

THE SATURDAY EVENING

POST

APRIL 30, 1949

15¢

How Our Foreign Policy is Made

By Joseph and Stewart Alsop

WHAT YOU CAN BELIEVE ABOUT FLYING SAUCERS

By Sidney Shalett





Weather balloons, like the one this plane is approaching, explain some "disks," but not all.

GEORGE BURNS



ACME

Kenneth Arnold, Idaho flier, twice saw groups of "saucers," set off coast-to-coast excitement.

WHAT YOU CAN BELIEVE ABOUT FLYING SAUCERS

By **SIDNEY SHALETT**

Is there "something funny" about the silence that still envelops the mysterious disks that alarmed us all and lured three military pilots to crash deaths? Were they missiles from Russia? From Mars? Air Intelligence probed 250 reports and here, for the first time, are its findings.

PART ONE

DATING as far back as the eighteenth century, and possibly earlier, the annals of our race bulge with solemn reports of queer things seen undulating through the sky. Except in publications frankly devoted to fantasy, American literature and journalism have until recently been relatively free of such frightening accounts. But the Great Flying Saucer Scare, coming like a long-delayed and violent reaction, showed us to be, when frightened, as credulous as anyone else.

The scare had its origin in June, 1947. On the twenty-fourth day of that month, at one minute before three P.M., Kenneth Arnold, of Boise, Idaho, piloting his three-place cabin plane in the state of Washington, from Chehalis to Yakima, saw what appeared to him to be nine shiny disks. They seemed to be flipping and flashing along over Mount Rainier. Arnold reported his experience, and the Great Flying Saucer Scare began.

Within a few days it had achieved a rich, full-blown screwiness. Observers in practically all the forty-eight states and the District of Columbia reported seeing "saucers." Descriptions of the mysterious sky-borne objects achieved a lush variance. Besides disks, there were flying doughnuts and flame-spurting teardrops; there were wingless fuselages and balls of fire which streaked through the heavens at supersonic speeds, or hovered like a helicopter, or oscillated like an electric fan.

In speculation, oral and published, the saucers—as the fearsome freaks came to be widely called—were attributed variously to the machinations of the Russians, of our own secret military research and even of men from Mars. The deaths of three military aviators stemmed from the scare; one actually losing his life in pursuit of one of the so-called saucers. The furor grew to such proportions that the United States Air Force—with considerable and understandable reluctance—finally set up a special project to investigate the reported phenomena. To date, those in charge of the projects have collected reports on some 250 instances of "unidentified flying objects," and, though the scare has subsided considerably in late months, the list of incidents continues to grow.

The hardness of the scare suggests that it might break out again in full bloom at any time, maybe at an embarrassing moment in our international affairs, and, with this thought in mind, I have spent the better part of two months investigating it. I have had what seemed to be the wholehearted co-operation of the Air Force in Washington and in other parts of the country. I have found that if there is a scrap of bona fide evidence to support the notion that our inventive geniuses or any potential enemy, on this or any other planet, is spewing saucers over America, the Air Force has been unable to locate it.

In reaching this finding, I am necessarily accepting the assurances of the highest officers of the Air Force, and those of its research and development ex-

perts, that they have nothing concealed up their sleeves. Of course, there are a lot of people, some of them quite sober citizens, who insist that there is "something funny" about the saucer business. These will probably insist that the Air Force is kidding me. But I don't think it is.

One of the men who would be hard to convince that the Air Force is being completely frank is Kenneth Arnold, who saw those first famous nine. Arnold describes himself as sole owner of a small concern which distributes fire-fighting apparatus in five Western states. He also acts as Northwestern distributor for the type of plane he was flying on the day he spotted the saucers.

Arnold was flying at 9200 feet when he first saw them, he later wrote in the first of a series of articles he did on the subject for a Chicago-published magazine called *Fate*. His first article, titled *I Did See the Flying Disks*, happened to appear in the maiden number of *Fate*, which styles itself a "cosmic reporter." The maiden issue also included articles titled *Behind the Etheric Veil* and *Invisible Beings Walk the Earth*.

Arnold did a number of things to get a fix on the strange objects. He concluded (a) that they were "saucerlike disks" with no tails; (b) that they flew extremely fast and "in a rather chainlike line, as if they were linked together," and (c) that, at a distance which he estimated as between twenty and twenty-five miles, each appeared somewhat smaller than a DC-4 airliner. Arnold said he had the flashing objects in sight for two and one half to three minutes, then they got away from him.

It was the immediate newspaper reports of Arnold's unusual experience which set off the excitement of June, 1947. Between then and the following Fourth of July, the newspapers and public officials were deluged with saucer reports from all over. The newspapers, on the whole, played the thing big, most of them mixing a little nervous whimsey with the upsetting reports.

