

DECEPTION ISLAND UFO SIGHTINGS

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(Translated by Dr. Willy Smith)

ABSTRACT

This paper objectively describes the details of UFO sightings occurring 22 years ago at Deception Island, one of the South Shetland Islands, which are located west of the Antarctic Peninsula in the Argentinian Antarctic Sector (Figure 1).

INTRODUCTION

At the time of the events in 1965, the author, then a lieutenant, was the commander of the Argentinian Navy base at Deception Island. The island, of volcanic origin, comprises the remains of a crater flooded by the sea, which penetrates through a narrow opening (Figure 2). It consists of a mountainous belt with an area of 127 square kilometers (49 square miles), surrounding a central body of water (Puerto Foster) which has an average depth of 135 meters (444 ft). The surface of this water freezes during the winter to a depth of 1.50 m. (4.9 ft). The external diameter of the island is about 16 Km (8.6 nautical miles) while the inside diameter is approximately 11 Km (5.9 nautical miles), the land belt having an average width of 3 Km (1.6 nautical miles). The volcano is active, and eruptions have occurred in 1842, and more recently in 1967, 1969 and 1970.

In June-July, 1965, three nations maintained research stations at different locations on the island, and personnel from all of them were involved in the observations. Those bases were: the English Base "B" at Caleta Balleneros, the Chilean base ("Pedro Aguirre Cerda") at Caleta Pendulum, and the Argentinian post at First of May Bay. Seven sightings will be described in chronological order.

FIRST SIGHTING

On Monday, June 7, 1965 at 19:50 hours, the meteorological officer Jorge Stanich was performing a routine observation at the Argentinian base. The sky was completely covered by stratus. The observer noticed a stationary, bright, yellow light at an altitude of 25 degrees above the horizon, and he estimated its distance to be 2000 meters (6560 ft). The witness is rather certain that the duration of the sighting was 5 seconds.



