

A GIGANTIC "CIGAR" OVER THE ATLANTIC

Gordon Creighton

IN 1980 we received a letter from a lady who had recently become a reader of FSR, stating that she would like to talk with someone from the *Review* and give us a confidential account of a strange experience that she had had many years before. It had been terrifying at the time and had left a most vivid impression in her memory. Having no knowledge of UFOs then, she had no clue as to what she might have seen. It was only after the chance purchase of a few books, and the discovery of FSR, that she had realized the possible nature of her experience.

The lady is from one of the countries of Western Europe that are members of NATO. She is now married to an Englishman, and it so happens that her home is not far from mine. For reasons which will be evident, she has asked that on no account should her name and address, or her nationality at birth, be divulged. I have interviewed her twice, and R. H. Bryan Winder also heard the first account which she gave. Her statements are supported by a lengthy and detailed written version and a sketch. For reasons of economy I have reduced her story to more compact proportions. The gist of it is as follows:—

"The events which I now describe took place in the first or second week of May 1963.

"I was at the time working for NATO as an English language secretary, and based in Paris. On the day in question I was one of a party of 50 NATO personnel who were en route to Canada for the NATO Ministerial Meetings in Ottawa. Our plane, an Air Canada DC8, carried what seemed to be the usual crew, and two stewardesses, though I had the impression that the flight was under military or NATO control.

"We took off from Orly Airport, Paris, some time after 10.00 a.m., and we were told that the flight to Ottawa would take about seven hours. As there were only 50 of us, the plane was relatively empty. I took a window seat on the port side (left) near the wing. The other two seats in my row remained empty throughout the flight. As NATO personnel we were all of course well known to each other, and very much a 'family group'.

"The weather was beautiful, and the Captain announced that we would fly at 36,000 (or maybe 38,000 — I do not recall clearly) feet. After lunch had been served, I sat enjoying the view of the vast expanse of sky above the clouds. The windows of the DC8 were very large, the largest I seem to recall having seen on an aircraft, and came down quite low beside the passenger.

"I was just reaching down to take a book from my hold-all, and was astonished to glimpse below the 'plane something dark and absolutely tremendous that stood out in vivid contrast to the brightness all round. I could not believe my eyes. I pressed close to the window in unbelief and there, almost beneath the DC8, was a gigantic dark grey 'torpedo.' It seemed menacing and frightening, and I had the impression that it was stationary. It was utterly unlike anything that I had ever seen in my whole life. It looked as though made of steel. No portholes or windows were visible. No wings or projections. Nothing but the long perfect torpedo form, with its bullet-shaped head, and the rear end which was cut off sharply and squarely.¹ The monster — and I emphasise that it was this terrifying size that impressed me — was well below us. I thought maybe 2,000 metres or so below us, but of

