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THE PHILADELPHIA EXPERIMENT: AN UPDATE CLARKSBURG, W V 26301

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Did the U.S. Navy succeed in making a destroyer escort vessel invisible during a Top Secret experiment conducted in the Philadelphia Naval Shipyard in 1943? The answer may never be known for sure in spite of an incredible amount of research into the subject. The passage of time, the inevitability of death, the continuing unavailability of government files on the topic, and a general lack of time and resources with which to conduct the necessary research have all combined to place the matter into a sort of limbo ever since publication of The Philadelphia Experiment: Project Invisibility (NY: Grosset & Dunlap) in 1979. The research which led to that volume was a five year project. Although the book provided a great deal of new information, it ended with almost as much speculation as it had begun; concluding only that something highly unusual had indeed occurred but that the case for precisely what it was remained unproven. "If the Philadelphia Experiment never happened as described, what actually did happen in a high security area of the Philadelphia Navy Yard..." is the closing line of the final chapter.

In fact, the legend surrounding the supposed experiment had been whispered quietly amongst occult researchers for years before the publication of The Philadelphia Experiment brought the matter into the public arena. Not surprisingly, the book's widespread acceptance over the past five years resulted in the surfacing of new information which almost certainly would have remained obscure otherwise. It has also inspired a soon-to-be-released high tech adventure film which takes the alleged events of the original experiment one step further into the realm of the fascinating and the fantastic. The Philadelphia Experiment, a 10 million dollar film from New World Pictures starring Michael Paré and Nancy Allen, is scheduled for release across the United States and Canada in mid-July. In connection with the film, a nationwide search for survivors of the actual

experiment is now underway. Of particular interest is information regarding D.J. "Don" Myers, last known as a crew member of the carrier U.S.S. Antietam in late World War II; former Bosun's Mate 2nd Class Harry Euton, and a second crew member known only as "Walker", both last known aboard the destroyer U.S.S. Geinard in the early '50s; and Charles W. Dwyer, known to have been a transient in New York City during the '60s. All are believed to have been eye-witnesses. Anyone with information that may be of assistance in this effort is urged to contact Mr. Phillip Little of West Coast Detectives, 5113 Lanekershim Blvd., North Hollywood, California 91601 (Phone 818-980-7393).

The legend of the Philadelphia Experiment is that the U.S. Navy was engaged in experimental efforts to create invisibility for ships and planes during World War II using high-energy electromagnetic fields. As the story goes, one such experiment, conducted in the Philadelphia Naval Ship Yard in 1943, succeeded all too well when a destroyer escort vessel and its crew not only disappeared, but were actually teleported 200 miles to Norfolk, Virginia, and then back again in a matter of seconds. Fantastic? You bet. But great stuff for a film. While the actual facts of the matter appear to have been somewhat more mundane (there actually was an experiment, the goal was radar, not optical invisibility, and the bizarre effects reported in connection with it-- men walking through walls, other men bursting into flames-- seem to have been the result of hallucinations of those witnesses who got too close to the high-powered low frequency force field involved) the film uses an excellent blend of speculation, fact and fiction to build to a fantastic, yet not totally impossible conclusion.

All too often, people who read a book which they regard as excellent are treated to a less-than-acceptable rehash when the film version is released. Not so with the film The Philadelphia Experiment, which begins by recreating the experiment in a blaze of special effects and then centers in on the two sailors who allegedly died when the actual experiment went horribly wrong. Instead of dying, however, the two men in the movie are incredibly transported ahead in time to 1984 where, following a harrowing series of events, they meet up with one of the scientists responsible for the original project-- a man now forty-one years older, but still involved with force field experiments using the technology of the '80s. David Herdweg (played by Michael Paré) knows that the only hope of getting back to his own time lies in cooperating with Dr. Longstreet (played

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by Eric Christmas). Longstreet, for his part, comes to realize that the only hope of saving the world from his latest experiment--gone-awry lies with David. Their ultimate agreement to cooperate leads to the climax of the movie.

The film is not a documentary, but a thriller in the truest sense of the word. Those who want the real facts after seeing the film, should read the book, which will be reprinted in paperback by Ballentine Books in time for the film's release.

But getting back to the experiment itself, it has already been noted that the controversy and publicity centered around the appearance of the book in 1979 resulted in some new information coming to light. To those readers who are already familiar with the legend of the experiment as set forth in the book, the remainder of this article should serve as an update. Others, to whom the Philadelphia Experiment is new material, may want to obtain and read the book first so that they will be better able to place the following material in its proper context.

Critics of the alleged experiment, self-styled skeptics who generally prefer to conduct their "research" from armchairs, have almost universally based their pronouncements against the reality of the event upon the argument that the whole story was cooked up by one Carl Allen, alias Carlos Allende, a former merchant seaman of questionable mental stability who wrote a series of bizarre letters to author Morris K. Jessup beginning in late 1955. Such an argument holds up, however, only so long as Allen(de) remains the sole source of the story. If the tale of the Philadelphia Experiment is nothing more than a science fiction yarn concocted out of thin air by an unbalanced Allen(de), then it should be impossible to discover any sources of information about the experiment dating any earlier than Allen(de)'s 1955-56 series of letters to Jessup. The very fact that such sources do exist, and that none of them had ever heard of Carl(ous) Allen(de) prior to the publication of the book, is sufficient to at least lend serious question to the Allen(de)-as-perpetrator argument, if not to utterly destroy it.