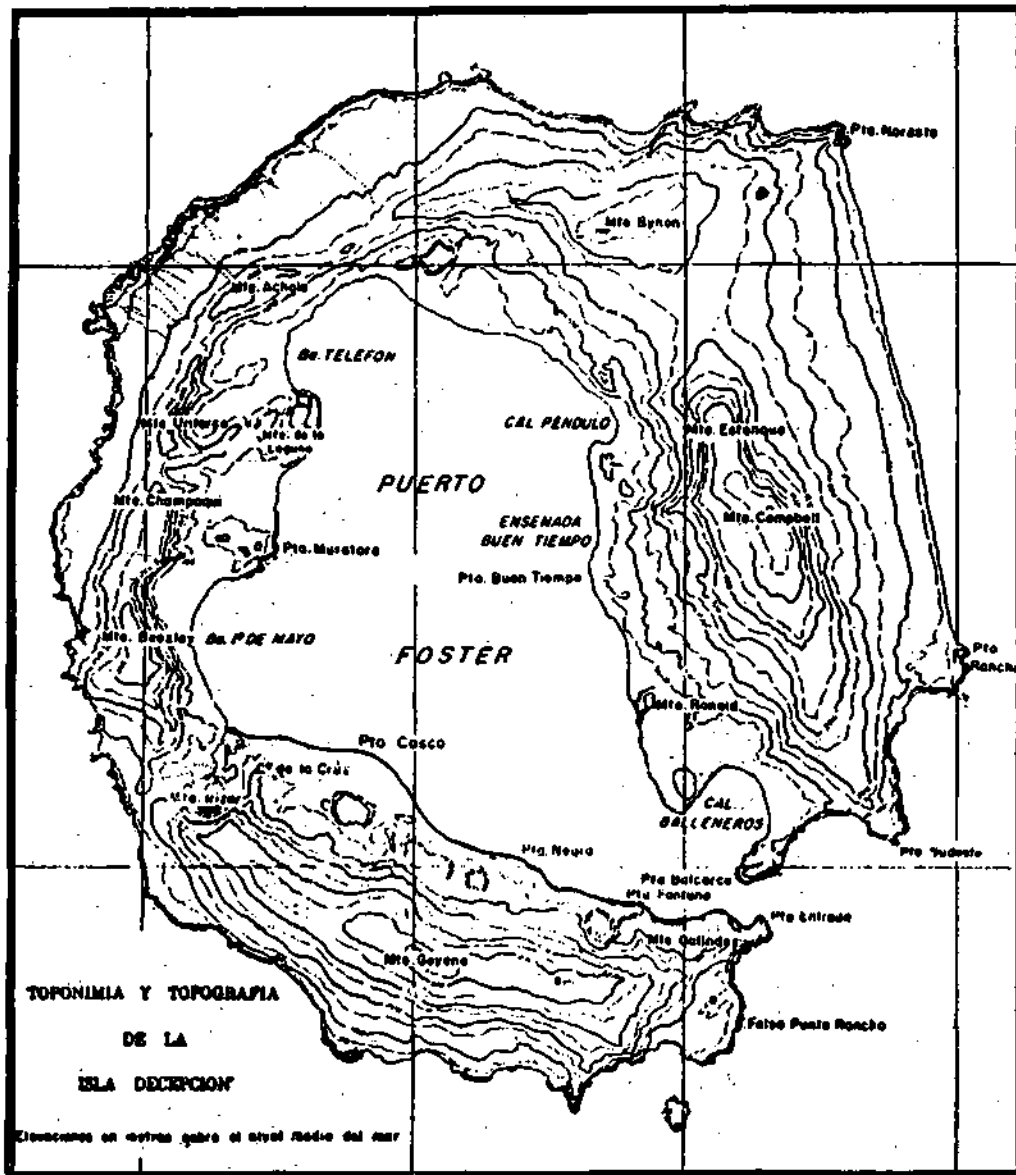


Figure 2  
Deception Island  
In the South Shetland Islands

Comments:

1) By applying a very simple trigonometric formula,  $h = d \sin A$ , where  $d$  is the distance to the object and  $A$  is its altitude, the height  $h$  of the object above the horizontal plane can be obtained.

$$h = 2000 \sin 25 = 845 \text{ m.} = 2772 \text{ ft.}$$

2) Likewise, it is possible to calculate the linear distance from the witness to the vertical of the object, which turns out to be 1800 meters. This information was used to mark the location of the object in Figure 3.

3) The witness reported the apparent diameter of the object at arm's length (60 cm) to be 1.5 cm. It follows from this information that at a distance of 2000 meters the actual UFO size was 50 meters.

4) In a second attempt, the witness also indicated that the head of a match (0.25 cm) at arm's length (60 cm) covered  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the object's width, making its apparent diameter 1 cm. Hence, at a distance of 2000 m., calculation shows an actual diameter of 35 meters.

5) Thus, from 3) and 4) above, it is possible to estimate the diameter of the UFO to be between 35 and 50 meters (115-164 ft).

SECOND SIGHTING

The following day, Tuesday, June 8, 1965, at 2:20 hrs, the same observer had a new sighting under identical circumstances. A stationary light was again observed for 4 seconds toward the NW, with an altitude of 40 degrees above the horizon. The light was similar in color to the one detected the previous day and was also below the stratus cloud deck of 8/8 coverage. The witness claimed to have heard a grave sound of hardly any intensity two minutes after the observation.

Comments:

1) The weather conditions being similar for the two sightings, we are justified in assuming that the ceiling was the same both days ( $h = 845 \text{ m}$ ). Thus, for an observation angle of 40 degrees using the formula  $d = h/\sin A$ , we obtain a distance of 1300 m (4264 ft) between observer and UFO.

2) Likewise, the distance from the witness to the vertical of the object is determined to be 1000 m (3280 ft), as shown in Figure 3.

3) According to the observer the angular size of the object was like 1 cm at arm's length. Consequently, the actual diameter at 1300 meters was 20 meters (65.6 ft).

4) In a second attempt to estimate the object's size, the witness indicated that the head of a match (0.25 cm) covered  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the object. This estimate yields an actual diameter of 15 meters (49 ft) at a

distance of 1300 meters.

5) From 3) and 4), we conclude that the actual diameter of the UFO was between 15 and 20 meters (49-66 ft).