The baffling thing about the reports was that, although some of the later ones obviously came from hoaxers and publicity seekers, others were coming in from persons whose standing in society was respectable. Army officers assigned to scientific projects, sane and sober commercial-airline pilots, Air Force test pilots and intelligence officers, police officers and deputy sheriffs, businessmen, astronomers and weather observers had incidents to describe.

One of the earliest of the more perplexing cases occurred on July 8, 1947, two weeks after Kenneth Arnold's experience, at Muroc Air Field in California. Muroc is the Air Force's most hush-hush sanctum, where the Air Force and Navy test their secret supersonic models, so it's not a place where you would expect the personnel to get unduly excited by strange things in the sky. But something did occur at Muroc, and the Air Force maintains that no experimental craft was involved.

It was Lt. Joseph C. McHenry, the billeting officer, who, walking toward his office at 9:30 A.M., first saw "two silver objects of either spherical or disklike shape, moving at about 300 miles per hour at approximately 8000 feet." He yelled at a couple of sergeants and a stenographer, who were near by, and they saw them too. Three more witnesses were summoned, but the objects had disappeared by this time. However, a third object hove into sight, and five out of the seven witnesses saw it. Everyone was certain that, because of the apparent speed and the fact that they seemed to be traveling against the prevailing wind, the objects couldn't have been any type of weather or cosmic-ray balloon.

At noon the same day, Maj. Richard R. Shoop, attached to the office of the Chief of Technical Engineering Division, had his attention directed by a Colonel Gilkey to "what appeared to be a thin metallic object," which played lazily over the field, diving, climbing and oscillating for eight minutes. At the same time, a test pilot in the vicinity saw a strange whitish object floating to earth from a high altitude. And another test pilot recalled that, on the previous morning, he, too, had seen a roundish object whirling around at 12,000-foot altitude.

Four days prior to this, on the Fourth of July, the city of Portland, Oregon, had fairly erupted with saucer sightings. It began when Patrolman Kenneth A. McDowell was feeding the pigeons on the parking lot back of Precinct I. "I noticed," he reported later, "that the pigeons became quite excited over something." He looked around to see what had disturbed them and saw five large objects, disk-shaped and of undetermined color, in the air. They dipped up and down in an oscillating motion at great speed and disappeared quickly. McDowell notified the police radio, which broadcast an alert to all patrol cars.

At exactly the same time in another part of the city, two other Portland patrolmen, W. A. Lissy, who is a private pilot, and D. W. Ellis, saw "three flat round disks which flew at terrific speed in straight-line formation, the last disk fluttering very rapidly in a sideway arc." They saw no evidence of what made the things go, no vapor or smoke trails and no sound. They estimated altitude of the disks as 40,000 feet. In still another part of the city, Patrolman Earl E. Patterson, a former Air Force pilot, saw one disk, and a harbor pilot, backed up by two witnesses, reported seeing "three to six" objects which resembled "a shiny chromium hub cap off a car." Various citizens also saw the things, including one housewife who described it as looking "like a new dime flipping around."

The Geese With a Humming Sound

IN near-by Vancouver, Washington, a crew of deputy sheriffs heard the Portland police broadcast. They ran out to look at the sky and, sure enough, over Portland they saw "twenty to thirty objects... like a flight of geese." The deputies even heard "a low humming sound."

That evening Capt. E. J. Smith, of United Air Lines, was piloting his ship from Boise, Kenneth Arnold's home town, to Seattle. According to a report published in Fate, Captain Smith, before taking off, had remarked, apropos of the disk stories, "I'll believe 'em when I see 'em." Over Emmett, Idaho, he said he did see nine strange objects, and his story was corroborated by Copilot Ralph Stevens and Stewardess Marty Morrow. First there were five "somethings" which were "thin and smooth on the bottom and rough-appearing on top," Smith told investigators. Later, four more came into view. In all, they were observed for some twelve minutes, silhouetted against the sunset.

One of the strangest and most tragic of all the saucer cases on record was the incident of January 7, 1948, at Godman Field, an Air Force base at Fort Knox, Kentucky. It was early afternoon—between 1:45 and 1:50 P.M.—when T/Sgt. Quinton A. Blackwell, chief operator in the Godman control tower, first saw the object appear over the south portion of the field. Fifteen minutes earlier the sergeant from the commanding officer's office had telephoned him to be on the lookout, saying that Fort Knox military police and the state police had warned that "a large, circular object, (Continued on Page 136)



