

## 'GHOST SHIPS'

# Experts puzzled by UFOs

HUNTSVILLE, Alabama, Sunday (AAP-Reuters). — Experts at an army missile base in Huntsville say they are puzzled about strange "ghost ships" picked up by powerful radar scanners in the Pacific during a tracking exercise last summer.

There has been little official comment on what the scientists found during the exercise, but Major Dallas van Hoose, the army's base spokesman, confirmed recently that "some unexplained aerial phenomena" were seen during the exercise last August.

Scientists, many of them reluctant to be named in interviews because of public scepticism over unidentified flying objects, say privately that they have been unable to find any explanation for the "ghost ships".

"We have never seen anything precisely like this before", one ballistic-missile defence expert, who works for an army agency, and who is familiar with the advanced radar used to test missiles and warheads, said.

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## Analyses results

Huntsville houses the defence-systems commands, which analyses results of missile tests in the Kwajalein Atoll region of the Marshall Island Trust Territory held by the US.

Last August, the air force launched a Minuteman intercontinental ballistic missile, ICBM, from Vandenburg Air Force Base aimed for the Kwajalein missile range, which is used by the army, air force and navy.

The radar experts in the Pacific found they were also tracking an unidentified flying object next to the ICBM's nose cone.

Radar picked up an inverted saucer-shaped object to the right and above the descending nose cone and watched it cross the warhead's trajectory to a point which was below and to the left of it before the phantom ship disappeared.

The "ghost ship" was described as being 3 metres (10 feet) high and 12 metres (40 feet) long.

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Two separate radar systems saw it at the same time, which may eliminate the probability that there was a malfunction in one of the radar systems.

It was reported also that three other identical objects were seen in the vicinity. They were the same size, shape and dimensions.

One scientist said the data indicated that the phantom ship "flew under its own power" but he could not explain what sort of power was involved.

So far, none of the experts believe the ghost ship was a natural phenomenon caused by freak weather conditions or echoes commonly seen on radar screens.