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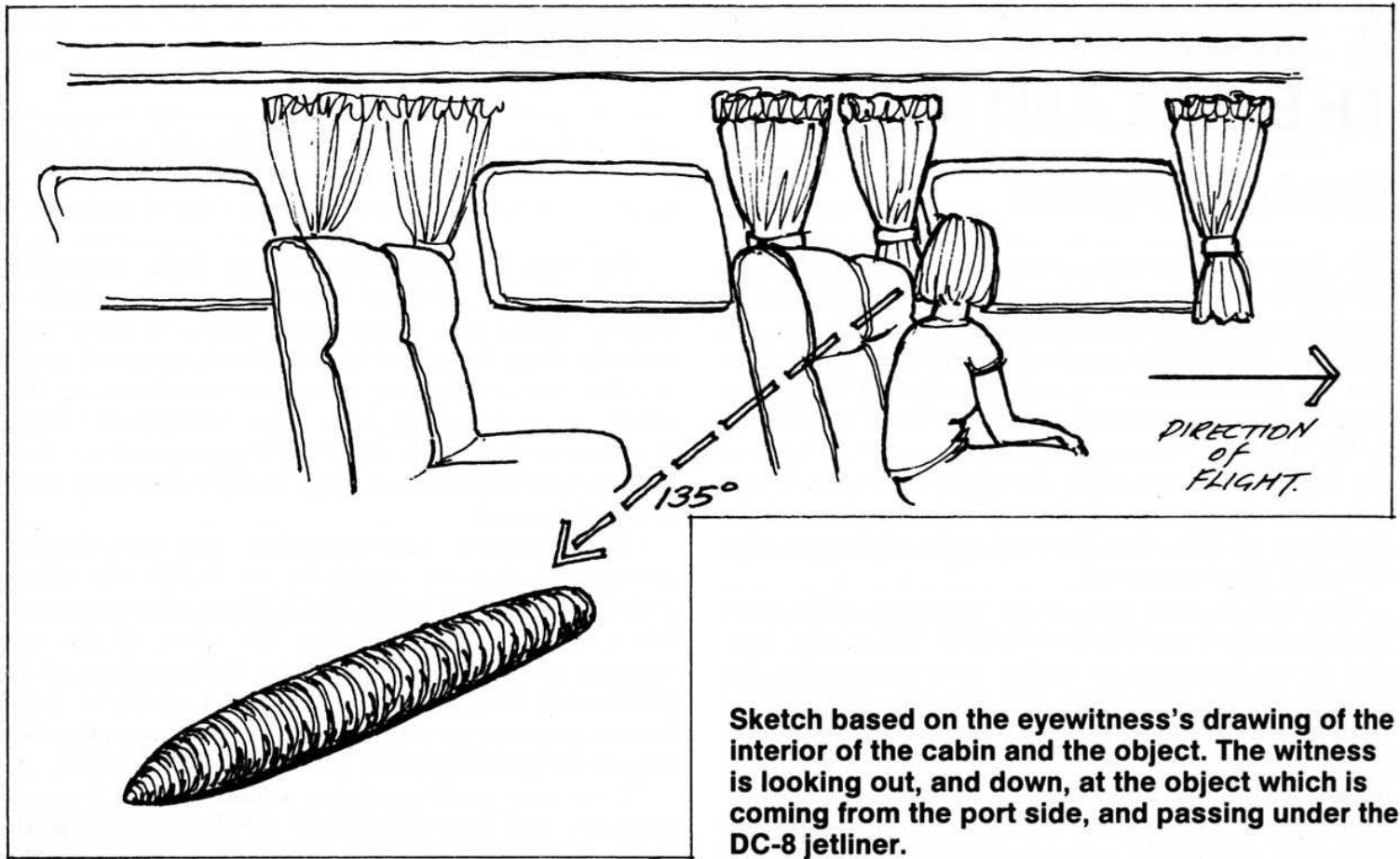
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Sketch based on the eyewitness's drawing of the interior of the cabin and the object. The witness is looking out, and down, at the object which is coming from the port side, and passing under the DC-8 jetliner.

course I had no way of being able to gauge this or to estimate the size of the thing.

"I looked down again quickly at the monster, and saw that a swathe of tiny clouds were beginning to pass over it, though it remained visible through them for a few seconds before being lost to my sight.

"I sat there in utter amazement that such a craft could exist. Why, I thought, had I never heard, in all my life, of the existence of anything like this! I felt stunned, and dazed, contemplating my utter ignorance that such things could be, and that I could know nothing whatever about them.

"I glanced around the cabin. Most of my fellow-passengers were reading, or dozing, or asleep. Only from the rear came sounds of animation from a group who were playing bridge.

"I sat there feeling utterly frustrated, both because of my inability to explain to myself what it was that I had seen, and because apparently not one of the others had seen it. At any rate, not one gave any sign of having done so,² and I felt too baffled to ask, and too scared lest I might prove to be the only witness in which case they would simply laugh at me. I sat back and closed my eyes, feeling that my mind had been completely blown. I resolved that, when back in Paris, I would talk about it to one of the NATO experts on nuclear weapons, a man whom I knew well, and with whom I had often chattered on all sorts of subjects, such as earthquakes, problems of energy, and so on.