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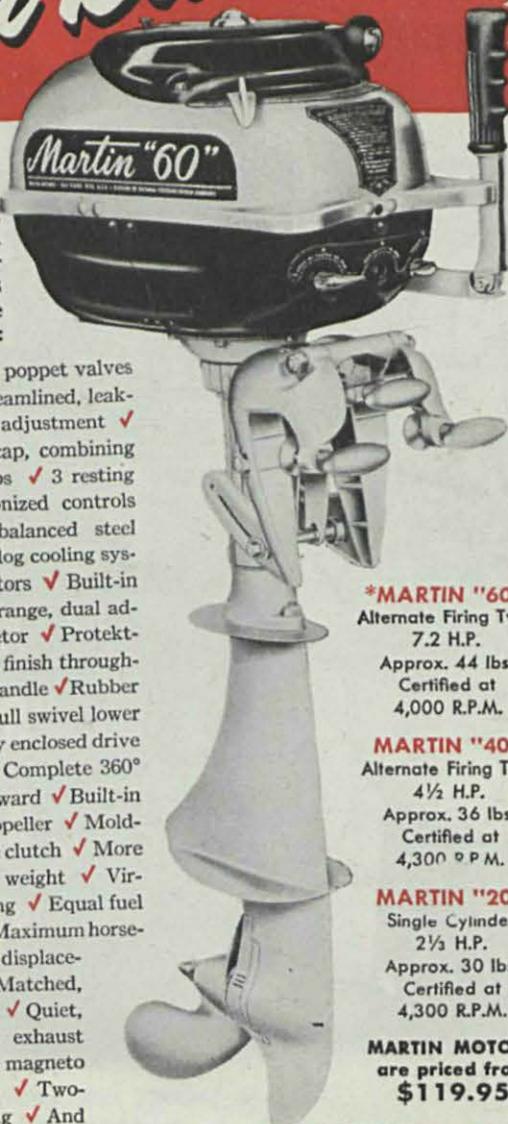
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(Continued from Page 134)

shotgun gripped across her bosom. He came to a full stop.

"What's that?"

She met his glance, her face crowded with its embittering fear and its frozen purpose, and for perhaps ten long-running seconds this enormous concentration held her still; afterward a clear embarrassment thawed her expression, and she dropped her eyes and whirled away into the kitchen. He walked on to the barn, thinking, *Why, she'd have killed him.*

He rustled out the horses and threw on the harness and drove them up to the stage and made the hitch. Rheinmiller and Schwann and the rancher had packed Cort to the shed, and now came back; the woman stood at the stage door, her glance waiting for Taggart. He moved around her and opened the coach door and offered her his hand.

"You're rested," he said, "and the night drive will not be hard."

After she took her seat, she bent forward to speak, but he moved on and took the reins while Rheinmiller mounted. The other passengers stepped inside, ready to go.

He said to Rheinmiller, "If you should see Huckabine lying along the road, send back a shot. I'll come up for him. Otherwise I'll go out first thing in the morning and make a hunt."

He threw the reins to Rheinmiller, who, kicking off the brake, gave the horses a brisk shout and sent them on at a sudden run. Coach and animals boomed over the bridge, made a long swing with the winding road, and presently passed into the narrow break of the side canyon.

In the kitchen, Mrs. Campbell said to Ada, "I'll eat in the kitchen tonight, with Henry. You go out and eat with Kelsey. Your hair looks nice . . . you look nice. You go on."

"I can't help him," said the girl. "I can't say anything I've not said before. He's seen me a thousand times."

"Always comes a time when a man looks and sees what he didn't before." Ada filled two plates with food kept warm in the oven, and carried them to the table. She checked the table and came back for the coffeepot and turned with it as Taggart walked into the front room from the yard. His head was down, and when he took his place, it appeared that the weight of weariness shoved him into the chair. He laid his elbows on the table's top and laced his fingers and sat this way in thought, forehead against fingers.

Mrs. Campbell looked on, some faint kindness sweetening on a face long since settled into disillusion. Ada had stopped at the kitchen's doorway with an air of panic upon her, and her breathing was quick and she seemed unable to move. She was, Mrs. Campbell thought, a pretty girl when strong feeling broke the mask on her face and the nice things came freely through. Ada stared at the floor and seemed to pull all her resolution back, and went in to put the coffeepot on the table and to

take her place, but her face was sober again, hiding what she felt. Her eyes avoided Taggart. Mrs. Campbell thought, *You fool girl, didn't you learn anything from that woman?* She pushed the door almost shut and stood close to the small crack to spy upon the scene.

Taggart said, "You'd have shot him." "I would . . . I'd have killed him," said Ada, and seemed to shrink away.

Mrs. Campbell couldn't see Taggart's expression, with his back to the kitchen, but there must have been something powerful in the continuing glance he put on the girl, for presently she looked to him and rose with a quickness that was straight out of impulse, and took the coffeepot. She walked behind Taggart and stood at his side while she filled his cup. Most clearly a wave of courage buoyed her; she laid her hand lightly on Taggart's shoulder. It was a terrible pity, Mrs. Campbell thought, that he didn't look around to see the tenderness Ada silently poured upon him.

"You've got it on your mind. You mustn't think of it. He wasn't any good. Don't you let it trouble you any more."

"All right, Ada. What's done's done. It's a hard country. Must be harder on you than on me."

