

GAVE FACTS



CAPT. DOUGLAS BARKER

MELBOURNE ARGUS
2.1.1954.

Airman sights a 'mushroom' in the clouds

FLYING mushrooms are with us!

Capt. Douglas Barker, veteran A.N.A. pilot, saw one yesterday.

He told the Civil Aviation Department that he saw a semi-transparent object shaped like "a mushroom with stalk" over the Templestowe brickworks at 10.15 a.m.

Last night, Captain Barker said: "I was sitting on the edge of the dining table in my home at East Kew when I noticed a clear, plastic-like, outsize 'mushroom' oscillating rapidly in and out of the thick cloud, which was at 1,800 to 2,000 feet.

"The object, which was flying well below the safety level in that area, was travelling faster than any jet I have seen, and was

roughly four times the size of a DC4 seen side-on.

"It appeared to have something trailing beneath it like a thick stalk, which could have been a small observation car.

"It was stoozing along at a very fair bat, and in roughly 12 seconds had disappeared over East Doncaster.

"I am not interested in impressing anyone, neither had I been celebrating the new year. I was in bed at 11 p.m.

"No question"

"When I reported it to Flight Control they said I should take more water with it, and told me a Convair was in the air in that position at 10.15 a.m.

"My flying mushroom was nothing like a Convair in appearance.

"I have been flying since 1937 for A.N.A., and served for three years with the R.A.A.F., so there is no question of confusion."

Last year another A.N.A. pilot, Captain B. L. Jones, reported sighting a "flying fishbowl" just south of Mackay, in Queensland.

Mr. A. R. McComb, regional director of the Department of Civil Aviation for Victoria and Tasmania, who is responsible for air traffic in these two States, said last night that the report would be carefully investigated.

"However," he said, "we know that a Convair was in the vicinity at the time, and possibly what Captain Barker saw could have been a reflection from this aircraft.

"Nevertheless, he is a very experienced pilot and unlikely to imagine things."