

## **EXPERTS ADMIT THEY ARE PUZZLED**

# **Flying saucers are no joke**

**S**IX people claim to have seen a flying saucer over a Melbourne suburb on Sunday morning.

They reported having watched an oval-shaped object, with yellow flames pouring from it, travelling "at a fantastic speed."

Apparently human figures were in it.

Reports of saucer sightings some time ago moved out of the realm of the purely humorous.

On May 16 General Twining, U.S. Air Force Chief of Staff, stated that 10 per cent. of all saucer reports "are not being discounted," and that the best being in America were

brains in America were working on the problem.

A week later, Air Chief-Marshal Lord Dowding head of the R.A.F. Fighter Command in the last war, said in England that people on other planets were "operating through flying saucers to help the world in its present crisis."

Several other level-headed soldiers and scientists have recently emphasised that saucer reports cannot be lightly regarded.

Ever since 1947, when Kenneth Arnold, an American businessman-flier, reported seeing a chain of flat and shiny objects swerving in perfect formation between high mountain peaks at 1000 m.p.h., the flying-saucer scare has been in full flood.

Tens of thousands of people from all over the world, though mostly in America, have since reported having seen saucer-like or cigar-shaped flying objects in the sky.

It was only too easy at first to explain away the reports as illusions, hoaxes, natural phenomena, or the

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**T**ODAY at least seven governments have special departments which are trying to probe these mysterious objects, including the U.S.A., Britain, and Russia. And in the U.S. 75 double-barrelled cameras have been set up at special sighting stations in 33 States, specifically to obtain photographic evidence.

In 1952, Captain Ed. J. Ruppelt, a World War II flier and director of the U.S. Air Force Saucer Research Bureau, classified some 1700 reports received in that year from all over the world—reports not only from civilians but also from airline pilots, scientists, balloon observers, and radar operators.

Thirty-eight per cent. of the sightings were attributed to astronomical bodies, 22 per cent. to birds and aircraft, 13 per cent. to balloons, 2 per cent. to hoaxes, and 15 per cent.

hoaxes, and 15 per cent. were "unexplained." The unexplained 15 per cent. (this dropped to 10 per cent. in 1953) continues to baffle the Air Force.

Nevertheless, the sceptics continued to scoff. General Hoyt Vandenburg summed up the reports as "all nonsense," and Mr. Nigel Birch, British Under-Secretary for Defence, as "all balloony."

Yet, even in conservative and cautious Britain, flying saucers are now being taken seriously.

A jolt was given to British pooh-poothers in November last year when two

R.A.F. pilots, flying their Vampire jets at 20,000 feet, spotted a "dead-white circular object" high above them, which remained stationary for a time then "whizzed off at high speed over the Channel."

This report was publicly and officially confirmed a fortnight later by the War Office, which announced that an Army radar set had picked up and tracked the flight of the same "strange object"

"strange object."

It's the same story here in Australia. The R.A.A.F. public relations officer (Mr. John Tyrrell) says:

"It would be stupid to ignore them. We believe there's something flying around which cannot be regarded as the figment of someone's imagination.

"We don't know what it is—we have no concrete evidence of saucers as such—but we simply can't discount certain reports from sane, rational people like seasoned R.A.A.F. and airline pilots."

But if something is seen, what is it? Serious theories vary widely. Dr. Donald H.

Menzel, of Harvard University, claims they are optical illusions caused by "temperature inversion," which projects images of earthly lights on the sky.

Others, including the Australian Minister for External Affairs (Mr. Casey), maintain with equal tenacity that they are meteorities.

And then, of course, there are the melodramatic

are the melodramatic claims that saucers are aircraft from Mars, perhaps manned by super-bees, as philosopher Gerald Heard suggested.

But such fanciful claims are backed by no concrete evidence. No Martian man or bee has been captured or even photographed, although George Adamski, author of the sensational *Flying Saucers Have Landed*, has published photographs of what purports to be a spaceship from the planet Venus.

Perhaps the most plausible theory is that saucers are a secret weapon, either Russian or American. Officials in these countries vehemently deny this—but one would be naive to believe every official denial.

The strongest argument against the "secret weapon theory" is the details of speed and manoeuvrability contained in reports from level-headed observers.