Ada set aside the coffeepot and returned to her seat. "You shouldn't neglect your food—not the way you work."

He dropped his hands to the table and bent forward. "Ada," he said, "that a new comb?"

"I don't wear it much."

Mrs. Campbell doubled both hands together and softly wrung them with anxiety. This touch-and-go thing now coming on was so delicate that one cool look from the girl could kill it. The thickening silence ran forward. Taggart still bent in the chair to watch Ada. Whatever he said so insistently with his eyes had its wonderful effect; before Mrs. Campbell's delighted witnessing, Ada ceased to be a silent and obscure girl from a hard-scrabble ranch, filled herself with the attention which this man poured into her, and became a woman. Actually her face grew rounder and a glow came upon her, and she was sure of herself. It was in her voice.

"I'll heat water enough for you to take a bath. You have a drink and go to bed."

"I ought to have a drink now." Ada laughed at him and rose. "All right. One now, one then."

Mrs. Campbell closed the door without a sound. It was done, and nothing could undo it, and the rest was as certain as tomorrow's sun. The woman from the stagecoach was a handsome beast who had used her flesh on Taggart without luck, but she had awakened him and, looking around, he had seen Ada. She heard Henry come about the house, and she put her head through the back door to summon him in, so amiable that he stared at her.

"You eat with me, Henry. The bottle's on the shelf and the food's warm."

WHAT YOU CAN BELIEVE ABOUT FLYING SAUCERS

(Continued from Page 21)

about 250 to 300 feet in diameter," had been seen over Madisonville, Kentucky, only ninety miles away.

Technical Sergeant Blackwell began telephoning and radioing, and in thirty minutes his control tower was jammed

with practically all the brass hats on the airfield, including the C.O. himself, Col. Guy F. Hix. For the next two hours and fifteen minutes there was a lot of confusion. Everybody in the control tower had something to say about the object. Lt. Paul I. Orner, the detachment commander, thought it was hovering, and that it was shaped like a parachute, but with some strange red light reflecting from it. Capt. Gary W. Carter, the operations officer, thought

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it was "round and white," and noted that it could be seen through the clouds. Lt. Col. E. Garrison Wood, the executive officer, was sure it was "at least several hundred feet in diameter." Colonel Hix reported, "It seemed at times to have a red border at the top and at the bottom. . . . I just don't know what it was."

Into the middle of all this confusion came a flight of four P-51 fighter planes. The fighters were Kentucky Air National Guard planes returning from Marietta, Georgia, to home base at Standiford Field near Louisville. The flight was led by twenty-five-year-old Capt. Thomas F. Mantell, Jr., a husky six-footer who had flown in the Normandy invasion and who had some 3000 military and civilian flying hours to his credit. Mantell, married and father of two small sons, had been a partner in a G. I. flying school since the end of the war; he was skilled and courageous, but not foolhardy.

In the control tower, Captain Carter, the operations officer, suggested that the P-51's be asked to chase the object. Sergeant Blackwell relayed the suggestion by radio. One of the P-51's peeled off and headed for Standiford, but Mantell and two other pilots, Lieutenants Clements and Hammond, roared upward.

At 2:45—five minutes after he began the bizarre chase—Mantell reported by radio: "Object directly ahead and above and moving about half my speed." At 3:15, he reported: "Object is above and ahead, moving about my speed (360 MPH) or faster. I'm trying to close in for better look."

By now, the three fighters were approaching the layer of the sky where the air is thin, and they had no oxygen equipment. Five minutes later two of the ships turned back. Mantell kept climbing.

Mantell's wing man said afterward that he lost the flight leader between 18,000 and 20,000 feet. On the ground, the last word they had from Mantell was: "Going to twenty thousand feet. If no closer, will abandon chase."

Somewhere at this point—as investigators since have reconstructed it—Mantell began to suffer from lack of oxygen. At 25,000 feet, Mantell, his eyes fixed on the gleaming object, must have lost consciousness. His plane, now pilotless, continued climbing to about 30,000 feet. Then it went into a dive.

Somewhere between 20,000 and 10,000 feet, the P-51 began to disintegrate.

Pieces of it were found scattered over the landscape as far as six tenths of a mile from the place where most of it fell.

What was it that lured Mantell to his death? I believe, as a result of my research, that it was either the planet Venus or a giant plastic balloon escaped from a Navy cosmic-ray-study project near Minneapolis, which is some 650 miles away.

In Mantell's case, the Venus theory is a strong probability. Dr. J. A. Hynek, professor of astronomy at Ohio State University, who has been retained as a consultant by the Air Force to help unscramble some of the confusion, estimates conservatively that 25 per cent of the so-called saucer sightings can be blamed on planets, comets, shooting stars and other cosmic fireballs. Venus, the closest major planet to the earth, is a prime offender. In World War II, hundreds of rounds of anti-aircraft ammunition were wasted on Venus at times of the calendar when the planet was particularly close to the earth and was picking up rays from the sun.

