

SEALIFT

MAGAZINE

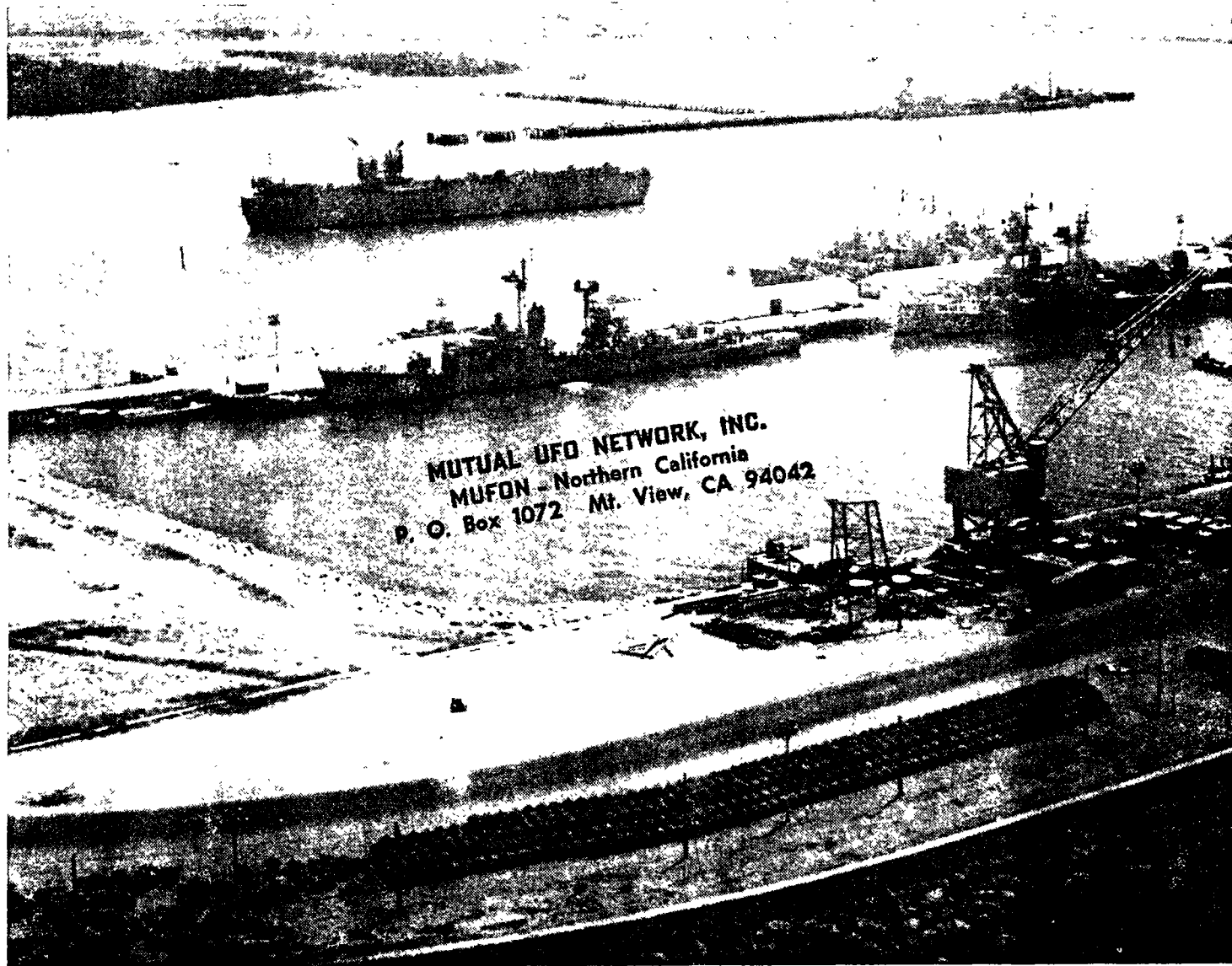
June 1966



11 Jan 66

In This Issue:

- PORT OF CALL: ROTA
- 'UFO' SIGHTED BY GAA SHIP'S CREW
- LIFE ON VIET-BOUND TRANSPORT 'VARIED'



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MUFON - Northern California
P. O. Box 1072 Mt. View, CA 94042

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MILITARY SEA TRANSPORTATION SERVICE

Three in Crew of GAA Ship Tell of Sighting of 'UFO'

Here's a sea story, backed up by witnesses.

