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The *Coyne Helicopter Encounter*

An Army Reserve Helicopter Crew Reports a Controlled Aerial Encounter with an Unidentified Craft, Mansfield, Ohio — October 18, 1973

DATE	LOCATION	CREW	COMMANDING OFFICER
October 18, 1973	Near Mansfield, Ohio	4 US Army Reserve	Capt. Lawrence Coyne
MILITARY REPORT FILED	OFFICIAL FINDING		
Yes	Unexplained		

VI.01 // BACKGROUND *The Crew and the Mission*

On the evening of October 18, 1973, a United States Army Reserve UH-1H Huey helicopter departed Columbus, Ohio, bound for Cleveland Hopkins Airport. The crew consisted of four men: Captain Lawrence Coyne, the aircraft commander; First Lieutenant Arrigo Jezzi, the co-pilot; Sergeant John Healey, the crew chief; and Sergeant Robert Yanacsek, the crew member. All were experienced military aviators. The flight was routine. Nothing about the night suggested it would not remain so.

The encounter occurred at approximately 11:00 pm at an altitude of 2,500 feet over the fields east of Mansfield, Ohio. What followed was documented in a formal military incident report,

corroborated by ground witnesses, and has remained one of the most credible and thoroughly attested military UFO encounters in the American record.

VI.02 // THE ENCOUNTER *What the Crew Reported*

Sergeant Yanacsek first observed a red light on the eastern horizon moving toward the aircraft at high speed. He alerted Captain Coyne, who assessed it as a possible military jet on a collision course. Coyne pushed the collective down and began a descent at approximately 500 feet per minute to avoid impact, radioing Mansfield Approach Control. Radio contact with the tower was lost at this moment — both UHF and VHF frequencies went silent.

The object did not pass. It decelerated and halted directly above and slightly forward of the helicopter, hovering at close range. The crew described a cigar- or craft-shaped object, approximately sixty feet long, with a red light at the nose, a white light at the tail, and a green light emanating from the underside — a green beam that filled the cockpit.

"The thing stopped above us and then there was this green light — it filled the entire cockpit. There was no noise. Nothing. And then it was gone."

— SERGEANT ROBERT YANACSEK, US ARMY RESERVE, DEBRIEF STATEMENT, 1973

After an estimated forty seconds of close proximity, the object accelerated rapidly to the west and disappeared. Coyne then discovered the helicopter was ascending at 1,000 feet per minute — the controls were set for descent; he had not touched them. The aircraft climbed from 1,700 feet to 3,500 feet with no control input. When full control was restored, radio contact was re-established. Nothing in the aircraft's technical record explained the altitude gain.

The Coyne encounter would be significant on the strength of four trained military observers alone. It became exceptional when ground witnesses came forward. A family of five travelling on Route 430 below the encounter site observed the hovering object and the helicopter simultaneously. Their account matched the crew's description of the object's lights and position, providing independent corroboration from a civilian vantage point at ground level.

<p>MILITARY WITNESSES</p> <p>4 US Army Reserve crew, all experienced</p>	<p>GROUND WITNESSES</p> <p>Family of 5 on Route 430 — independent account</p>	<p>RADIO BLACKOUT</p> <p>Both UHF and VHF; simultaneous; unexplained</p>
<p>ALTITUDE ANOMALY</p> <p>1,700 to 3,500 ft with descent controls engaged</p>	<p>MILITARY REPORT</p> <p>Filed; reviewed by Army command</p>	<p>OFFICIAL CONCLUSION</p> <p>No explanation found</p>

The Coyne encounter was evaluated by military investigators and subsequently reviewed by civilian researchers, including members of the Center for UFO Studies founded by Dr. J. Allen Hynek. It was found to be one of the most thoroughly documented and credibly witnessed cases in the American record. The altitude anomaly — an aircraft climbing against its own control settings — represents a physical datum that has never been satisfactorily explained by any conventional mechanical or atmospheric mechanism.

The Coyne case was presented to the United Nations in 1978, as part of testimony supporting a proposed UN panel on UAP phenomena. It was one of several military cases cited by international advocates for formal investigation. No UN panel was established. The case remains open.