6) From the information available, the author was unable to determine any causal relationship between the observed light and the sound perceived two minutes later.

#### THIRD SIGHTING

The third incident took place on Friday, June 18, 1965, and was observed starting at 16:20 hrs by nine witnesses from the Chilean Air Force base. For a total of 25 minutes, a bright and apparently solid object zigzagged from the east quadrant to the south quadrant, and maintained an altitude above the horizon between 35 and 20 degrees. Looking like a very large star, it was white with some orange hues while turning. The sky was starry with very few clouds.

#### FOURTH SIGHTING

At 19:15 hrs on Friday, July 2, 1965, five garrison members of the English Base "B" had a new sighting while doing routine meteorological observations. The witnesses observed a light in the north quadrant, zigzagging, hovering and accelerating at times, and maintaining altitudes between 20 and 45 degrees above the horizon. The light was green and red, at times yellow, and was observed for perhaps 15-20 minutes. The night was starry, with 1/8 sky cover of strato-cumulus and practically no moon. The edges of the light resembled those of a bright star.

The remaining sightings (5th, 6th and 7th) are singularly important, as they prompted the issuing of official statements by the Argentinian Navy and the Chilean Air Force. The text of those communiquees are reproduced in Appendixes I, II and III, but the following comments are appropriate.

Appendix I; The description of the sighting is in general accurate, but it must be pointed out that the altitude of the light above the horizon did not exceed 35 degrees. The number of witnesses belonging to the Argentinian post was 14, and the duration of the incident was 62 minutes. It is impossible to prove that the UFO observed earlier from the Argentinian base at the South Orkney Islands (5th sighting) was the same. The general direction of the UFO displacement was east to west.

Appendix II: The text of Bulletin #172 confirms the initial official communique. The UFO moved toward the left of the observers. The author cannot vouch for the existence of these magnetometers, neither has he seen the corresponding recording.

Appendix III; The sighting at the English base took place on July 2, 1965.

FIFTH SIGHTING

The site of this observation was the Argentinian base on Laurie Island in the South Orkney Islands. At 17:03 hrs. on Saturday July 3, 1965, two meteorologists, Jose Jarriek and Jose Mazzuchelli, observed for 15 seconds a round bluish-white object moving east to west on a parabolic path. Its size was bigger than a first magnitude star. Two variometers (instruments that monitor the local magnetic field) registered sudden and strong disturbances of the magnetic field which were recorded on their tapes at the time of the incident (17:03).

SIXTH SIGHTING

The same day, Saturday July 3, 1965 at 19:20 hrs, nine garrison members of the Chilean base (Pedro Aguirre Cerda) observed for 20 minutes the maneuvers of a luminous object of solid appearance and yellowish-red color which occasionally changed to green, yellow and orange. It moved at high speed, mostly in a straight line with oscillations, but it also hovered momentarily. A wake, apparently steam, followed its passage. It was initially observed toward the north at 40 degrees above the horizon, and finally disappeared in the clouds toward the S $\text{E}$  at an altitude of 45 degrees (Figure 5). The night was clear and starry, with a waning moon, 2/8 coverage of strato-cumulus and a few cirrus; the wind was of the order of 80 Km/hr (50 miles/hr) (\*). The witnesses were performing routine meteorological observations.

SEVENTH SIGHTING

This sighting took place at the Argentinian post just two minutes after the termination of the previous observation at the Chilean base. It lasted 62 minutes, from 19:42 to 20:44, and was witnessed at different moments by a total of 17 persons (14 members of the Argentinian garrison and three visiting Chilean sub-officers). The UFO was described as a circular object of solid appearance with a red center and ill defined edges of changing colors (yellow, green, orange, blue and white). It was moving in a zigzag trajectory from right to left with respect to the witnesses, appearing initially toward the NNW with 30-35 degrees altitude. Its maneuvers at low speed included hovering, accelerations, reversals of direction and luminosity changes. It was hidden at times behind the clouds (stratus), but it was also noticed in front of the cirrus backdrop. It finally disappeared toward the NW, decreasing in size and gaining altitude. The distance between object and observers was estimated first as 10-15 Km (6.2-9.3 miles) and later on as 20-30 Km (12.4-18.6 miles). The UFO was first noticed by Sub-Officer Aldo Irusta who was at the meteorological observatory of the post. The weather conditions during the sighting were totally similar to those of the sixth observation.