The January-February 1966 issue of *Sealift* magazine carried a brief report of the sighting of a 200-250 foot unidentified flying object by the GAA ship *SS Morgantown Victory*, in the Pacific Ocean north of Marcus Island.

The published information was gathered from fragmentary radio messages, but since that time the magazine has received a firsthand report from the *Morgantown Victory's* skipper of the occurrence which goes into greater detail about the object and its startling behavior.

Capt. Glynn Petrie, master of the *Morgantown Victory*, which is operated under GAA for MSTs by Pacific Far East Line, Inc., gives a detailed summary of the events which began when the bow lookout, Able Seaman Robert J. Claunch, made the first report of what he described as a "large glowing object coming from the horizon on the starboard beam."

Captain Petrie reported as follows:

"Just prior to 2200, ship time, January 11, 1966, I was

in my bunk when I heard a hurried clatter of feet on the bridge grating over my head. After, the phone rang and Mr. Richard M. Anderson, third mate, reported what appeared to be a plane afire on the port quarter. I ran to the bridge, but could see nothing. The information given me indicated a plane in trouble had headed for the ship and ditched on the port quarter.

"At 2201, the vessel started to execute a Williamson turn. The bow lookout was doubled and a search was made utilizing the vessel's searchlight. During the search, I realized that I had heard no sound, such as a plane would have made. I questioned Robert Claunch, A.B., on bow lookout, and learned that the object had maneuvered approximately 180° about the vessel without sound.

"At 2238, vessel executed another Williamson turn and resumed her original course and continued search. At 2300, I took statements from each of the witnesses, Mr. Anderson, third mate on watch, Claunch, A.B., and bow

(Continued on Page 21)



Here is a historic shot of the launching of the SS MORGANTOWN VICTORY at Fairfield, Md., on 5 February 1945. Ship was dressed for the occasion. Note height of tugs' stack. Even in 1945 the MORGANTOWN VICTORY was besieged by flying objects, only then they were two curious gulls, puzzled, perhaps, by their encounter with a ship still so new that she hasn't even got a sloop-chute.

SHIP REPORTS ON UFO—(Continued from Page 3)

lookout, and John Facha, A.B., helmsman, who had left the wheel to sight the object. The statements were taken individually and I did not seek to make them agree.

"The weather was clear: wind SSW 13k, barometer 30.16, temperature 19 dry 15 centigrade, sea moderate, and fine with excellent visibility, almost full moon astern with the vessel steering 257 gyro and 258 true.

"This is a fine steering vessel, a fact important in considering the possibility of poor steering and yawing which, had such been the case, might have accounted for the apparent maneuvering from the starboard to the port quarter.

"There were two phone calls from the bow. First, when object was on starboard quarter. The third mate ran to starboard wing and looked forward, seeing nothing. Another phone call from the bow was to have the bridge look on the port quarter. The third mate and Facha looked and saw the object. This gives a rather prolonged time element during which the object was visible."

The statements obtained from the three men who actually saw the object were taken an hour after it was first sighted when the events were still fresh in their minds. It is interesting to note that the three men were not excitable youngsters with active imaginations, but mature seamen with combined seetime of 79 years. It is also significant that the ship was bound for the Far East and had not touched port for many days.

Able Seaman Claunch reported:

"At a little before 2200, January 11, 1966, I was bow lookout in clear, fine weather. I sighted a large, glowing object coming from the horizon on the starboard beam. It approached to within 1 mile at a height of about 400 feet. It then altered course to a position off the starboard quarter where it hovered for about 30 seconds, then went to the port quarter and gradually disappeared. It appeared to be cigar shaped with a bright light at its head, a glowing body with a duller light aft, and a fiery tail. It was silent and I saw it for about 3 minutes in all. I first thought it was a plane in trouble and looked for running lights but saw none. It did not flare or light up the surroundings. The lights were steady. This definitely was not a meteor. I am an able seaman and have been at sea for 25 years and have never seen anything like it."

