

FIRST "SAUCER" OF 1954

THIS is the man, Australian National Airways pilot Captain Doug Barker, who saw the first "flying saucer" of 1954—over the Yarra Valley (Victoria) on January 1 . . .

Neither the Convair pilot, Captain J. P. Boyd, nor radar-screen operators at Essendon saw anything unusual.

Capt. Boyd said the Convair was flying in and out of cloud at 2000 feet about 10.15 am—the time Captain Barker saw the strange object.

He said that during the flight he tested the Convair's landing gear by putting it down several times.

Captain Barker said "It's main body was elliptical, with a long shaft, about the same length as its body, hanging below it. At the end of this thin, slightly-curved shaft was a sort of control tower."

The aviation traffic superintendent at Essendon (Mr. R. H. Doyle) said the two radar units there would pick up even rain squalls, and any objects travelling at high speed would be recorded by the screen.

The Civil Aviation De-

partment regional director (Mr. A. R. McComb) believes Captain Barker saw the reflections of the Convair, but added that Captain Barker was "a very experienced pilot and unlikely to imagine things."

But Captain Barker is convinced that what he saw was not a plane or an optical illusion.

"It would fly for a short time into the clouds, then sink down to the clear sky," he said.

"I couldn't possibly confuse this with any plane. It was four times as big and travelling 10 times as fast as a DC3."



**... This is what it looked like
to him—he made this draw-
ing himself ...**



**... This is what Civil Aviation experts believe he saw
—a Convair airliner . . .**



Reflections from a Convair in flight could have looked like a "flying saucer" or "flying mushroom" to a ground observer, the experts said. There was one testing its landing gear in the area at the time.