

## **Wake up to "flying saucer" nightmare**

**A** CANADIAN aircraft factory has completed blueprints for a genuine 1500-miles-per-hour flying saucer.

All the company needs is about £89,000,000 to build the circular super-doooper fighter.

This news coincides with America's record low in "flying saucer" sightings since the scare began a little more than six years ago.

One June day in 1947 an American businessman flying near high mountains in the United States saw what he thought was a chain of unfamiliar aircraft close to the mountain tops.

They were flat and shiny, like plates, and swerved in line among the high mountain peaks, as if they knew where they were going.

His story was front-page news, and touched off scores of similar sightings all over the country and, eventually,

the country and, eventually, in other countries as well.

One night in 1948 Lieutenant Gorman, of the U.S. Air Force, was on a routine flight over Dakota in an F-51 aircraft when he saw what he thought was the tail light of an aircraft 1000 yards distant.

Ground control said there were no aircraft within miles of him.

Gorman took a closer look

**By NORMAN  
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and this is what he reported later:

*"It was from six to eight inches in diameter, clear white and completely round, with a sort of fuzz at the edges.*

*"It was blinking on and off. As I approached . . . the light suddenly became steady and pulled into a sharp left bank.*

*"I dived after it but I could*

*"I dived after it but I could not catch up with the thing. It started gaining altitude and again made a left bank.*

*"I put my F-51 into a sharp right turn and we headed straight at each other. Just when we were about to collide I guess I got scared. I went into a dive and the light passed over me at about 500 feet."*

Shortly after, observers from an airfield in Kentucky saw an unidentified red-topped cone flying high above them. Four planes took off to investigate.

Here is the official communique on the incident:

*"Three of the planes closed in on the object and reported it to be metallic and of tremendous size. One pilot described it as round like a teardrop and at times almost fluid.*

*"The leader, Captain Mantell, reported that the object was travelling above him at half his speed.*

*"I'm closing in on it now to*

*I'm closing in on it now to have a good look,' he radioed. 'It's directly ahead of me and still moving at half my speed. The thing looks metallic and of tremendous size. It's going up now and forward as fast as I am, that's 360 miles per hour. I'm going up to 20,000 feet, and if I'm no closer I'll abandon chase.'"*

The time was 3.15 p.m. and that was the last heard from Mantell. Later in the day his body was found in the wreckage of his plane.

There was no doubt in many minds now. Mantell's dead body was proof positive that "flying saucers," or "cones" or "cigars" (with lights), existed. Rumor soon had the body riddled with bullets, some said "nuclear" bullets.

**T**HERE were still two main strands to popular theories:

- The men from Mars, or some other planet, had found their way across space; we

such way across space, we must prepare for an interstellar invasion.

● The Russians were up to some dastardly new trick and should be atomised before they atomised us.

Meanwhile, the U.S. Air Force had set up an organisation called "Project Saucer" to study sightings.

There were thousands from all parts of the world and many could not be dismissed as mob hysteria.

The climax came in the summer of 1952 when thousands of people in Washington, from bootblacks to Senators, saw an armada of saucers fly over the American capital.

These "saucers" were recorded by radar.

Professor Donald H. Menzel, Professor of Astrophysics at Harvard University, has now introduced a chilling blast of scientific common-sense into all this romantic intensity.

In a new book, *Flying Saucers* (Putman, English)

**Saucers** (Putman, English price, 21/-) he analyses reported sightings with expert knowledge.

In addition, he points out that European chronicles and publications, from ancient times on, are full of wonderful accounts of sights in the sky that would today be reported as "flying saucers."

Professor Menzel divides "sightings" into two main groups:

- Meteors, fireballs, stars, weather balloons, and peculiar natural atmospheric effects such as mock suns.
- Hallucinations and deliberate hoaxes.

The original 1947 "sighting," for instance, was either snow or fog-tilted and twisted by violent air circulation. Similar saucer-like disks reflecting the sun are a fairly common phenomena around high mountain peaks.

Lieutenant Gorman's glowing balls of light are common, too. Many allied airmen saw them during World War II.

them during World War II. They are due to light reflected from a distant source by a whirlpool of air over one wing of the aircraft. Some

airmen called them "grem-lins."

Captain Mantell blacked out at 20,000 feet owing to lack of oxygen. There were no bullet holes, "nuclear" or otherwise. Professor Menzel says he was chasing a "mock sun."

Mock suns or dog suns are haloes formed by ice crystals in nearby cirrus clouds. To chase one, says Professor Menzel, is like chasing a rainbow. It looks to be a hop, skip and a jump away, but it always races ahead at the same speed as you chase it.

**T**HE Washington "armada" was due to an unusual atmospheric condition known as "temperature inversion." This gives rise to a sandwich of cold and warm

a sandwich of cold and warm layers of air, causing both a visual and a radar image.

Visual images of this kind are common in hot desert places. The radar images are caused by abnormal "bending" in the radar waves due to the atmospheric conditions. The effect was well known during the war.

The most famous hoax occurred in 1950 when a Mr. Newton gave a brilliant lecture at the University of Denver on the men from Venus—tiny creatures less than four feet tall—found in crashed saucers he had investigated.

Professor Menzel exposes this story for the deliberate eye-wash it was.

Reviewing *Flying Saucers* in a recent issue of the official B.B.C. publication, *The Listener*, Professor A. C. B. Lovell Professor of Radio Astronomy at the University of Manchester, agrees with Professor Menzel's conclusions.

"My advice," he says, "is

to regard all accounts of inter-  
planetary saucers and visitors  
from Mars or Venus as non-  
sense."