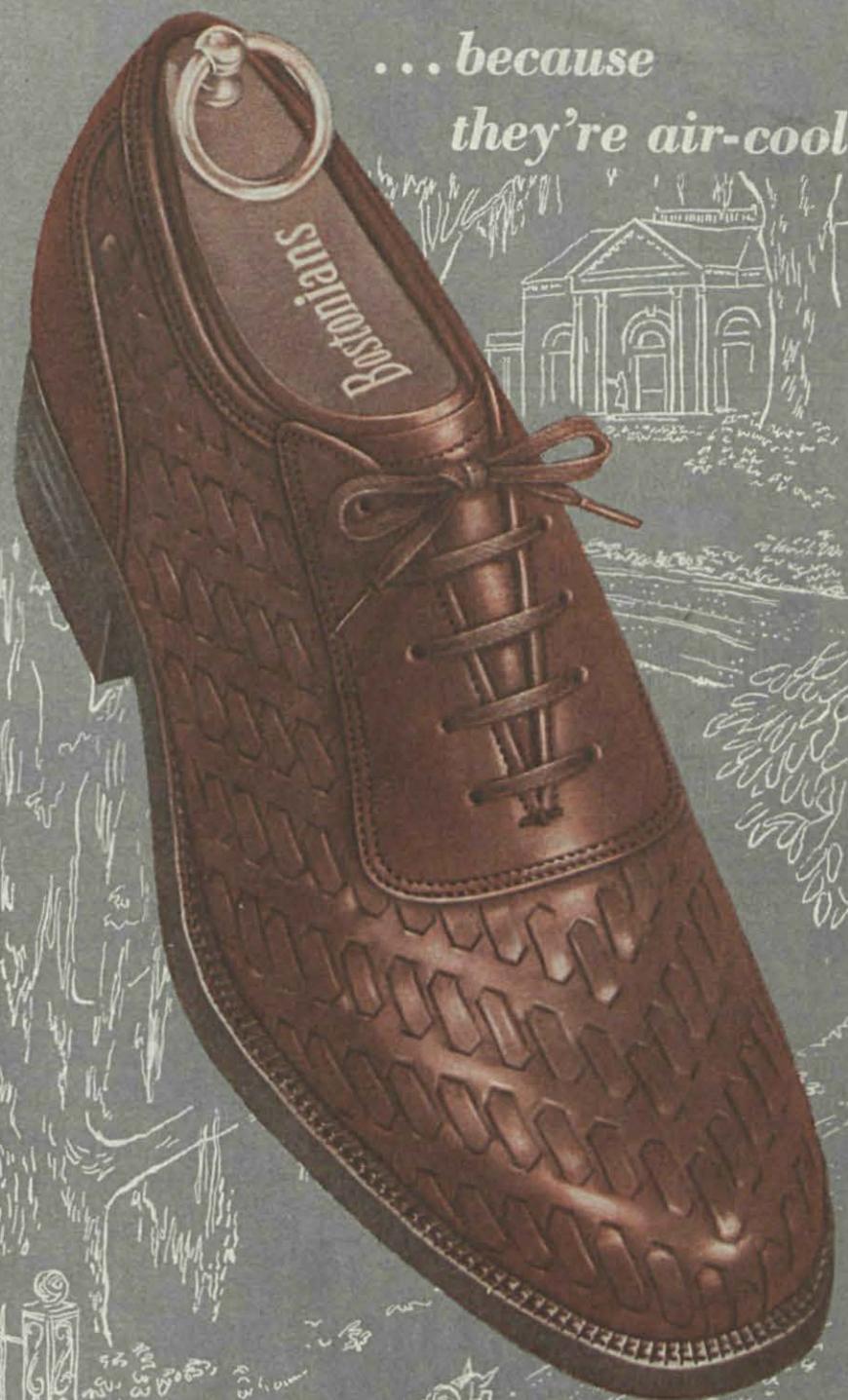
Doctor Hynek, after carefully checking the position of Venus on the day Mantell was killed, reported that "nearly all of the sightings check approximately with the position of Venus," though he thought it "a little surprising that it was so easily picked out during daylight by the naked eye." On August 19, 1948, when another silvery spherical object came into sight over Godman Field, an astronomer was consulted before the fighter planes were called out. The astronomer reported that the object clearly was Venus, then only three weeks from its period of greatest brilliancy.

However, a responsible naval-research official in Washington told me unequivocally that one of the Navy's giant plastic cosmic-ray balloons was known to be loose in the Godman Field area the day Mantell was killed, and he is firmly convinced that the pilot met his death chasing it. It is entirely possible that both Venus and the balloon were rampant in the area that day, because the thing—or one thing—was reported seen over a bewildering course, stretching through Illinois, Kentucky, Tennessee and Ohio.