This is Helmsman Facha's statement:

"At a little before 2200, January 11, 1966, I was at the wheel steering 257 gyro. When the lookout reported a flying object, I looked out and saw what appeared to be a plane on fire on the port quarter. I watched it for over a minute when it showed a bright flash and went out. The ship was steering well and making steady

course. I have never seen the likes of this before. I am an able seaman with 17 years sea experience."

Richard Anderson, mate on watch, described the sighting as follows:

"Lookout phone from the bow to bridge reporting a flying object low on starboard side. I glanced out starboard forward and did not notice anything. Lookout called again and said it was on the port quarter. I glanced out and saw an orange glowlike fire trailing behind a flying object streaming out behind for what appeared to be about 15 or 20 feet. Same disappeared in about a minute heading in an easterly direction approximately 3 or 4 degrees above the horizon. Pointed out object to helmsman and phoned Captain Petrie notifying him of same. I hold a second mate's license and have been to sea for 37 years."

Do any *Sealift* readers have any thoughts on all this? ‡

MSTSO ROTA—(Continued from Page 9)



Rear Adm. D. J. M. Pery, Spanish Navy, Commander, Joint United States/Spanish Naval Base, Rota, attends a reception with Capt. J. C. Young, USN, Commander, Naval Activities, Spain.

clinic, library, hobby shop, swimming pool, golf course, gymnasium, bowling alleys, stables, skeet range, indoor and outdoor theaters, and a family housing area.

Due to Rota's proximity to the Straits of Gibraltar, one of the major shipping arteries of the world, there is an abundance of shipping reasonably available, provided sufficient cargo is on hand to induce vessels to call.

The region surrounding the base is known as Andalusia and is famous the world over for its sherry wines and bullfights. The ports of Puerto de Santa Maria and Sanlucar de Barrameda flank the port of Rota on the south and north respectively and are rich in nautical history stemming back to the days of Columbus and his journeys to the new world. ‡

STATEMENT OF WITNESSES: UNIDENTIFIED FLYING OBJECT ON JANUARY 11, 1966

S.S. MORGANTOWN VICTORY Voy. 6-NSA-5

LATITUDE 26° 58' N TIME: GMT 1200

LONGITUDE 154° 46' E LCT 2200

Statement of Claunch, Robert J., A.B. :

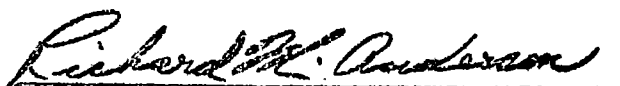
"At a little before 2200 January 11, 1966, I was bow lookout in clear fine weather. I sighted a large glowing object coming from the horizon on the stbd beam. It approached to within one mile at a height of about 400 feet. It then altered course to a position off the stbd quarter where it hovered for about 30 seconds then went to the port quarter and gradually disappeared. It appeared to be cigar shaped with a bright light at its head, a glowing body with a duller light aft and a fiery tail. It was silent and I saw it for about 3 minutes in all. I first thought it was a plane in trouble and looked for running lights but saw none. It did not flare or light up the surroundings. The lights were steady. This definitely was not a meteor. I am an Able Seaman and have been at sea for 25 years and have never seen anything like it."


Robert J. Claunch, A.B.

Statement of Anderson, Richard M., Third Mate :

"Lookout phoned from the bow to bridge reporting a flying object low on stbd side. I glanced out stbd fwd and did not notice anything. Lookout called again and said it was on the port quarter. I glanced out and saw an orange glow like fire trailing behind a flying object streaming out behind, for what appeared to be, about 15 or 20 feet. Same disappeared in about a minute heading in an easterly direction approximately 3 or 4 degrees above the horizon. Pointed out object to helmsman and phoned Captain Petrie notifying him of same.

I hold a Second Mate license and have been to sea for 37 years."


