

Ghost Spots in the sky

**By FRANK FELDMAN,
EUROPEAN CORRESPONDENT**

On radar screens they track
sky "ghosts."





One of Britain's "low" radar stations to intercept low-flying aircraft.

ALTHOUGH the "Flying Saucer"

A controversy has been neatly quashed an entirely new mystery apparition in the sky is puzzling scientists.

Radiolocation experts are now tracking ghosts in the sky!

Dr. Louis Caldwell, one of the best-known US radar specialists, says: "Frequently things occur between heaven and earth which, on closer analysis, can only make a sober scientist shake his head in wonder. There are incidents that with one stroke, can turn theories, experiences, even well-thought-out mathematical computations into an indigestible state of disarray. Something has gone awry . . . but where?"

For the time being the celestial ghost apparitions have not been explained satisfactorily, although certain scientific causes have been advanced as most probably reasons for these spectres which radar operators have seen on their screens.

During the last war radar operators were puzzled by indisputable "objects" on the screens of their cathode ray tubes. On one occasion fighters were sent up to investigate the "hostile" activities but as they

the "hostile" activities, but as they zoomed about wildly, pilots could see nothing to arouse their suspicion.

However, the operators had not been deceived. In the hurly-burly of those turbulent war days little significance was attached to the recurring phenomena. Today, however, scientists and especially astrophysicists, are less inclined to gloss over them.

Americans have aptly nicknamed the radar pick-ups "ghostriders in the sky." Four years ago radar operator Ken Ehlers near Arcata, 80 miles north of San Francisco, saw two bright spots on the screen of his cathode ray tube.

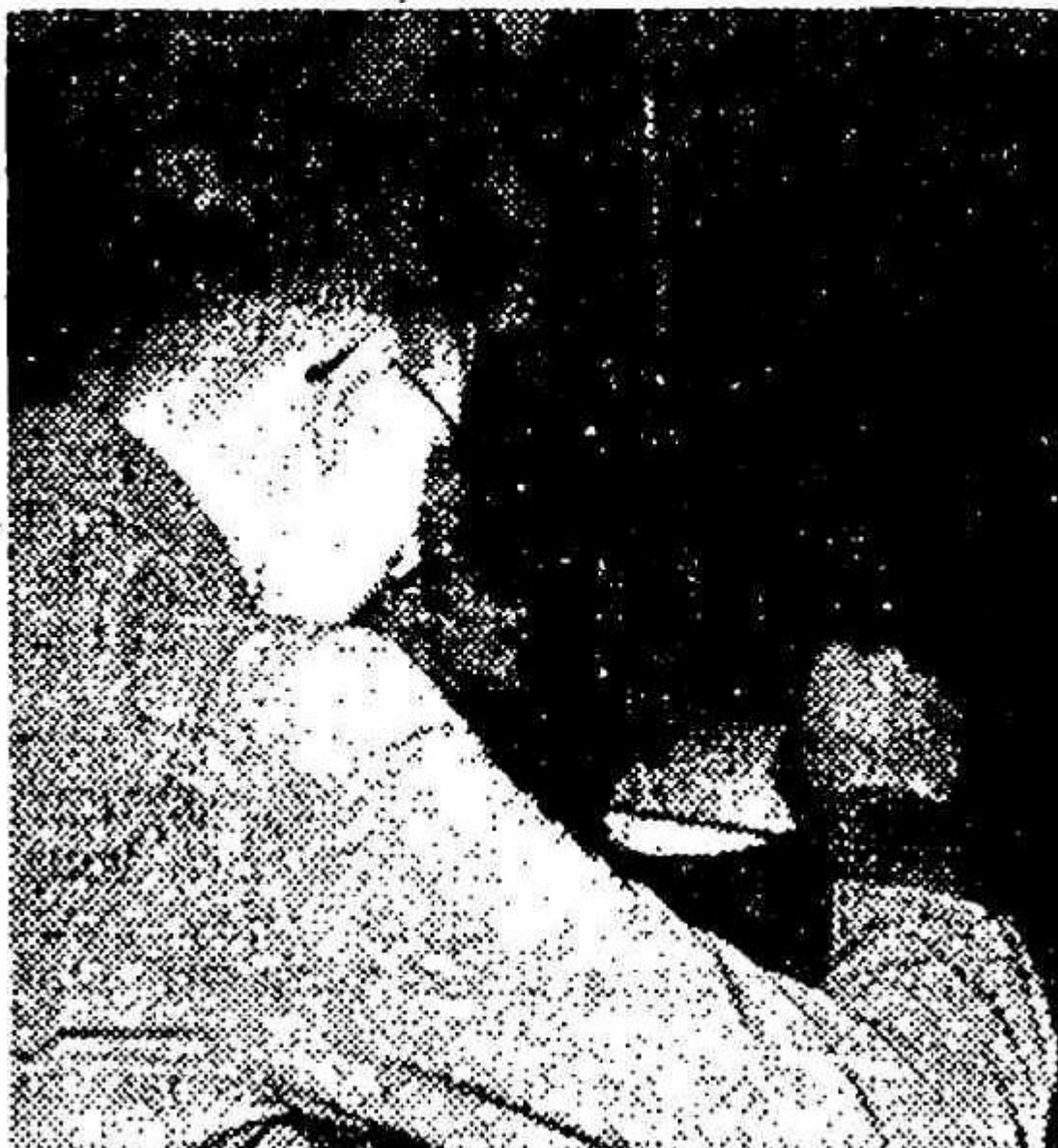
"Planes again," he muttered sleepily. The spots moved at an incredibly slow speed. He communi-

cated with a flight observation post. The horizon was studiously squeezed dry by powerful binoculars, but there was no sign of a plane, balloon or any other object.

This negative message was flashed back to Ehlers as he sat watching his screen. "You're jumpy," he was told.

Nevertheless, he was not "seeing" things—the spots were as clear as pins.

From that day onwards the odd observations never stopped. Radar apparatuses were overhauled, checked and put through the usual technical mill—without avail. They showed no faults. The looming





Radar operator at the controls.

phasma continued to appear, and not only over north California.

Ehlers' observations were at first put down to hallucinations—until he photographed the apparitions clearly marked on his screen, and passed them on to his superiors. There could be no more doubt. One day he even directed a C-47 transport to a spot already ringed by a "sky ghost." He held his breath as the machine approached. There . . . now! But nothing happened. By all reasonable calculations the two objects should have collided, but the C-47 had flown right through his spectre!

Instructions were issued to ground personnel to keep a tight check on all phenomena. Officers were ordered to make periodic reports which were

make periodic reports which were subsequently sifted.

Briefly the celestial ghosts are characterised by the following facts: Altitude is rarely above 1200 feet, they appear in every type of weather, they are always flying in a south-easterly direction irrespective of wind, often cruising against a strong breeze, the ghost riders usually appear in groups, although isolated spectres have been spotted.

Such noted scientists as Dr. Louis W. Alvarez, who introduced the radar control system in America, tried to find a plausible solution, but remained mystified. One explanation was that these aeronautic ghosts were nothing but radio-active clouds, formed as a result of atom tests; but this did not hold water because they could move against the wind.

Dr. Alvarez, a sober-minded, rational scientist does not believe in sky ghosts. He is inclined to put the apparitions down to a conflux of electrically-charged air particles, since they occur only under special atmospheric conditions.

That seems reasonable, but it fails to explain why these concentrations

to explain why these concentrations are transmuted into shapes of aircraft—or other solid objects—on the radar screen. That's the poser they're still considering. ●