Some weeks before the Mantell tragedy, the Air Force had already made the decision that the saucer business must be investigated. Gen. Hoyt S. Vandenberg, then Vice Chief (now Chief) of Staff for the Air Force, was instrumental in making the decision.

Bostonians

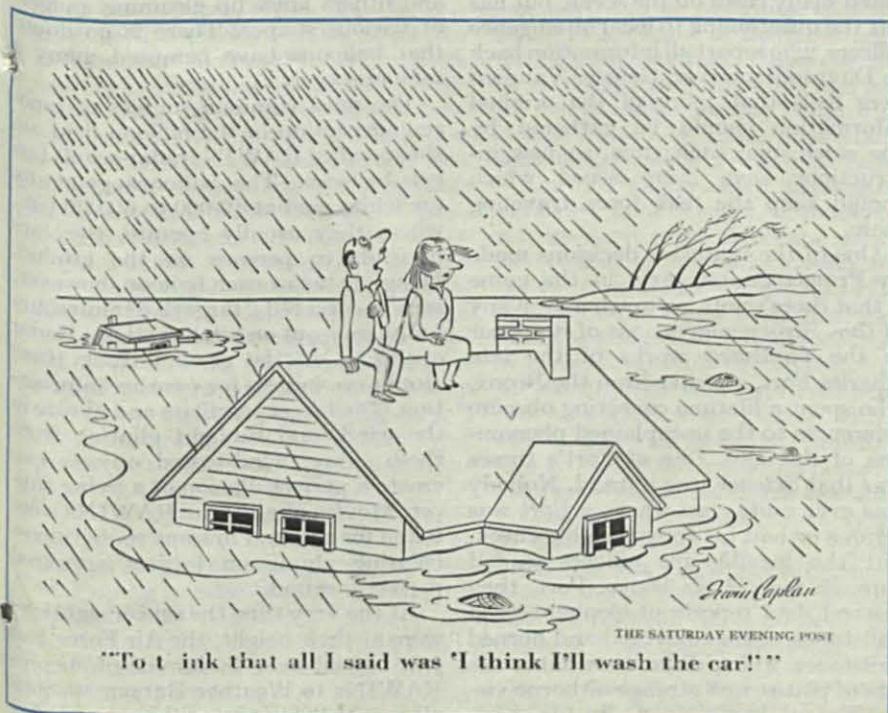
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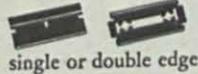
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However illogical and absurd the notion of unexplainable objects soaring over America might sound, the Air Force could not afford to close its mind arbitrarily to the possibility that something new might be in the skies.

There were a number of factors that were subjects for legitimate concern. For one thing, reports of strange objects in the air had started trickling in from Alaska, a strategic military area, and from parts of Scandinavia and North Germany, where it might be entirely possible to witness some of the known Russian experiments with guided missiles and rockets. Queer-shaped objects leaving trails of green light were seen coming from Peenemünde, the ex-Nazi missile center now in Soviet hands. And Russian rockets had fallen inside the American zone of occupied Germany.

We also knew that the Germans had been much further along than we were in the missile field, and that the Russians had scooped up all the German scientists they could corral. We knew that the Russians, with the help of German scientists, had developed some small disks with explosive edges, launched by a compressed-air catapult, for possible use as an ordnance item. We knew that the Russians were hot for developing snorkel submarines capable of launching buzz bombs; our own Navy has been able to fire the Loon, its version of the German buzz bomb, from submarines off Point Mugu, California. And we remembered the Japanese wartime stunt of letting free balloons drift over to this country as a possible means of initiating incendiary or germ warfare; it was a slightly screwball undertaking, but some of the balloons did get here.

So the Air Force set up its project, under Air Intelligence, to investigate. For some obscure security reason, it still is not permissible to mention the code name of the project, so I will call it Project Saucer. Top supervision is from Washington, but the leg work, cataloging and evaluating are done by the Technical Intelligence Division at Air Matériel Command Headquarters, Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Dayton, Ohio.

Project Saucer at Wright-Patterson provides a task force of intelligence officers and civilian technical experts who can jump into a plane any time an important saucer sighting is reported and go out to investigate. In practice, the task force has not personally investigated many cases on the scene, but has left the questioning to local intelligence officers, who report all information back to Dayton. However, General Vandenberg feels that more of the original information should be gathered by the same men each time, so new instructions have been issued which should keep the task force traveling more.

One of the tentative decisions made by Project Saucer early in the game is that there's nothing much new in any of this. Strong suggestions of it appear in the published works of the late Charles Fort, a writer from the Bronx, who spent a lifetime collecting obscure references to the unexplained phenomena of the ages. One of Fort's theses was that Science was a fraud. Nobody was ever quite sure whether Fort was serious or had his tongue in his cheek, but the intelligence officers waded through four of his books. Fort, they learned, had reports of elephant-sized hailstones, orange-flavored and horned hailstones, flying disks, snowflakes the size of plates, and strange airborne visitations of beef, blood, butter, coal,

salt, black powder, axes, clinkers, bricks, fireballs, human bodies, fish, frogs, toads, serpents, ants, worms and even a haystack. Most of the phenomena were slimly documented, many being based solely on newspaper-filler items telling about purported freaks of nature.