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(\*) One must recall that July at the South Pole is midwinter when the bases are totally cut off from the rest of the world.

Comments:

- 1) The average of the first distance estimates is 12.5 Km, while the mean for the second estimates is 25 Km. Thus, the average value for all determinations is 18.75 Km (11.6 miles).
- 2) Since the normal height of cirrus clouds is of the order of 10 Km., we can use the fact that the UFO was moving in front of them to make an estimate of the maximum possible distance. We use the formula:  $d \text{ (max)} = h / \sin A$ , where A is the average altitude  $(30 + 35) / 2 = 33$  degrees, and  $h = 10$  Km, to obtain a distance of 18.4 Km (11.4 miles).
- 3) The results of 1) and 2) above are consistent, and establish that the distance to the UFO was between 18.4 and 18.75 Km (11.4-11.6 miles).
- 4) The distance between the observers and the vertical of the UFO follows from the formula  $h \tan A$ , which yields 15.4 Km (9.6 miles).
- 5) According to the witnesses, the shape of the object was similar to a rugby ball and looked like a Bunsen burner flame with the colors indicated above.
- 6) Binoculars and a theodolite were used during the observation.
- 7) The observers indicated that a match head (0.25 cm) at arm's length (60 cm) covered the UFO totally. Thus, at a distance of 18.4 Km its actual diameter was 75 meters (246 ft).
- 8) A second size estimate was based on the fact that the UFO was covered by the head of a nail (0.3 cm) at arm's length (60 cm). At a distance of 18.4 Km this yields a diameter of 90 m. (295 ft).
- 9) From 7) and 8) above it follows that the actual size of the UFO was somewhere between 75 and 90 meters (246-295 ft).
- 10) As indicated at the time by the author's statements to the press in Buenos Aires, attempts to photograph the object were made. Those attempts failed, because the available film had very low sensitivity (20 DIN), and because the strong prevailing wind (50 miles/hr) made it impossible to set up the camera for time exposure photography.

To conclude this paper, the author deems it appropriate to mention the last incident that occurred in the Antarctic during this period. The event took place during some undetermined night in August, 1965, at the Argentinian post at the South Orkney Islands. Members of the garrison observed four UFOs over Uruguay Bay, located in the north of Laurie Island. Maintaining a rhomboidal formation, they proceeded slowly over the frozen sea in a westerly direction, showing a slight up-and-down motion as they advanced. At a certain moment during the sighting, a vivid flash of light seemed to originate from a point on the vertical below the UFO group, illuminating like daylight the whole island. The UFOs continued their slow motion toward the west, finally disappearing behind the hills on that part of the island.

This sighting culminates the orchestration of the Antarctic observations, as a prelude to the wave of reports to occur during the second half of 1965.

## ANTARTIC UFO SIGHTINGS DURING JUNE AND JULY, 1965

Date	June 7	June 8	June 18	July 2	July 3	July 3	July 3
Time	19:50	02:20	16:20	19:15	17:03	19:20	19:42
Place	Deception Argentinian Base	Deception Argentinian Base	Deception Chilean Base	Deception British Base B	Laurie Argentinian Base	Deception Chilean Base	Deception Argentinian Base
Witnesses	1	1	9	5	2	9	17
Duration	5 sec.	4 sec.	25 min.	15-20 min.	15 sec.	20 min.	62 min.
Description	yellow light below cloud deck	yellow light below cloud deck	bright white object; orange hues	green & red light; at times yellow	round bluish-white light	red-yellow object; also other colors	red object; edge varying colors
flotions	stationary	stationary	zigzag hovering	zigzag hovering accelerating	parabolic trajectory	straight line with oscillations	zigzag hovering reversals
Estimated distance	2000 meters (1.24 Miles)	1300 meters (0.8 Miles)	not estimated	not estimated	not estimated		18.5 KB (11.5 mi.)
Estimated size	35-50 ft. (115-164 ft)	15-20 ft. (49-66 ft)	plane at 10,000 ft	not- estimated	not estimated	not estimated	75-90 ft. (246-295 ft)
Weather	cloudy	cloudy	starry, dark 1/8 cover	starry, moon 1/8 cover	starry, moon 2/8 cover 50 MPH wind	starry, moon 2/8 cover 50 MPH wind	starry, moon 1/8 - 2/8 50 MPH wind
UNICAT entry	M891	M892	U112	M893	M894	U110	U11



