

# IS THE "FLYING SAUCER" A REFLECTED IMAGE?

From Kenneth Harris—Exclusive to "The Mercury" in  
Tasmania

**WASHINGTON.**—For five years reports have been coming in from all over the United States of curious, shining, fast-flying apparitions in the heavens, some seen by day, others by night.

**F**ROM the reports, these objects have seemed to possess so many of the characteristics of power-driven machines, and yet have been so completely unlike all machines known to man, that even sober scientists have wondered if they had been directed here by a scientifically-minded people, far more advanced than ourselves, living on some other planet.

To all these phenomena, in spite of the fact that they differ enormously from one another, the public has given a general nickname—"flying saucers."

At the beginning of this month "flying saucers" made a dramatic appearance over Washington, the civil, political, and military capital of the United States. They could be seen with the naked eye, but they were first spotted on a radar screen.

radar screen.

The public began for the first time to get somewhat alarmed about what was going on. Consequently, top-level military men were instructed to prepare a complete round-up of all the information which had come to hand about "flying saucers."

Of the several hundred "flying saucer incidents" reported since the first was seen in June, 1947, it has now been revealed that 80 p.c. have been explained satisfactorily.

## Not From Mars

About 20 p.c. of the incidents remain mysteries. But Major-Gen. John Samford, Chief of Intelligence to the United States Air Force, has given information which he is sure explains even these.

Gen. Samford begins by pointing out what "flying saucers" are not. According to him, if these apparitions were airships or missiles of any kind, in the remarkable way they have been seen to behave—shooting up vertically or turning at right angles at immense speeds—they would have to have "no mass and unlimited power," a description which, as anybody who

cription which, as anybody who has opened a physics textbook knows, makes them forces, not material things, let alone airships or planes, and rules out the possibility of their being planes or rockets or missiles sent over by the Russians.

It also rules out the possibility of men from Mars or the moon cruising around the earth in ultra-powerful space-ships.

**If these "flying saucers" are none of these things, then, what are they? They are, apparently, reflected images, rather similar basically to that already familiar kind of reflected image known as the mirage.**

In the case of a mirage, a layer of very hot air a few feet off the ground acts as a kind of mirror which sends a reflection of the thing being reflected along the length of that layer, perhaps at a distance of 50 miles, where it is seen by a bystander who thinks he sees the thing being reflected standing or lying only a couple of hundred yards away from him. This is a "horizontal" kind of reflection.

## **First "Classic"**

In the case of the "flying

In the case of the "flying saucers," the reflection is more of a vertical kind. For instance, in the middle of the day the slanted windshield of a car climbing a hill sends a beam of sunlight into the air. High in the atmosphere the beam strikes a vertical layer of hot air which transmits the reflection at an angle down to some other part of the earth, perhaps many miles away from the motor car.

The speed and size of the reflected image can be much faster and bigger than that of the thing reflected, just as by having a little mirror in your hand you can make a huge "saucer" of light "fly" at great speed.

This theoretical explanation of "flying saucers" fits in very well with the classics of "flying saucer" history. This history began in June, 1947, when a pilot flying in the mountainous State of Washington saw "nine saucer-like objects . . . flying like geese in a diagonal chain-like line" and

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swerving in and out of the peaks about 1,200 m.p.h.

**The reflection theory would say that what the pilot saw on that cloudless afternoon was a bright light caused by**

was a bright light caused by the sun shining on to a balloon or plane, beyond his vision, being reflected within his vision by a huge layer of hot air.

If the layer had nine facets —like a diamond — each would show a separate reflection just as a diamond made up of nine facets on one side would show nine reflections of its image of your face.

## Seeking Proof

The reflection theory had some vogue some years ago, until somebody pointed out that though it was possible to believe that a pilot could be taken in by what was nothing more than a fleeting reflection, a reflection miles away would not appear on the radar screen of an instrument in the control tower of an airport unless something was producing it.

Let us look at the most striking of the cases reported in Washington's "flying saucer" invasion. A radar operator in the Washington control room spotted several unaccountable blips on his radar screen. Checking showed that these were also registering on radar screens at two other airfields. A

... were also registering on radar screens at two other airfields. A pilot flying a plane near the

spot where the blip was coming from was asked if he could see anything.

He reported he could definitely see a strange bright glow. The reflection theory would explain this as follows: Airport radar beams were going up from the three stations, but parts of them at any rate were meeting a layer of excessively hot air, and were being deflected by it to the ground. There they happened to alight on something like a motor car. The motor car was shown as a blip on the screen, but was shown, owing to the peculiar hot-air mirror effect, not in its actual location on the ground, but up in the sky—at the point where the radar beams landed on the hot-air mirror.

The same hot-air reflector showed a ground-light also in the air—perhaps the lights of the motor car, or some other nearby light, possibly from another car. A radar image and a ground-light image, therefore, were now in the sky together and at roughly the same place. The men in the radar towers picked

men in the radar towers picked up the radar signal, and asked the pilot of the nearest plane to look in that direction. He did so, and saw the ground-light image reflection just about where the radar was recording a radar "blip."

**Though the United States Air Force is pretty confident about the reflection theory, it is not giving up its attempts to get a complete scientific explanation of what is going on which will be substantiated by actual proof.**

With the Air Force's energy and equipment being produced and deployed, and with a good-working hypothesis already established, it looks as though Public Mystery No. 1—the old "flying saucer"—is on the way out