

Australian UFO Expert Says Interest Growing

By JOHN RIDDICK
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Sightings of Unidentified Flying Objects (UFOs) have increased greatly in Australia, an officer of the largest independent UFO investigating group in that country said here yesterday.

"We have the same pattern of observations in Australia that you have here and the same official debunking," said Paul Norman, an officer with the Victorian Flying Saucer Research Society.

Norman was here to talk with University of Arizona physicist James E. McDonald after meeting with the research group sponsored by the Air Force at the University of Colorado. He was to see the Air Force scientific consultant, Dr. J. Allen Hynek, in Chicago last night.

"The situation has changed a great deal in the past two years," Norman said, "There is terrific interest by the public now in Australia although the scientists still give little credence."

Norman, who works as an engineer in Melbourne, said that the most common observations in Australia are of cigar shaped or disc shaped UFOs.

"Frequently, they pull maneuvers that aircraft can't do," said Norman. "On one occasion, 10 UFOs circled a

chartered jet plane for 3 minutes.

"The official explanation was migrating pelicans. They would have had to be supersonic birds."

After investigating many cases and "talking with dozens of people who have seen the 'real McCoy,'" Norman said, he is convinced the UFOs are extra-terrestrial.

There have been a number of pictures taken of UFOs in Australia including a mushroom shaped object photographed in April, 1966 on a polaroid camera. A disc shaped UFO was photographed by a 15-year-old boy with a box camera this March.

In July, 1965, members of the control tower at the Canberra Airport saw a disc shaped UFO hover over a tracking station which then had trouble tracking a spacecraft.

The official explanations were balloons, vapor trails or the planet Venus — none of which was possible," said Norman. "This is known around the world as the shotgun approach."

Norman also told of a farmer in Tully Queensland who last January saw a bluish circular object rise out of a swamp leaving a 30-foot diameter circle of dead grass. This was just prior to the famous

"swamp gas" episode at Dexter, Mich.

And in April last year, children and their science teacher at recess saw a UFO in the suburbs of Melbourne hover over pine trees and "play a cat and mouse game" with passing aircraft.

And Norman also talked with a farmer in Moe, Queensland, who in February, 1965 at 7 a.m. saw a grey metallic object, 25 to 30 feet in diameter with a transparent dome on top, descend from a cloud, causing his cows and horses to react violently.

Norman first became interested in UFOs in 1953 when he saw a whitish blue pulsating object hover over a power station in Middle, Tenn. where he was superintendent. He emigrated to Australia four years ago after being associated with the National Investigation Committee on Aerial Phenomena in this country.

"In Australia, as in the United States, the UFOs frequently have electromagnetic effects such as causing cars to stall," said Norman.

"Most people who see UFOs are amazed. They come as a surprise because the people have been listening to the debunking stories. The best evidence comes in their comments in their first surprised moments."