Richard M. Anderson, Third Mate

Statement of Facha, John F., A.B. :

"At a little before 2200 January 11, 1966, I was at the wheel steering 257 gyro. When the lookout reported a flying object, I looked out and saw what appeared to be a plane on fire on the port quarter. I watched it for over a minute when it showed a bright flash and went out. The ship was steering well and making steady course. I have never seen the likes of this before. I am an Able Seaman with 17 years sea experience."


John F. Facha, A.B.

THE ABOVE REPORT OF THE WITNESSES STATEMENT WAS TAKEN AT 2300 HOURS 1/11/66

7

STATEMENT OF GLYNN J. PETRIE, MASTER :

"Just prior to 2200 ship time, January 11, 1966, I was in my bunk when I heard a hurried clatter of feet on the bridge grating over my head. After the phone rang and Mr. Anderson, Third Mate, reported what appeared to be a plane afire on the port quarter.

I ran to the bridge, but could see nothing. The information given me indicated a plane in trouble had headed for the ship and ditched on the port quarter.

At 2201, the vessel started to execute a Williamson Turn. The bow lookout was doubled and a search was made utilizing the vessel's search light.

During the search, I realized that I had heard no sound, such as a plane would have made. I questioned Claunch, A.B. on bow lookout and learned that the object had maneuvered approximately 180° about the vessel without sound.

At 2238, vessel executed another Williamson Turn and resumed her original course and continued search.

At 2300, I took statements from each of the witnesses, Mr. Anderson, Third Mate on watch, R. Claunch, A.B. and bow lookout, and J. Facha, A.B. and helmsman who had left the wheel to sight the object. The statements were taken individually and I did not seek to make them agree.

The weather was clear: wind SSW 13k, Barometer 30.16, Temperature 19 dry 15 Centigrade, sea moderate, and fine with excellent visibility, almost full moon astern with the vessel steering 257 gyro and 258 true.

This is a fine steering vessel, a fact important in considering the possibility of poor steering and yawing which, had such been the case, might have accounted for the apparent maneuvering from the stbd to the port quarter.

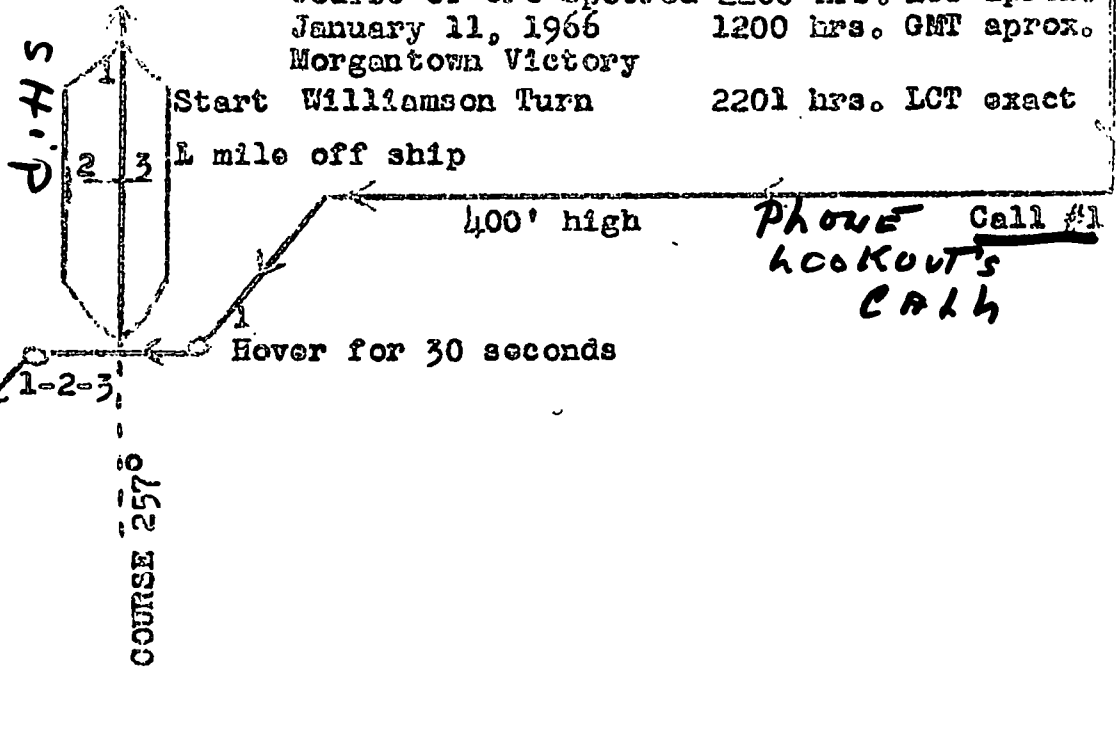
There were two (2) phone calls from the bow. First when object was on stbd quarter. The Third Mate ran to stbd wing and looked forward, seeing nothing. Another phone call from the bow was to have the bridge look on the port quarter. The Third Mate and Facha looked and saw the object. This gives a rather prolonged time element during which the object was visible."


