

I should imagine this would necessitate some kind of dynamo to produce a field of force around the experimenters, and this would be contained in a hemispherical type of housing. Having altered your personal bio-electronic field of force from that of your earth body to the vibrations of the next whorl, you would be in the timeless zone and could go backwards and forwards in time. It would probably be possible also to move the whole machine instantly in any direction by the power of thought. This hypothetical machine is not at all unlike what is reported of the flying saucers.

What Lethbridge may have had in mind—in the reference to scientists—is the curious legend of the Philadelphia Experiment, which has become part of modern UFO folklore. According to Dr Morris K. Jessup, a machine such as Lethbridge describes *has* been constructed, by US Navy scientists. Jessup wrote one of the earliest books on flying saucers—*The Case for the UFO* (1955)—and was a teacher of astronomy and mathematics at the University of Michigan, an eminent scientist whose researches led to the discovery of thousands of binary stars. After investigating Inca and Maya ruins, Jessup arrived independently at Lethbridge's notion that they might have been set up by some 'levitating power'. Soon after publication of *The Case for the UFO*, Jessup received two letters from a man who signed himself Carlos Allende (or Carl Allen), who described the 'experiment'.

Allende claimed that in October 1943, the Navy had tried inducing a tremendously powerful magnetic field on board a destroyer in Philadelphia, presumably on the Delaware River. 'The "result" was complete invisibility of a ship. Sailors on board the ship became semi-transparent to one another's eyes ("vague in form"). The ship itself vanished from its Philadelphia dock and reappeared at its other regular dock at Newport, Virginia. Half the crew became insane. Some went into a semi-comatose state which Allende calls 'deep freezing'. They had to be exposed to another piece of electronic equipment to 'unfreeze' them. One man walked through the wall of his cabin in the sight of his wife and children, and vanished. Two more burst into flame as they were carrying compasses and burned for eighteen days. Other 'frozen' crew members were restored by 'laying on of hands'.¹

The story sounds preposterous enough, and is made more so by Allende's claim that he read it in a Philadelphia newspaper. It is full of

inner contradictions—in one paragraph, Allende says the experiment took place at sea, and a page later, in Philadelphia—and seems to be the work of a crank. But according to Jessup's friend, Dr Manson Valentine (quoted in Berlitz's book on the Bermuda Triangle), Jessup was asked to go to the Office of Naval Research in Washington, and was there shown a heavily annotated copy of his book on UFOs and asked if he recognised the handwriting. Some of it resembled Allende's, and Jessup gave them the Allende letters, which included his address in New Kensington, Pennsylvania. Subsequently, Allende vanished, and the Office of Naval Research went to the trouble of having Jessup's book mimeographed, together with all the written comments.

Three years later, in April 1959, Jessup was found dead in his parked station wagon in Dade County Park, Miami; a hose connected the exhaust with the interior of the car. Many 'ufologists', including John Michell, have suggested that Jessup's death was not suicide, but this claim is unsupported by a shred of evidence. Jessup was depressed by his failure to make a living as a writer and by the collapse of plans to investigate UFO evidence in Mexico.

Valentine asserts that Jessup 'had a theory that the power of magnetic fields could transform and transport matter from one dimension to another'. He also states that in the last year of his life, Jessup was approached by the Office of Naval Research to work on 'the Philadelphia Experiment on similar projects' but had declined 'because he was worried about its dangerous ramifications'. No doubt the Allende letters *are* from a crank, yet it still seems possible that Jessup had stumbled on to something that Naval scientists felt worth investigating.

It is worth mentioning another version of the Philadelphia Experiment story, as reported (allegedly) by the Russians; it was told to the writer Robert Charroux by Professor Doru Todericiu, who claimed to have derived his information from behind the Iron Curtain. The Russian version asserts that the Americans were experimenting with a magnetic field in the shape of a Moebius Strip. A Moebius Strip is a geometrical figure with only one side. It can be constructed easily by taking a long strip of paper, giving it a twist, and gluing the ends together. The resulting circle of paper has only one side—as can be verified by tracing a pencil line down its centre; the line connects up with its own beginning without having to change sides. If the circle is cut into two with a pair of scissors—cutting along the pencil line—the

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fita de
Moebius