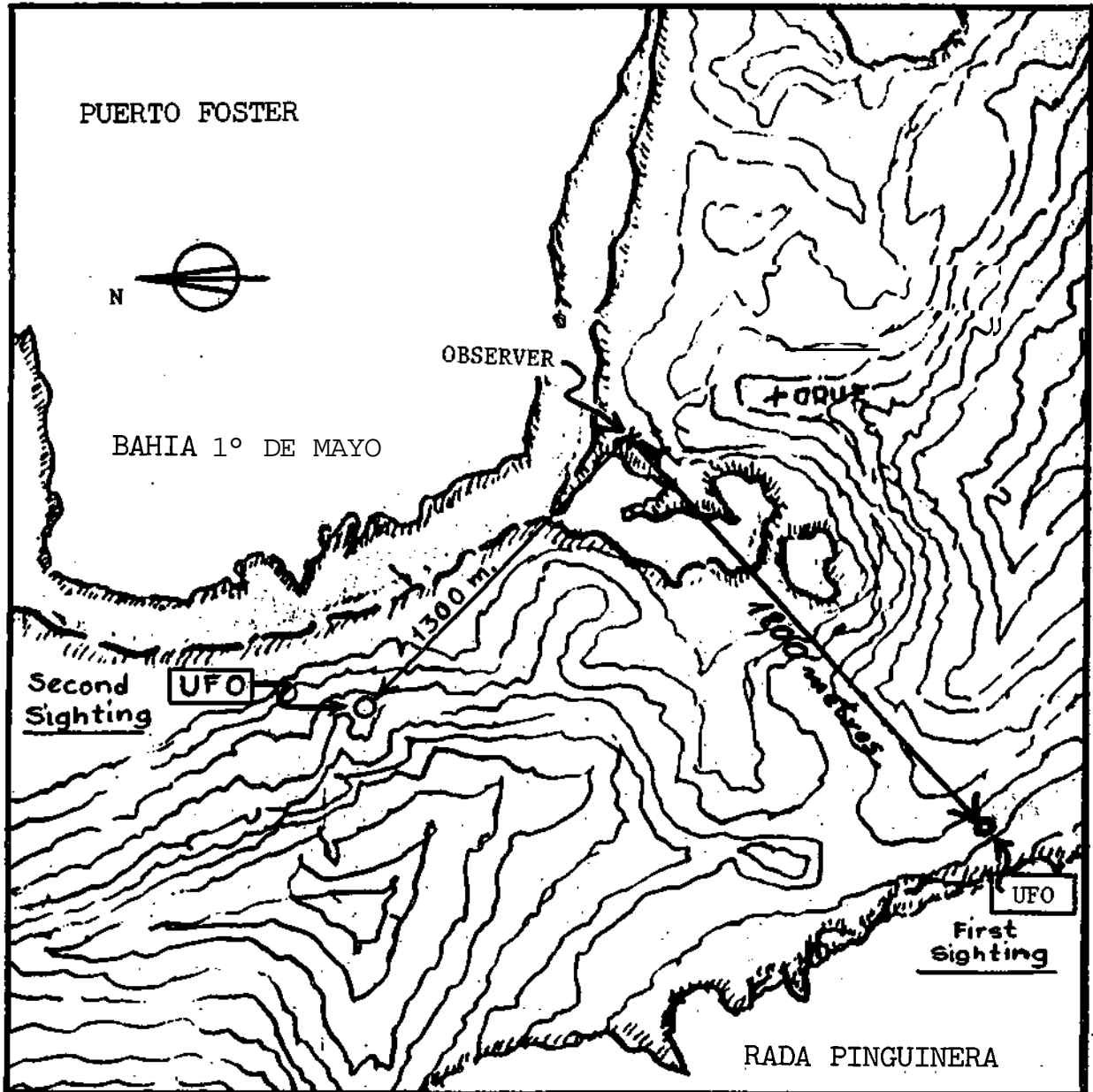


Figure 3

First Sighting, June 7, 1965  
Second Sighting, June 8, 1965  
Relative position of UFO and observer