When I went to Wright Field armed only with reports of what witnesses said they had seen, the Great Flying Saucer Scare seemed reasonably mysterious to me. When I had finished my investigation in Dayton, Washington and elsewhere, the thing seemed less mysterious than odd. There are any number of logical and perfectly normal solutions by which most of the saucer sightings can be explained.

In addition to the 25 per cent or more bona fide cases of mistaken identification that can be blamed on astronomical phenomena, a large percentage can be accounted for by weather-observation and radar-target balloons. The mil-



GROUNDS FOR DIVORCE

(COFFEE GROUNDS, OF COURSE)

By Phyllis I. Rosentour

Percolator, vacuum, drip;
My husband snarls and curls his lip;
And instant coffee he turns down,
While Turkish types call forth a frown.

I brought a biggin* back from France,

His morning Java to enhance;
He hates it, and his day is spoiled
If I offer coffee boiled.

Caffeine-free he will not drink;
He pours my efforts down the sink;
But camping out, this captious man
Brews nectar in an old tin can!

*Early type of percolator



itary services and the Weather Bureau use numerous types of balloons to record atmospheric data. Some carry steady lights, some carry blinking lights and others hoist up gleaming gadgets of various shapes. There is no doubt that balloons have bemused many a sane observer.

The most common sources of innocent deception in the balloon field are the so-called RAWIN (radar-wind) target balloons. The balloons generally are white, and at 40,000 to 60,000 feet, where they usually operate, they are invisible to persons on the ground. Dangling below each balloon, however, is a six-cornered "target" of aluminum foil, strung out on kitelike sticks. Radar operators on the ground track these aluminum targets for weather information. The targets oscillate and gyrate in the wind, and sunlight glinting from these shiny, wind-tossed objects can create a perfect illusion of a flying saucer. Movies of airborne RAWINs were taken for me, and in some shots the oscillating aluminum targets appeared perfectly round.

At the very time the saucer sightings were at their height, the Air Force had just turned over thousands of surplus RAWINs to Weather Bureau stations all over the country, so they were being

used in greater numbers than ever before. Sometimes several RAWINS were released together, which might account for "disk formations."

Another common—and obvious—solution lies in the field of cosmic-ray-study balloons. The armed forces, seeking to learn more secrets about atomic energy, have set up projects all over the country to penetrate the stratosphere with giant balloons. They are often released in clusters.

The Navy, particularly keen to harness atomic energy for submarine and warship propulsion, has gone a step further in its Operation Skyhook, which it is carrying out in collaboration with the General Mills aeronautical laboratory at Minneapolis. A new type of plastic balloon—a huge, translucent thing with a long tail—has been devised to carry seventy pounds of equipment 100,000 feet and more into the air. When the balloon starts aloft with its case of instruments which is four feet tall, it is filled to only one per cent of its capacity with helium. When it reaches the stratosphere, expansion causes it to swell to a monstrous thing 100 feet tall and 70 feet in diameter.

The Skyhook balloons are released in the vicinity of Minneapolis, and the Navy even has released them from an aircraft carrier. Sometimes they carry lights. They travel to widely separate corners of the United States—one drifted as far as 1300 miles from base—before a timing device cuts loose the instrument container, allowing it to descend by parachute. The released balloon then breaks into pieces, and the descending fragments do some tricks of their own in floating earthward. According to a General Mills scientist, "At sunset the balloons glow like a large evening star in the reflected rays of the sun. Since they are far above the horizon, they may be visible for as long as thirty minutes after darkness has shrouded the earth. Thousands of people in the Minneapolis area have observed this phenomenon with mixed emotions, ranging from mild interest to terror."

How much of the scare can be blamed on experimental aircraft and missiles? Our research and development authorities insist that nothing they are doing with aircraft or missiles should cause people to see flying saucers. However, some of the sightings have been in the White Sands, New Mexico, area, where the frightening marriage of the German V-2 and the Wac Corporal is being forged, and the conclusions are obvious. Also, after Air Force officials had said that they knew nothing of anything flying in the vicinity of their highly secret Muroc base that might be making people see saucers, it came out that a former test pilot near Muroc had been playing around with a six-foot all-metal disk-shaped tow target. And both the Navy and Air Force, of course, are filling the air with strangely shaped experimental planes—needle-nosed things which break the sonic barriers; a "flying flap-jack" plane that really looked like a saucer, but now has been dropped by the Navy; eight-engine "flying wing" bombers, rocket-assisted craft and planes with fire-belching ram-jet engines on their wing tips.