(But when I next saw him, and had the opportunity to tell him about my 'monster cigar', I just could not bring myself to raise the subject. My courage failed me. I did not want to be laughed at. The whole thing seemed too incredible to be taken seriously.)

"As for the rest of the NATO party, I never dared to mention it to any of them, out of fear of being thought completely mad. But I made a private resolution that I would go on trying to find out what it could have been. (Little did I realize then that it would take seventeen years.)

"I had of course heard the occasional story about 'flying saucers,' but I always thought that the name meant that these were just little things, no bigger than a real saucer. I had no idea whatever that craft of all shapes and sizes were being seen, all over the world, and that they were all being given the blanket name of 'flying saucers.'

"To be truthful, I had already heard one story about a 'cigar', said to be some 15 or 20 metres long, seen by people a few years earlier at Santa Maria³ in the Azores Islands. 'Fifteen to twenty metres' was nothing in comparison with what I had just seen. And in any case, everyone had said that the thing seen over the Azores was simply a Russian secret device.

"It was only about two years ago that, while browsing through a secondhand-bookshop, I found, and bought, two or three books on UFOs. It came as an immense shock to me when I found that what I had

seen also came under the general term of 'flying saucers,' and that other people had also seen giant 'cigars' or 'torpedoes' in other parts of the world, and at other times.

"But there is a second part to my story which was far more terrifying than the sight of the huge 'torpedo,' and which I found it equally impossible to explain to myself. I must emphasise that whether or not it was in any way related to the 'torpedo' I cannot say, as I do not have sufficient technical knowledge. Yet I have the feeling that it might be unwise to exclude this part from my account, so I give it here now for the experts to pronounce upon:—

"After my glimpse of the monster 'torpedo,' I sat there brooding on it for half an hour or so, as I recall, when suddenly the DC8 started to shudder and pitch up and down violently, nosing steeply upwards, then steeply downwards, and this went on for a long, long time. I might explain that I had often encountered turbulence and 'air-pockets' when travelling by aeroplane, but it had never been anything remotely like this. This was as though we were in a gigantic lift that was shooting up and down madly. And, as though that was not enough, there now came a succession of reports like cannon-fire or thunder, filling the cabin. Meanwhile the plane continued to shudder and 'buck' violently, and each time it came down I had the sensation that it was going to break in half.

"Throughout all this, everybody in the passengers' cabin sat there petrified, absolutely silent, white-faced.

"After a while of this, I felt such panic that I rushed up front in search of a stewardess, and shouting '*What's going on? I'm scared!*' I lifted a curtain in front of what seemed to be a sleeping-berth, and found a stewardess lying on the bed there, her hands covering her eyes as though she were weeping. She gave no response to my shouts, and all around there was total silence still, apart from the sound of the engines, overlaid by the repeated 'claps of thunder' and the continued bucking up and down of the plane.

"I went back to my seat, and suddenly found myself bathed in perspiration. Every pore in my body seemed to be hard at work. And yet I noticed that the light dress I was wearing was still completely dry.

"A second time, I ran forward to the stewardesses' quarters but there was nobody there. I hammered on the door leading to the cockpit, and shouted again, asking what was happening, as I was scared to death. The other stewardess came out and looked at me as though I were an idiot, and for a while said nothing. Then, calmly, she announced 'Ladies and Gentlemen, do not be alarmed: the cabin is being depressurized.' Shortly afterwards, the Captain was heard to make the same announcement.

"I should like very much to know whether all that I have just described, about the violent behaviour of the aircraft and the loud reports, is explicable as being due to the process of 'depressurization' and, if so, what

are the circumstances that are likely to have made it necessary for such alarming and drastic steps to be taken? Is this sort of thing usual and normal — as the calm behaviour of the second-mentioned stewardess seemed to indicate? And why, in that case, had the other stewardess — as it seemed — been weeping? Was this simply because she, like all the rest of us, found the turbulence just a bit too alarming? *Or is it possible that she was still suffering from shock after seeing the gigantic 'torpedo'?* It certainly would be interesting to know the answers to these questions.