Glynn J. Petrie, Master

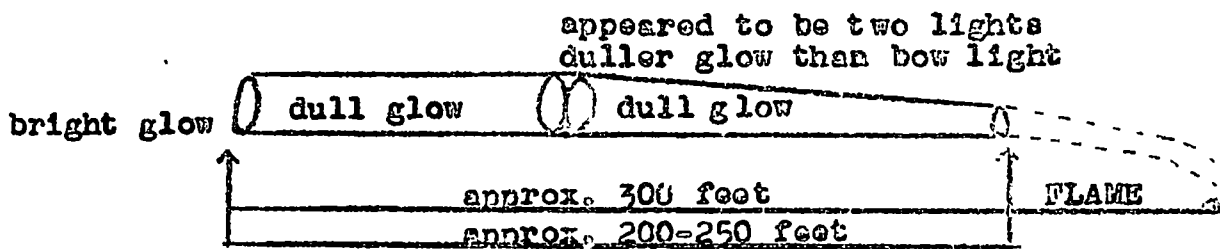
Observed by:

- #1- Claunch
- #2- Anderson
- #3- Facha

Course of UFO Spotted 2200 hrs. LCT aprox.
 January 11, 1966 1200 hrs. GMT aprox.
 Morgantown Victory
 Start Williamson Turn 2201 hrs. LCT exact



Description of UFO



- color of UFO - appeared orange-yellow glow with a whiter tint aft of the two lights.
- Flame - appeared to be red-orange with direction of flame dipping downward.
- Height - approximately 35-40 feet.

"The above drawings are accurate to show the course and description of what was seen on January 11, 1966."

Robert J. Claunch
 Robert J. Claunch, A.B.

Form Statements by 5 crew members C PROBABLE SATELLITE Jan 11 1966
 Source also Sealift Magazine Analyst id Date 12/12/67 RE ENTRY Pacific Ocean - Morqantown Victory
 Documentation via Purser of ship Date 12/12/67 Location N of Marcus Island F
 Sea - Ground-Air Air-Air Radar Radar-Visual GRADE: (A) B Bx Z Sky/Weather Clear; full moon eastern
 Time 10 pm. Zone _____ Duration 1-3 min Local Env. _____

Night Day Dusk am Dusk pm Uncertain Instruments Single One of Series See also
 WITNESSES Name Occupation Special Qualifications
 No. 3 Robert J. Claunch A.B. (at sea 25 yrs)
 Richard M. Anderson 3d Mate (at sea 37 yrs)
 John F. Sacha A.B. (17 yrs)

