

**PART
FOUR**



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Hushed-up: The crash of a UFO

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The pilot of the Norwegian Air Force Catalina flying-boat was bored. For over four hours, as the aircraft droned deeper into the long Arctic shadows, he and his crew had seen nothing but a vast expanse of grey sea and white ice-floes.

Only occasionally was the sombre scene lit by a shaft of dim, watery sunlight that coloured the vast ice-pack off Norway's North Cape a dim, delicate pink.

It was May, 1952 and the Catalina was on a routine ice-survey mission from its base in northern Norway.

Ahead of the aircraft, the jagged snow-capped peaks of Spitzbergen rose from the icy sea.

The pilot turned slightly, bringing the Catalina over the islands' western shores. Dwarfed by the mountains that towered above it, the aircraft cruised on.

Glimmer

Another half hour or so and it would be time to set course for home.

Suddenly, a flash of reflected light caught the pilot's eye. There was something down there, something that glittered among the icy crags.

Skimming past a sheer mountain wall, the pilot brought the Catalina down

by **Bruce Sandham**

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Whatever the rescue teams actually found on Spitzbergen, it was certainly not an orthodox aircraft.

And a few days later, the Norwegian government released an amazing statement to the newspapers.

It claimed that the object found on the island was, incredibly, the wreck of a flying saucer — a disc-shaped craft that was "definitely not of this earth."

The statement added that a thorough investigation and analysis of the alien object was being carried out by Norwegian, British and American experts.

Journalists flocked to Norway seeking more information — but the Norwegian government refused to make any further comment.

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For the materials used in its construction were completely unknown and had defied every attempt at analysis.

The statement that is was of Soviet origin was false. Furthermore, a detailed examination of the disc had revealed certain technical features which were beyond the grasp of terrestrial science.

Colonel Darnby went on to say that a team of air force specialists — who had been keeping a close watch on the Arctic regions since the crashed disc was discovered — now believed that the area within the Arctic Circle was being used as a base by alien craft.

The specialists had logged a great deal of Unidentified Flying Object activity during their three years of surveillance.

The statement concluded that the true facts behind the affair were of sensational importance, and should be made known to the public without delay.

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Suddenly, a flash of reflected light caught the pilot's eye. There was something down there, something that glittered among the icy crags.

Skimming past a sheer mountain wall, the pilot brought the Catalina down for a closer look. Whatever was down there appeared to be metallic.

The long polar shadows made it difficult to pick out the exact shape of the object — but it looked like the crumpled wreckage of a crashed aircraft.

If it was, there might be survivors and in that freezing climate, help, to be effective, had to be quick.

Analysis

As the Catalina climbed away from Spitzbergen, its radio operator flashed a priority signal to the Norwegian air rescue service.

Within half an hour, rescue teams were on their way by air to the island.

As the Catalina flew homewards, its crew were unaware that their discovery on the barren island of Spitzbergen was destined to become one of the biggest mysteries of modern

times — a mystery which has remained a closely guarded secret for the past 16 years.

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Science

The silence was broken very briefly a few months later, when an unnamed United States Air Force spokesman told newsmen that the mysterious craft had been of Soviet origin, and carried Soviet markings.

The newspapers were by no means satisfied but they filed away the story as unusable through lack of reliable information — and forgot it.

Then, in September 1955 the Norwegian government revealed that a Norwegian general staff board of inquiry had practically completed an investigation into the nature of the mystery object, and was about to make its findings public.

The chairman of the board, Norwegian Air Force Colonel Gernod Darnbyl, stated emphatically that the wrecked

craft could not have originated on earth.

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The full report, it was said, would be published after discussions with the British and U.S. governments.

But the report was never released. One rumour was that a NATO partner — either America or Britain, or maybe both — had clamped down on any release of further information.

Certainly, since the early Fifties, both the United States and Britain have been classifying information about UFOs under the heading of secret.

Opinion

To issue the standard type of explanation in connection with the Spitzbergen saucer would have been futile, particularly in view of the announcements already made by the Norwegian government.

Is this why the whole affair was cloaked under a veil of "No further comment"?

And what finally happened to the Spitzbergen saucer? Did the Norwegians find its crew dead inside it?

Were its technical secrets ever unlocked?

These are questions which, for the time being, at least must remain unanswered.

One day, perhaps, public opinion may force the authorities to lift the curtain of secrecy that hangs over that May afternoon when invaders from space landed amid the Arctic ice.

TOMORROW: The shining discs of death