"If an expert were to say that the behaviour of the aircraft was definitely not 'normal,' and not explicable as due to depressurization, then is it possible that such a situation could have been brought about by either the action or the close approach of a UFO?⁴ (Either the same thing that I had seen — if it was indeed a UFO — or some other UFO that was also active over the North Atlantic on that same day?)

"Whether or not this frightening behaviour by the DC8 was in any way connected with what I had seen is something that I have so far found no way of knowing. Nevertheless, even if this second part of my story is found fully explicable and discountable, I am still anxious that my account of the great 'torpedo' shall find a place in the records.

"Did anyone else aboard the DC8 see the 'torpedo'? That is the key question. Given the position of the 'torpedo' in relation to the passenger cabin, only a passenger looking out and downwards at that precise moment would have caught a brief glimpse of the object and, as I have said, I found no evidence that any other passenger did see it. As for the plane's crew, there was only the one stewardess who seemed upset. What is certain is that the pilots up in the nacelle certainly would have had abundant time in which to see the 'cigar,' as it cut slightly diagonally across their route from their port side and well below them. No explanation or comment whatsoever about the 'cigar' was given by the Captain or any other crew member, and no statement was made by the authorities when we landed in Canada. It must however be borne in mind that, although the machine was to all appearances an ordinary DC8 civilian passenger carrier, the party on board consisted entirely of NATO personnel, and NATO is a *military* organization. We were flying under NATO auspices and in that sense we were under military control. In such circumstances it would not be surprising if the cockpit crew and the stewardesses were less forthcoming about a UFO than perhaps they might have been, were it an ordinary passenger flight."

Notes and References

1. The documentary records of Ufology contain numerous eyewitness reports of what are alleged to have been "tubular," or "cigar-shaped," or "torpedo-shaped" UFOs, often of enormous size, and there are also photographs. I

recall that several of these photographs reveal “bullet-shaped noses” and “squarely cut-off rear ends.” Quite a large proportion of such craft have allegedly been seen over the sea, indeed in some cases entering or leaving the sea. Nobody has written better on this aspect of Ufology than our friend Toni Ribera of Spain, and it is a great pity that his books have not yet been translated into English, for one of them deals at great length with these reports of “flying submarines.”

The most impressive account of such a huge “cigar” craft that I have read so far was contained in a letter written in 1954 to Australian UFO researcher Edgar Jarrold by a lady named Mrs. A. M. King of Nairobi, Kenya. She said:

“I left Mombasa (Kenya) at the end of June 1947, on the *SS Llandoverly Castle* en route to Cape Town, and, going through the Straits of Madagascar about the beginning of July, I was on deck with another lady passenger at approximately 11.00 p.m. when we noticed a particularly bright star. It was travelling very fast and approached the ship. Suddenly a searchlight appeared which flashed a strong beam of light on the water within fifty yards of the ship. It descended, its beam shortening and becoming brighter as it neared the water, and the next instant there was no more light, but an object appeared, apparently made of steel, and shaped like a cigar cut at the rear end. It remained in the air about twenty feet above the sea, parallel with the *Llandoverly Castle*, and travelling in the same direction.

“Gaining a little in speed, after a second or two the whole shape disappeared without a sound, from the rear end issuing fierce flames which shot out to about half the length of the object. It appeared that there must be something like a huge furnace inside the thing, but still we could hear no noise from the flames. No windows could be seen, only a band of metal around the entire thing which, if it had been a complete cigar shape, would have been centrally situated.

“The object was very large, about four times the length of the *Llandoverly Castle*, and at a rough guess, four times as high. We had a wonderful view, but in a few seconds it had disappeared. No light was seen forward on it as it left; it just vanished soundlessly in the darkness. For a while we thought we were the only ones on deck at that late hour, but, walking to the prow of the ship, we saw there one of the ship’s officers with a few passengers; the entire party had seen the same thing. Whether or not it is recorded in the ship’s log, I know not.”

If Mrs. King’s estimate is right, the ‘monster torpedo’ must have been *at least 1,600 feet long*.