SKETCHES: SHAPE FORMATION PATH by _____

	Relative	Absolute	Reference Points	Var.	Other
1 No. <u>1</u>					
2 Type <u>Cigar</u>					
3 Color/Surface		<u>200-250 ft</u>		<u>+ flame</u>	
5 Structural Details					
6 Color Change					
8 Structural Lights					
9 Flashed					
12 Beam(s) of Light					
13 Flame					
16 Other Emission					
17 Formation, Geom.					
20 Satellite Obj.					
23 Near-Collision (a/c)					
25 Near-Landing					
28 Pace Vehicle					
30 Buzz/Hover, Area					
33 Flight path, general					
34 Motion of object					
36 Attitude					
39 Manoeuvres					
41 First Noticed					
24 Collision					
26 Landing					
27 Occupants					
29 Buzz/Hover, Vehicle					
31 House					
32 Person					
35 Motion, part of object					
37 Vert. ascent					
38 Descent					
40 Hover-accelerate					
42-a Departure/Disappearance					
42 Noise					
43 Odor					
44 Assoc. w/ Water					
45 w/ Power lines					
46 w/ Govt. Installation					
47 Reaction to Light					
48 Other intell. reaction					
49 Animal Reactions					
50 E-M Effect					
51 Physiological Effects					
52 Psychological Effects					
53 Traces on environment					
54 Physical evidence					
55 Photographs					
56 Movie					
57 Govt./military involvement					
58 Other orgs. involved					
59 AF Explanation					
60 Other Explanation					
61 Secrecy or cover-up					

EXPLANATIONS OF ABOVE / HIGHLIGHTS OF CASE / ABSTRACT OF CASE

8 - Bright light at head, duller light aft; lights steady
 3 - glowing body, orange-yellow
 16 - fiery tail ~~15~~ ²⁰ ft long, dipping downward
 39 - seen first to starboard, then to port

Cosmos 53 reentered at approximately 1200 GMT at location near ship. Point of entry was in direction witnesses were looking. But see description of manoeuvres

February 11, 1969

Mr. Lamar Holt
Sealift Magazine
NSTS
Navy Department
Washington, D.C. 20390

Dear Mr. Holt:

In the June 1966 issue of Sealift, there is a report on a UFO sighting made by three members of the crew of the SS Morgantown Victory. Having recently reviewed our file on this sighting, we thought you would be interested to know that there is a tentative explanation for the report. At approximately 1200 GMT (the time of the sighting), Cosmos 53 reentered the Earth's atmosphere at a point relatively close to the position of the ship. The general reentry window and trajectory are consistent with the visual details given by the witnesses, and the basic configuration of the UFO, as reported (glowing head, elongated body, flaming tail), is fully consistent with the appearance of a decaying satellite. Certain other elements of the sighting are also consistent with reentry phenomena. Additional analysis would be required to confirm definitely if this explanation is correct, but the present evidence clearly favors it.

We hope this information is helpful. If we can be of further assistance, please let us know. Enclosed is some literature that may be of interest.

Sincerely yours,

Stuart Nixon
executive staff

GSN/sn
Encl.

1906-11 JBN
RECEIVED MAY 16 1966

COLO. V

NATIONAL INVESTIGATIONS COMMITTEE

ON AERIAL PHENOMENA

TELEPHONE: NORTH 7-9434

CABLE ADDRESS:
SKYLIGHT

WASHINGTON 6, D. C.

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES:
1536 CONNECTICUT AVE., N. W.

MAJOR DONALD E. KEYHOF
USMC (RET.) DIRECTOR

7 February 1966

Mr. John L. Greene
1440 Davies Drive
Beverly Hills, Calif.

Dear Mr. Greene:

Thanks for your letter dated 1 February 1966 and for your interest.

You mentioned that three witnesses had a UFO sighting at sea. As a serious organization devoted to a scientific investigation of UFO reports, we are anxious to find out all we can about this sighting. Therefore, I am enclosing some report forms. If at all possible, could you possibly ~~have~~ ask the three observers to fill out a report and return them to us? It would be greatly appreciated and would facilitate our research. As you can see on the forms, names will be kept strictly confidential if so desired.

Also enclosed is some information in which you may be interested.

Thank you.

Sincerely yours,

Gordon Lore
Gordon Lore
Editorial Assistant

cc: File

Dear Mr. Lore --

Enclosed is information about the sighting of the UFO's I wrote you about. My son, John L. Greene Jr., is purser on the ship and sent the information to me. He ~~mentioned~~ mentioned that the men making the sighting were reliable witnesses. I had misplaced the mimeoed sheets and was almost ready to blame the Air Force for their disappearance.

A Williamson Turn is a maneuver which brings a ship around and directly back on its track -- that is, 180° -- usually executed when a man has fallen overboard.
Best wishes in your work,

A privately-supported fact-finding body serving the national public interest