However, the investigating authorities have learned that all the logic in the world will not convince the witness who wants to believe that the thing he sighted was something sinister or maybe interplanetary. At Wright Field, for instance, there is a civilian technical consultant, an expert on rockets in his own right, who is convinced that the

saucers are visitations either from Moscow or Mars.

Fate magazine, which has beat the drum for the interplanetary-spaceship theory, printed an article signed by Neil Stanley and Chester S. Geier, stating: "As no evidence has turned up as yet to show that the disks originated on this planet, it must be assumed that they are visitors from space." In an earlier issue, another writer opined that if Kenneth Arnold, who seemed to have started it all, actually had seen what he described, it must have been "a train of spaceships from some other planet."

Arnold himself has been conducting a one-man campaign to prove that he did see something out of the ordinary that day over Mount Rainier. Several witnesses to saucer phenomena elsewhere told me that after their stories were published they received correspondence from Arnold urging them to disclose full information. Arnold has written other articles for Fate—one titled Phantom Lights Over Nevada, and another Are Space Visitors Here? In the latter, discussing a fisherman's report of seeing weird purplish spheres with portholes maneuvering over the Crown River, in Ontario, Arnold wrote: "Once again, we can be sure that these Canadian blue-green-purple globes are not meteors, nor are they fragments of a comet or Venus. What, then, are they? Spacecraft from another world?"

I wrote to Arnold, asking for more information about his activities and his ideas. He replied, in part: "Since my first observation and report of the so-called 'flying disks' I have spent a great deal of money and time thoroughly investigating this subject. . . . It may be of interest to you to know there is a connection between tremendous amounts of furnace slag which is being found in giant dumps on our ocean floor, strange submarines, rocket ships and flying disks. . . . There is no doubt in my mind but what these objects are aircraft of a strange design, and material that is unknown to the civilization of this earth."

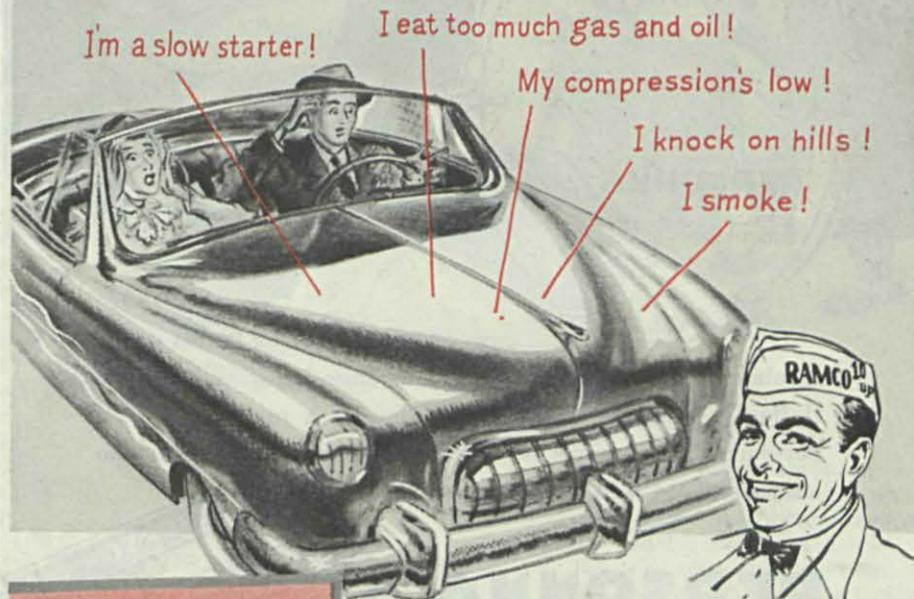
About five weeks after his first saucer sighting, Arnold appeared in another Northwestern town to investigate a report that two men had seen a "wounded" saucer—a sort of "doughnut-shaped aircraft" escorted by five similar craft—crash on an island off the coast. Arnold's account of this investigation in Fate is a real cloak-and-dagger epic, and he mentions that while flying to the scene of the investigation he spotted another covey of some twenty-five flying disks. He was joined in his investigation by Capt. E. J. Smith, United Air Lines pilot who had seen saucers while en route to Seattle.

Later, a Government investigation indicated that Arnold probably had run up against an elaborate hoax. In the course of his own investigation, Arnold telephoned 4th Air Force intelligence at Hamilton Field, California, with the result that two officers, Capt. William L. Davidson and Lt. Frank M. Brown, were sent out to see what it was all about. After talking with Arnold and the air line pilot, Smith, and also to one of the supposed actual collaborators in the hoax, the two officers pulled out after midnight to fly back to Hamilton Field.

On the way back to California, the B-25 bomber that Captain Davidson and Lieutenant Brown were flying crashed. Both men were killed.

Editors' Note: This is the first of two articles by Mr. Shalett on the Flying Saucers. The second will appear next week.

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