A similar type of vast ‘cigar’, seemingly metallic, estimated to be at least 800 metres (2,600 ft.) long, allegedly came down to a height of only 2,000 metres in broad daylight one summer’s day in 1961 over the Russian city of Voronezh, and many thousands who saw it panicked. When it departed, it stood straight up on its tail, let out a tongue of flame said by some witnesses to be as long as itself, and vanished straight up into the sky. (*Amazing News from Russia*, in FSR Vol. 8, No. 6 (Nov./Dec., 1962.)

An Italian named Luciano Galli has claimed (FSR Vol. 8, No. 5, September/October, 1962) that he was taken up in a small disc to a huge tubular machine which he thought was “at least 600 metres long” and which had

“one end cut like the end of a cigar.” Taken inside it, he claimed that he found it contained hundreds of beings and scores of discs.

Probably the best known account of a “cigar-shaped craft” with a “cut-off rear” is that described in Adamski’s second book, *Aboard the Space-ships*. One almost trembles at the thought of even mentioning Adamski, for to do so nowadays is considered very bad form in ufological circles “because everybody *knows* he was a fraud.” In fact some of his alleged photos of such craft do show precisely such long, dark, zeppelin-like forms with “cut-off rear.”

The emotional heat generated by the slightest mention of George Adamski is curious because, if one troubles to reflect upon it, one will see that, since the date of his experiences and his photographs, which would have been principally around the period 1952-53, dozens and dozens of other folk, all over our planet, in various countries and civilizations, have claimed to have seen — and sometimes to have photographed — in these 29 years since 1952, precisely the same types of “Mexican Hat discs” and large “flying cigars” as Adamski claimed to have seen and to have photographed. I notice too that, all over the world, alleged UFO percipients have continued to tell “contactee stories” that are far, far “wilder” and far more fantastic than anything that Adamski ever said, and yet, on the whole, these percipients seem to be listened to with considerable respect by many researchers. Almost never do they seem to be greeted with the sort of obloquy that was heaped upon Adamski.

The fact of the matter, I suspect, is that we have all got used to the UFO contactee syndrome now. We even expect their accounts to be wildly absurd and illogical and full of lies and contradictions — as they usually are. Adamski is all old hat and tame stuff now. But he hasn’t stopped being “a liar and a hoaxer.” Others who tell the same stories go scot-free.

2. This mention of people “not showing any sign of having seen anything” reminds me of an interesting report which I received a few years ago. A middle-aged English lady, well known to old friends of mine (and in background totally uninterested and uninformed as regards UFOs) came to see me one day and described an extraordinary experience that she had. She had been on a holiday trip to the Scilly Isles (lying off the southwestern tip of England) one fine summer’s day about nine or ten years previously. In the evening she boarded a small steamer to return to the Mainland. The ship was filled with holiday-makers and the decks were crowded. She was standing right against the rail, enjoying the beautiful scene and the last of the day when, out of the sea, right beside the steamer, a large, round, shining silvery “saucer” came up swiftly and silently and shot into the sky. She said it passed so close to her that she could see the droplets of water swirling off its gleaming surface. All around and behind her were the mass of other tourists, pressed close together, and she said they could not have failed to see it too. But, so she told me, not a soul amid that crowd gave the faintest indication by word or gesture that they had perceived anything out of the ordinary. As she remarked, laughingly: “*They were all British. They kept a stiff upper lip.*”

(Admittedly however there do seem frequently to be cases where some individuals “see” while others do not, and one is obliged to recognize that, for all we know, the former category might conceivably involve a minority of

people who are *clairvoyant* — maybe only temporarily or intermittently. This idea takes us instantly into the field of Parapsychology, which is too vast and too mine-bestrewn for further discussion in the present article. But it is something that we absolutely must always keep in mind whenever considering any UFO sighting whatsoever — including, of course, the report from the lady secretary who was with NATO.)

3. At this point I feel this lady's memory may be playing tricks. For — unless of course there were *two* quite separate sightings of "flying cigars" over Santa Maria in the Azores — the happening to which she here refers is entered in our records as having been on July 9, 1965, and therefore two years *after* her own experience.

