceivable way, and, indeed, in many ways which could never have been foreseen. The total number of Circles recorded was far in excess of the previous year and most likely exceeds 1000, though this is only a guess. Unprecedented new shapes such as "dumb-bells", rectangles, triangles, "scrolls" and semi-circular rings were found. The size of some individual Circles also far exceeded what had been recorded before. But most staggering of all was the appearance of elaborate formations, which were called pictograms, —some up to 150 yards long—, whose complexity and varying combinations of certain distinctive features, exhibited an articulateness which the Circles had never previously shown.

This rapid growth in the complexity of the Circles during the year 1990 was so marked that none but the most hardened self-deluding sceptic could possibly seek to deny it. It is an aspect which had been clearly apparent in earlier years, but one which accelerated with seemingly increased urgency in 1990. Theories which claim to explain the Circles cannot afford to ignore this unmistakable evolution, however unwelcome it may be to those explainers whose fixed ideas have failed to appreciate the real nature of this phenomenon. Nevertheless it is true to say that an explanation of what is happening, in terms generally acceptable and understood, seems as remote as ever in 1990. But the idea that some intelligence is at work has now gained considerable ground.



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The first 1990 Circles started in late April and early May to the north of Devizes. In addition to a plethora of small circles, several large ringed Circles appeared in the young crops. All of these exhibited very precise narrow rings, usually 6 to 9 inches wide,