The fact of the matter is that the whole Allen(de) sideshow which has permeated arguments both pro and con about the Philadelphia Experiment for years, is

nothing more than a huge red herring—a quagmire into which both researchers and skeptics alike have fallen far too many times. Clearly if truth is to be found, it is not to be found with Allen(de), whose testimony can be seriously questioned or discredited on any one of a dozen or more grounds. If anything, the available evidence would seem to suggest that Allen(de) is best dismissed as a probable crackpot, while at the same time testimony from other sources which appear to have no visible connection with him should be examined more carefully. As stated on page 64 of The Philadelphia Experiment (hardcover ed.), "...(it all) boils down to the simple fact that while Carlos may have started the controversy that has raged on over the so-called Philadelphia Experiment for more than two decades, he really doesn't appear to have the essential information needed to solve the mystery."

A similar problem exists with the U.S. Navy, which claims it has been totally unable to locate any documentation indicating that such an experiment ever occurred. Small wonder, for if such files do still exist, they would be buried in the literally tons of virtually unindexed material in the National Archives devoted to military wartime experimental projects and undertakings of every conceivable sort. Most of these are not filed under the various military services at all, but rather have been lumped together in the massive files of the old National Defense Research Board which comprise some several million documents in their own right. If one knew precisely where to look, there is a fair chance something might be located which, if found to be releasable upon declassification review, might provide the proof needed to solve the mystery one way or the other. But given the sheer volume and general disorganization of material in the Archives, coupled with a minimal staff already severely taxed just trying to keep up with the work at hand, there seems little hope of breakthrough short of a private researcher literally camping out at the place and spending months or perhaps years of valuable time physically searching the available files. (This author speaks from experience. I've already spent weeks in the place.)

Rather than dismissing the matter for lack of convincing documentary evidence, however, the case remains open on the basis of anecdotal evidence gleaned from the personal testimony of individuals who have come forward over the years to state that such an experiment did in fact take place and that, for one reason or

another, they had some personal (although not always first-hand) knowledge of it. With that in mind, the following accounts are all significant in that in most instances they pre-date Allen(de)'s letters to Jessup, and in all cases none of the individuals involved ever met or was even aware of the existence of Carl(ou) Allen(de).

(1.) Mr. Eric Nelson, a writer who lives in Saskatoon, Canada, communicated the following in a letter dated April 18, 1980:

"I have recently completed your excellent book The Philadelphia Experiment and wanted to send you the enclosed letter from a Sacramento acquaintance.

"I met Mr. Mazlum at the Los Angeles airport last March (1979) while we were both waiting for a bus and as we got talking and as a result of his telling me he is an electrical engineer I mentioned to him my long-time interest in the Philadelphia Experiment.

"...I subsequently received the following letter from Abe Mazlum... (which I am sending on) to you maybe as another clue in the puzzle...."

\*(Letter from D.A. Mazlum to Eric Nelson dated April 24, 1979:

"...It happens that there is an Eric I work with in the office, Eric Ericson, that is. He was in the U.S. Navy at one time and associated with a fellow by the name of Harry Euton. Harry was a part of the Philadelphia Experiment evidently, and he was awe stricken one day when he saw himself standing on the deck of a ship with no bottom and no rear end. Eric says that the guy shuddered with the mystery of the event every time he related it. I haven't read about the experiment and had never heard of it before. I cannot brush it aside as fiction, but in everything I am used to showing some restraint...."

During a personal interview conducted with both Mr. Mazlum and Mr. Ericson on July 25, 1980, Ericson stated that he had served aboard the destroyer U.S.S. Gairard (DD-706) during late 1950 or early 1951. The Gairard was a Summer class destroyer which at the time was part of the Atlantic Fleet's first section, 12th squadron.

While serving on the Gainard during Operation Portrex, an electronics counter-measures exercise in the Caribbean which involved simulated attacks on the ships by jet aircraft, Ericson (then an Electrician, 1st Class) met Bosun's Mate 2nd Class Harry Euton. It was Euton who told him the story of having been a part of an experiment which rendered a ship invisible. According to Ericson, Euton had been in between assignments on two capital ships during World War II when he was "selected" to be a participant in some sort of Top Secret experiment which was to test a new concept of camouflage against radar which involved the use of heavy degaussing generators and equipment.

Euton went on to relate that during the experiment something went wrong and the ship literally "vanished" from the second anti-aircraft mount to the rear of the vessel. Suddenly the ship had no bottom and no stern. Euton described himself as standing, but with nothing beneath him to stand on. Several other people who had been near him at the time simply vanished with the ship. Other people forward of him were visible, but they did not look like they did normally—a point which Ericson said Euton had steadfastly refused to clarify or even to discuss further. At the same time, Euton said that he felt an intense pain in his bridgework (teeth), and that his automatic reaction to "reach out and grab something to keep from falling" resulted in his grasping a cable or a pipe which he could feel but not see.

Shortly after the "failure" of the experiment, those survivors who were not in the hospital were "debriefed" as a group, told to "forget" the experiment, that it was a Navy secret, and that none of them were to speak of it again. At the end of the debriefing session, each of the sailors involved received transfer papers to different places. They were also told that all work on the project was being stopped.

Ericson went on to relate that a third party present during his conversation with Euton was a fellow named Walker, possibly Dave Walker. Ericson left the Gainard in 1951. Harry Euton was still with the ship at that time. He was not certain about Walker.

(2.) Mr. Riley Crabb is head of Borderland Sciences Research Foundation of Vista, California, a psychic-oriented research group which publishes a bi-monthly journal. In January, 1970, Riley received the following letter from Mr. Russ Griffin of New York:

