

# **Flying saucer nonsense**



**Scientists and US Air Force  
experts are taking cracks  
at this chimerical crockery**

**A** **AMERICAN** newspapers and periodicals have begun to unmask recent quasi-scientific books and so - called authoritative reports about flying saucers, space-ships and mystery visitors from other planets.

Flying saucers have whirled along a crazy path through human credulity since an Idaho businessman-pilot first reported having seen them in June, 1947.

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In the minds of millions of people around the world they have become enormous space-ships, manned by queer, super-intelligent beings from another planet, who are watching us much as we watch microbes under a microscope.

Some of these space-ships are described as huge saucers which dart and hover in mysterious silence. Others are portrayed as wingless, monstrous, fiery tubes tearing through our atmosphere at more than 1000 miles an hour, emitting a weird glow.

The author of one recent would-be scientific book asserts that three saucers have landed in the United States, and that in them the authorities found the bodies of beardless men, varying in height from 36 to 40 inches, probably from the planet Venus.

**W**HAT do experts say about this and similar reports which have been published as matters of fact?

Harvard University astronomer Dr. Donald H. Menzel said: "The whole thing is so crazy that I don't think astronomers should

don't think astronomers should dignify it by commenting."

Harvard Observatory director Dr. Harlow Shapley was more succinct. He said: "Nuts!"

The reputable *New York Journal-American* has published four long articles by a special writer who examined a vast amount of evidence on flying saucers and who had interviewed American experts.

One of the men he saw is Colonel Harold E. Watson, chief of the Wright Field Air Materiel Command, and head of a special Air Force branch detailed to investigate reports of flying saucers.

In his investigations, Colonel Watson had the help of the Air Force Office of Special Investigation, the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the US Post Office.

In two and a half years he and his men carefully investigated 375 reports of flying saucers. Not one yielded any proof of the existence of flying saucers, or of other mysterious space craft.

## **Wearied by tales of spies in the skies**

Colonel Watson said wearily: "I don't know how to make it plain

don't know how to make it plainer than this.

"The Air Force has in its possession no flying saucers or parts of flying saucers.

"It has no bodies of little men, nor any samples of the so-called clothes these imaginary creatures wore, nor a shred of supporting evidence.

"This planet is not being spied on by space creatures, nor has any potential earth enemy sent observation ships against us.

"No branch of the armed forces has an aircraft or missile resembling the structure or alleged performance of a flying saucer.

"Flying saucers just don't exist."

**Colonel Watson has chased so-called saucers in the US Air**

**Force's fastest propeller-driven plane, the F51, and caught them.**

In every case they turned out to be reflections from the wings or bodies of distant planes, reflections from water tanks, jet aircraft, weather balloons and other everyday objects.

Other everyday objects.

American experts believe that honest reports of saucers and similar aircraft coming from experienced and trustworthy pilots can be traced to fatigue, suggestion, and the optical tricks that windshields play on airmen.

The first pilots of the F51's saw more saucers than any other group of Americans. They also saw sections of cities and countryside floating above them.

The designers altered the angle of the plastic canopy enclosing the pilot in these planes, and the saucers and mirages vanished.

Wright Field—centre of many

of the great flight developments of the world—investigated a report from an intelligent farmer that a saucer was headed toward the field.

The radar operator picked up something odd on his screen. Jets went up to investigate the object, which set their compasses spinning crazily.

The saucer turned out to be a curiously colored magnetic cloud.

Reports of objects which hover in the sky or flash across it have

in the sky or flash across it have been found to be meteors or tricks of Nature.

**E**ARTH - BOUND electrical conditions can flash fluorescence across the sky or make it hover.

An Ohio farmer breathlessly told investigators that he had seen two enormous flying saucers descend from the stratosphere, lower eight steel legs, scoop up samples of earth, and race away

Inquiry showed that the farmer had been discharged from an asylum a fortnight before.

US Air Force investigators received a letter last June containing snapshots of a strange object.

They found the saucer had been made as a practical joke from an old washing machine lid, and had a broken midget radio for an engine. Someone had played an acetylene torch over the exhaust to give the thing an appearance of having been scorched by escaping gases.

Most of the tenacious believers in space-ship stories point to the death of Captain Thomas F. Mantell as "proof."

tell as "proof."

On January 7, 1948, Kentucky police notified Fort Knox (repository of the huge US gold hoard) that a round object, estimated to be 250 feet in diameter, was approaching.

Nearby Goodman Airfield confirmed this, and said the object had a reddish glow.

Three F51's went up. Two

climbed to 18,000 feet before returning. Mantell reported that the object was climbing fast, but that he would follow it to 20,000 feet before returning.

He never returned. His body was found near Fort Knox, and the wreckage of his plane was strewn over half a square mile.

Air Force experts estimated that if the object had shot Mantell down at 20,000 feet (his last radio message was from 18,000 feet) the wreckage of his plane would have been spread over a much greater area — up to two square miles.

Investigators believe the object Mantell chased might have been a runaway weather balloon, or a

a runaway weather balloon, or a reflection, but not a flying saucer.

In July, 1948, an Eastern Airlines crew reported having seen a fiery-tailed wingless mammoth, glowing like a magnesium flare as it flashed past their plane at 2.45 am.

The evidence the Air Force collected suggested that the object might have been a meteorite or a fireball.

The case which has angered intelligent Americans is contained in a recent book purporting to be a serious treatise on flying saucers.

The *Saturday Review* criticises the book as "a farrago of astounding information" and "representative of a growing and singularly unfortunate reversion to medieval processes of thought."

The exploded report is that of little, beardless men, "probably from Venus."

The author seems to have received much of his information from a Silas M. Newton, whom he describes as "one of the greatest geophysicists of the oil industry"

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The Air Force checked up on Mr. Newton, found, by hearsay, that he was a respectable citizen of Hollywood, engaged in the oil business. His golf club had neither his address nor phone number.

The book tells how “Dr. Gee, top magnetic research specialist in the United States,” was called in by the Air Force to examine a strange aircraft on a rocky plateau in New Mexico.

It reveals how Dr. Gee and his assistants found 16 bodies of little

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men in the saucer, which contained food and water—even lavatories.

It is described as being made of a metal like aluminium, but much harder and more heat-resistant. There was not a bolt or rivet in it, and it was operated by push buttons.

We are told that Dr. Gee found that the saucer was operated by magnetic force (not yet mastered by earth-men) and radios that went without valves.

When the Air Force checked the

When the Air Force checked the story the US Government could not identify Dr. Gee. Investigators traced the story of the saucer from Venus from the bar room of the Lakeside Country Club, Hollywood, after actor Bruce Cabot had reported that a man named Newman or Newton had told him that a man had told him . . .

And so on. You know how these things go.

The story had been retailed by radio men, motor car employees and other citizens, but all who had told it tried to sheet home to someone else the responsibility for having started it.

At the end of its criticism of the flying saucer nonsense, the *Saturday Review* states: ". . . we offer a reward: To the first little man from another planet who walks into this office, the *Saturday Review of Literature* will present 100,000 dollars."