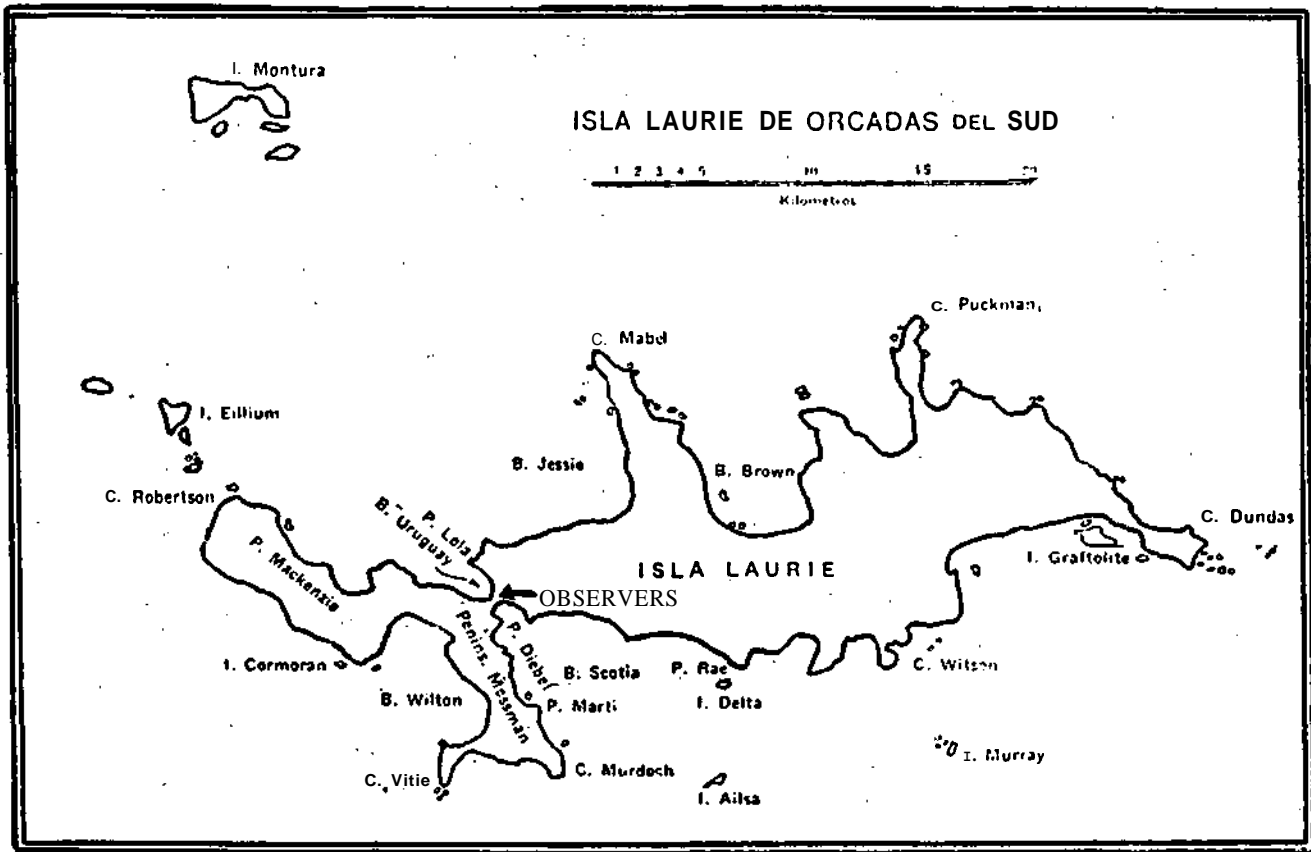


Figure 4

Fifth Sighting, July 3, 1965  
 Laurie Island  
 In the South Orkney Islands

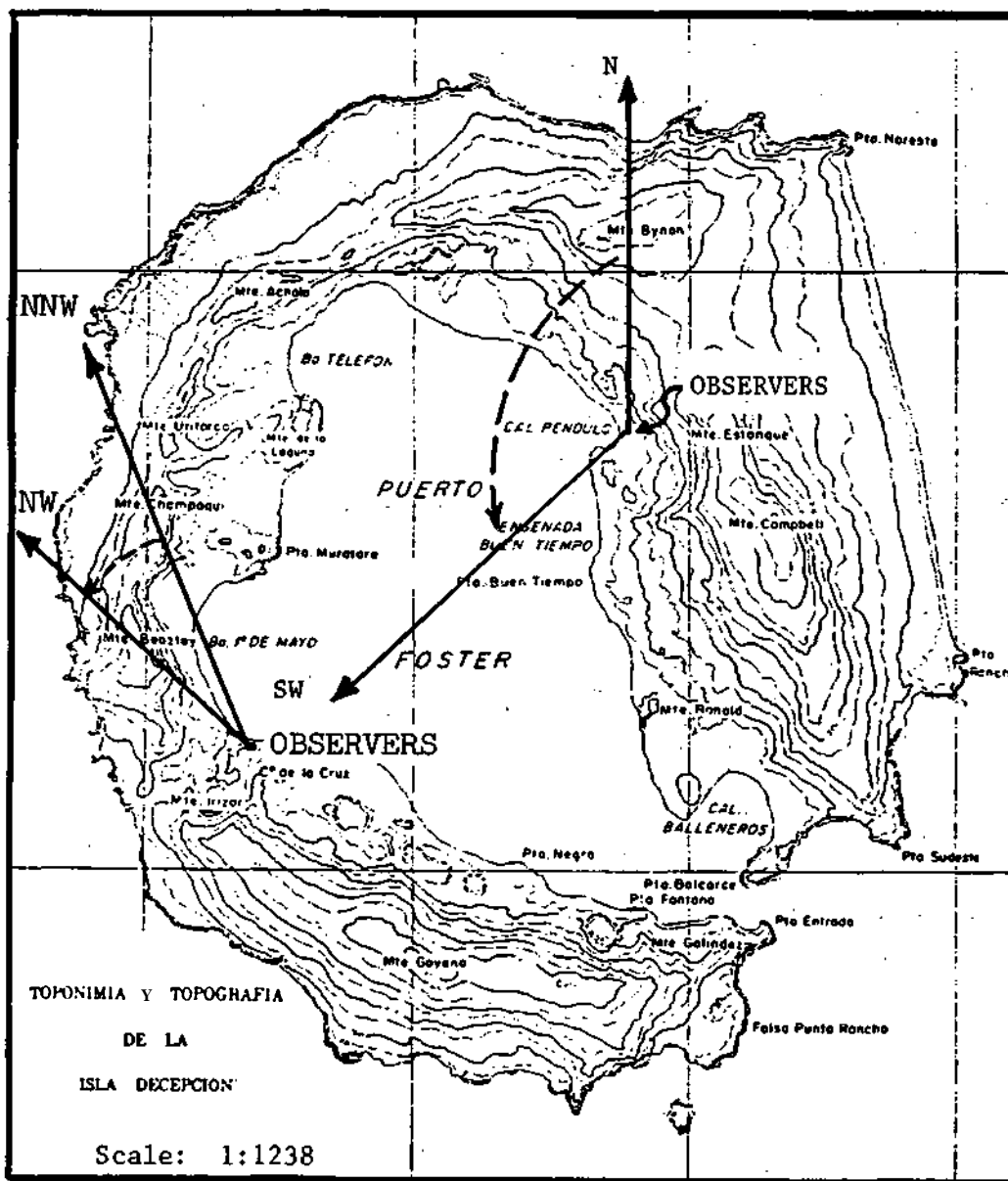


Figure 5

Sixth Sighting, July 3, 1965  
 Seventh Sighting, July 3, 1965  
 Azimuthal angles of observations

APPENDIX I

## ARGENTINIAN NAVY FIRST OFFICIAL STATEMENT

(Released on Tuesday, July 6, 1965)

The Navy garrison in the Argentinian Antarctica, Deception Island, observed on July 3, at 19:40 hours local time, a giant, lens-shaped flying object, solid in appearance, mostly red and green in color, changing occasionally with yellow, blue, white and orange shades. The object was moving on a zigzag trajectory toward the east but several times it changed its course to the west and north with varied speeds and without sound. It passed at an elevation of forty-five degrees above the horizon at a distance estimated to be about 10 to 15 kilometers from the base.