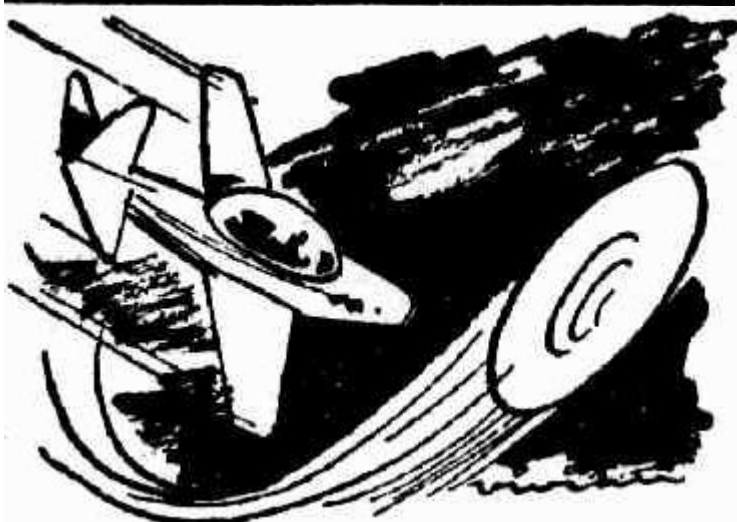
These reports invariably refer to the saucers as being "intelligently controlled." When chased, they dodge out of the way and usually

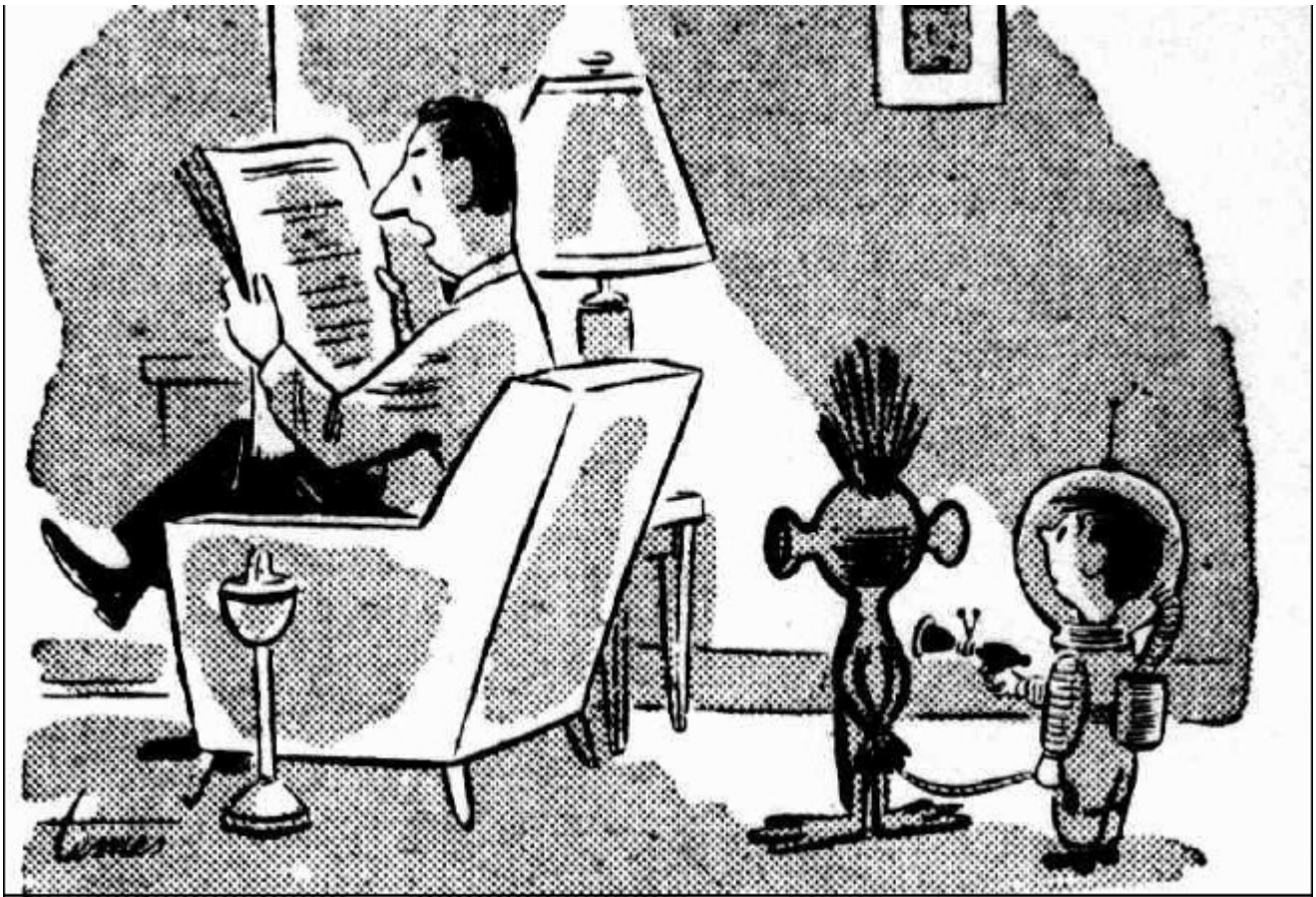
out of the way, and usually accelerate off at staggering speeds, variously estimated as 1000 to 21,000 m.p.h.

If the saucers are man-made, they represent an almost unimaginable advance on any aircraft hitherto manufactured.

All we can say at present is, we don't know what they are — but, whatever they are, they are being taken seriously.

**By NORMAN  
STRACHAN**





**"O.K., so you captured a Martian—now run along and play."**