The "cigar" or "torpedo" which we have in our documentation passed over the Island of Santa Maria in the Azores on that date at an estimated height of 20,000 ft. and promptly stopped all the electric clocks at the Santa Maria Airport, one report said for twenty minutes, others said for forty-five minutes. (See FSR, Vol. 11, No. 5, p. 24, and Vol. 12, No. 5, p. 32.)

4. Readers will recall the recent experience of the US Army Reserve officer Captain (now Lieut. Colonel) Lawrence Coyne, whose helicopter was on October 18, 1973 put by a UFO into a powered descent of 500 feet per minute and then 2,500 feet per minute, only to be bounced up again into the sky at the rate of 1,000 feet per minute (see Jennie Zeidman's *UFO-Helicopter Close Encounter Over Ohio* (in FSR Vol. 22, No. 4, 1976).

Additional note

Finally, since this NATO lady's account relates to something huge seen over the North Atlantic Ocean, and possibly not too far from Canada, these notes should not be ended without a reminder of one of the most famous cases of all time, that of Captain James Howard who, on June 29, 1954, when piloting his B.O.A.C. Stratocruiser *Centaurus* on a flight to London, flew on a parallel course for eighteen minutes with a vast unknown object which he estimated to be "about the size of an ocean liner." Captain Howard's crew of eleven and a dozen of his fifty-one passengers also saw it, and one of the opinions expressed was that it was "as big as the *Queen Mary*" (one of Britain's two huge pre-war Cunard liners).

This particular UFO does not seem to have been described by anyone as a "cigar" or a "torpedo." It was in fact apparently changing shape in a puzzling fashion, but seems mainly to have looked delta-shaped or "like a telephone mouth-cum-earpiece lying on its back," as indicated in Captain Howard's sketches. It appeared to be accompanied by a Group of much smaller objects which finally seemed to enter it before it vanished from sight. (See *Mystery over Labrador*, by Leonard Cramp, in FSR, Vol. 1, No. 1 (Spring 1955).

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Editor's note: The case of the Stratocruiser *Centaurus* is
(Continued on page iii)

THE FALCON LAKE INCIDENT — Part 3

Chris Rutkowski

WE saw, in the first part of this article, how Stephen Michalak, from Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, claimed that on May 20, 1967, he had suffered burns when he encountered a strange UFO which landed on a rocky outcrop near Falcon Lake, a resort close by the boundary between Manitoba and Ontario. In the second part of the article, the various effects — physical, radiation and physiological — were discussed.

The Mayo Clinic

In August of 1968, Michalak went to the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota. The purpose of his visit was to undergo tests to determine exactly what was ailing him, as the doctors in Winnipeg appeared to be unhelpful. It is worthy of note that Michalak paid for the Mayo tests entirely on his own, as Medicare would not cover such a trip. He went and stayed at a hotel near the hospital, walking across each day and entering as an outpatient. He reported that he was given a thorough physical and psychological examination by various doctors, then sent home.

But, the problems began. Michalak has bills from the Clinic made out to "Mr. S. Michalak," and also his registration card. He waited for several weeks, but

received no word on his results. The CAPRO investigators appealed to APRO for help, and a medical consultant sent a letter to the Mayo Clinic, asking for the medical reports. In reply, he was sent the now-famous "letter of denial," which bluntly said that Michalak had *never been registered there*, and that they didn't "know anything about him."²⁵

This immediately spurred the shouts of "cover-up!" from individuals who learned of the letter, and rightly so. However, medical ethics is a very serious concern, and few realize the "red tape" which has been set up for both the protection of the doctor and the patient. There is a very great danger in releasing confidential files to unauthorized personnel (and this applies, obviously, to other fields as well, including ufology). Another letter to the Mayo Clinic was sent, this time accompanied by a release form signed by Michalak.

The reports came immediately. Michalak had been found to be in good health, but with neurodermatitis and simple syncope (fainting spells due to sudden cerebral blood pressure losses).²⁶ The syncopes were suggested as having to do with hyperventilation or impaired cardiac output. This is interesting, as Michalak has indeed had heart problems within the past few years.

The psychiatric report showed that despite the