During the maneuvers performed by the object, the witnesses were able to register its changes in velocity and also the fact that it hovered motionless. The meteorological conditions for the area of the sighting can be considered as very good for this time of the year; clear sky, some strato-cumulus, moon in the last quarter and, perfect visibility.

The object was witnessed by the meteorologist together with 10 members of the garrison. The observation lasted for fifteen to twenty minutes and photographs of the object were taken.

In the afternoon of the same day the same object was sighted from the Argentinian base on the South Orkney Islands, moving away toward the northwest (330 azimuth), about 30 degrees above the horizon, estimated distance ten to fifteen kilometers (six to nine miles).

Source: the newspaper CLARIN of Buenos Aires, issue of July 7, 1965

APPENDIX II

## ARGENTINIAN NAVY BULLETIN #172

(Released Wednesday, July 7, 1965)

In a direct radio contact with the commanding officer on Deception Island, Argentinian Antarctica, Lieutenant Daniel Perisse, this officer confirmed the details of previous announcements referring to the sighting of unidentified flying objects in the area. He asserted that all the garrison personnel observed an extremely brilliant object, moving toward the north with variable speed, sometimes hovering, displaying sudden accelerations and changes of direction. The characteristics of the object and its motion, added Lt. Perisse, were such that the possibility of a weather balloon, a plane or a star were ruled out. The object was observed by a total of 17 persons, including three visiting sub-officers from the Chilean base "Pedro Aguirre Cerda."

The conditions of the observation were also explained by Lt. Perisse. In the Antarctic, the day starts at about 10:20 hrs, and

daylight extends until 15:30 hrs, followed by 16 hours of darkness. The sighting took place during the night hours, in total darkness **attenuated** only by some moonlight. The attempt to photograph the object was doomed to failure considering the low sensitivity of the film used, the distance, and the prevailing darkness.

From the Navy post at the South Orkney Islands comes a message of extreme importance: during the **passage** of the strange object over the base (N.T.: earlier the same day), two magnetometers in perfect working condition registered sudden and strong **disturbances** of the magnetic field (at 17:03 hrs), which were recorded on their tapes.

Source: the newspaper LA PRENSA of Buenos Aires, issue of Thursday, July 8, 1965.

### APPENDIX III

#### CHILEAN AIR FORCE COMMUNIQUE

(Released Wednesday, July 7, 1965)

The Chilean Air Force released today the text of the reports received by radio from an Antarctic base, describing an unidentified flying object sighted on June 18 by personnel in the British, Chilean and Argentinian posts. According to a message sent by Commander Mario Jahn Barrera from the Antarctic Chilean base "Arturo Prat," a luminous **object** was sighted for about 20 minutes by nine members of the garrison **who were** performing routine meteorological observations. It changed **colors**, speeds and direction, moving **with** an oscillatory motion at high speed.

The following day, the British base reported that five members of the garrison had also seen a flying object the previous night, **red** in color with shades of yellow and green, hovering for 10 minutes before disappearing.

Always according to Commander Mario Jahn Barrera, communication with the Argentine base disclosed that on July 3 sixteen persons had observed an aerial object, and that Corporal **Ladislao Duran** Martinez had taken 10 color photographs of it.

The report of the Chilean **Commander** concluded by stating that radio communication among the bases had not been previously possible due to strong interference, and that consequently the possibility of inducing a psychosis for UFO observations was ruled out, a detail of importance from the scientific viewpoint.

Source: the newspaper LA RAZON of Buenos Aires, issue of Wednesday, July 7, 1965.