

FLYING

Now is the time for the truth, orders U.S. Air Force

From Tony Delano,
New York

WE may at last be drawing close to answering the most fantasizing questions in our life on earth. Are there really flying saucers?

Are they, despite all the doubts of science as we know it, vehicles from another galaxy?

The flying saucer era is approaching its twentieth birthday with 10,141 recorded sightings between 1947 and the beginning of this year.

Of these, all but 646 have been classified by the United States Air Force which, with the Central Intelligence Agency, is responsible for the task of explaining the phenomena.

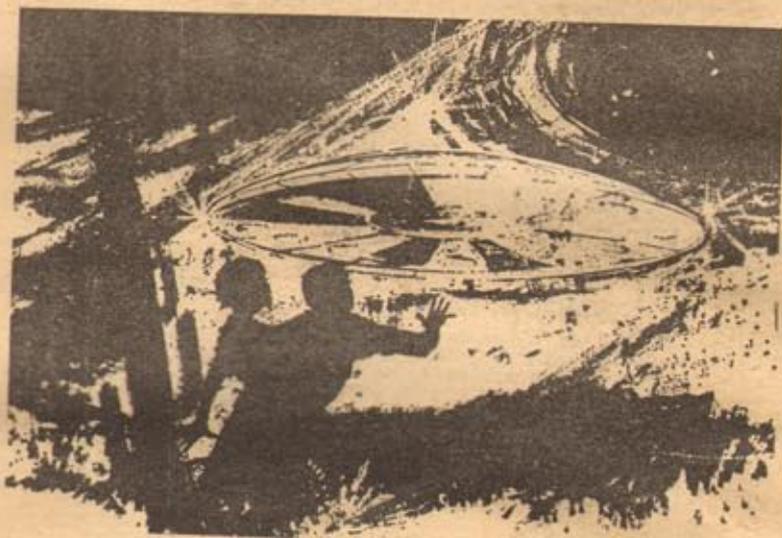
Weather balloons, swamp gas, stars, comets, planes, birds, the planet Venus—explanations of what people believe to be saucers, are more numerous even than theories of where they come from. . . Russia, Mars, Venus, the other side of the Moon, the bottom of the sea, God, a secret American base.

The US Air Force has finally realised that there is grave public dissatisfaction at its long reluctance to tell what it knows about saucers or even to appear to be taking them seriously.

Most Americans, especially many of the thousands who think they have seen Unidentified Flying Objects, as they are officially termed, believe one of two things.

The first is that the Air Force knows all about the subject, but is keeping its conclusions to itself for fear of the reaction.

The second, is that, being aware that it is powerless and the UFOs are harmless, it prefers to pretend they do not exist.



THE suspicion that the US Air Force has been keeping quiet about a great deal is reinforced by the manner in which sightings are investigated.

Teams of technicians take samples, measurement tests. Intelligence officers question the people involved meticulously.

Then they are told that they have seen something else or had an hallucination. And they are asked not to talk about it.

Publicly, the only investigating body is the staff of Operation Blue Book—one officer, one sergeant, one secretary in the Pentagon in Washington.

They make the final

classification of all sightings into Hoax, Hallucination, Misidentification or—rarely—Unexplained, and announce it with bland disinterest.

In August last year, tens of thousands of people watched curious light patterns darting through the skies on a course from the Canadian border to Mexico.

Simple, said the Blue Book folk. They were the constellation of Orion.

Alas, pointed out Professor Walter Webb, of the Hayden Planetarium, Orion at that time could be seen only

from the other side of the globe.

MOVED finally by the weight of public mistrust, the US Air Force has announced that it will set up a project in a university yet to be chosen where impartial scientists can work parallel to Blue Book.

Teams of physicists, astronomers and psychologists can make their own investigations.

And it has released all the Blue Book dossiers from the Top Secret classification.

Except for one of

the key documents—the minutes of a meeting of a panel of eminent scientists held thirteen years ago at the California Institute of Technology.

This the CIA refuses to unwrap, except in a censored version.

Which, since the CIA is the censor, can be interpreted as meaning that there are clandestine implications to be drawn.

When it occurred to laymen that the appearance of UFOs might not be confined to the last nineteen years, they turned to searching records of last century. \$60.

For a few years the