

Flying Saucer Mystery: Are They Fact Or Fancy



'PURSUIT'—Bob Savage, 29-year-old singer from Encino, Calif., stands on ramp at International airport, New York City before departing for Madrid, Spain, where he says he hopes to meet Rita Hayworth. A former Air Force pilot, he describes his trips as a "pursuit." He said he met Miss Hayworth in 1946 and has had "a few dates with her." He explained he has no date to meet her in Madrid but that he sent her a cablegram telling her he was coming.

By WARREN BENNETT
Associated Press Staff Writer
What are these things popularly referred to as "flying saucers"? The Air Force, which has spent five years chasing will-o-the-wisps from coast to coast, still hasn't a short, hard, precise answer to the question.

The Air Force is continuing to investigate reports of so-called "flying saucers" with what it characterizes as "adequate but not frantic" attention. It believes that eventually most aerial phenomena will be understood as more is known about the upper atmosphere.

But if the Pentagon doesn't know exactly what all the supposed objects are, it can tell you definitely what they are not. The Department of Defense says they are not a secret weapon, missile or aircraft developed by the United States. Neither the Army, Navy, Air Force, nor any other government agency is conducting experiments that could be the basis for the rash of sightings.

And so far as is known, says the Defense Department, there is no indication that anything is being directed against the U.S. from another country or from another planet.

Since 1947, the Air Force has investigated and analyzed 1,500 reports dealing with aerial phenomena.

The majority of these reports came from civilians. About eight per cent came from civilian airline pilots and about 25 per cent from military personnel.

To help evaluate and interpret these reports the Air Force obtained the services of civilian and military astronomers, electronic specialists, meteorologists, aeronautical engineers, physicists and psychologists.

The evidence indicated most reports of unidentified flying objects could be accounted for as misinterpretations of various conventional objects. They stemmed from what psychologists call a mild form of mass hysteria. Reports of similar phenomena go back to Biblical times. There have been hurries of them in various centuries.

Most of the reports were identified and disposed of as friendly aircraft erroneously reported, known electronic and meteorological phenomena, light aberrations, man-made objects such as weather balloons, and hoaxes. About 2 per cent of the reports proved to be outright hoaxes.

There remained, however, a number that did not fall into any of these familiar categories. Some came from highly qualified scientists. About 20-25 per cent of the sightings—had to be classified as presently unexplained.

That is why the investigation is being continued. It is an Air Force responsibility to identify and ana-

lyze aerial phenomena that possibly could be a menace to the nation. At first it was believed that some pattern might evolve from study of a large volume of these reports. Up to now, none has materialized. The accompanying map shows the location of single and multiple reports of unexplained phenomena.

A big difficulty in disposing of unexplained reports stems from the lack of accurate basic data, such as size, shape, composition and flight characteristics (speed, acceleration, altitude, exact maneuver pattern) of the objects.

It is now felt that reports from people whose training and experience in observing aerial objects qualify them to obtain essential data are the only ones likely to produce material suitable for systematic analysis. The Air Force is acquiring new specialized tools for these observers.

New developments include a diffraction grating camera which separates light into its component parts (spectrum) and registers them on film. The principle is used by astronomers in determining composition of the stars.

Another involves use of a continuously operating telescope equipped with a camera. This telescope has a wide aperture lens capable of covering a cone of 150 degrees, nearly the whole sky from horizon to horizon.

The Air Force has received many reports of unusual objects on radar scopes. Speed reports of these objects have been reported from zero to fantastic speeds. Such radar sightings have resulted in many fruitless intercept flights by jet pilots.

It is fairly well established that some of these images are ground objects reflected from a layer of warm air above the earth as shown in the accompanying sketch. These temperature inversion reflections can give a return on a radar scope as sharp as that received from an aircraft. So can electrified clouds.

Bearing out this theory is a January, 1951 incident near Oakridge, Tenn., site of the atomic installation. Two Air Force planes attempted to intercept an unidentified "object" and actually established a radar "lock" on it. Their altitude at the time was 7,000 feet. On their radar, the object appeared to be at an elevation of 10 to 25 degrees. The pilots made three passes in an attempt to close on the object. In each instance, the pilots reported their radar led them first upward and then down toward a specific point on the ground.

On Sept. 2, 1952, a jet fighter flew right through a spot in the sky over Chicago while radar scopes on the ground were showing blips from an unexplained object. Said the pilot: "We didn't see anything. We didn't hit anything. We went through the target showing on the scope and there was nothing there—not even a cloud."

In any event, the subject is hot. Probably it will continue so until there is a logical explanation for reports of all unexplained aerial phenomena. Until such time the Air Force isn't writing the subject off.

Church Plans Benefit Fair

Organizations of Peace Memorial church on South Sixth Street are sponsoring a church benefit fair, Friday evening, Oct. 24, 7:30 p.m. in the gymnasium of the Altamont Junior high school.

The Westminster Fellowship group will present a home talent skill directed by Minnie Buries. The Mariner's Club will sponsor booths of white elephants, coffee and donuts, hot dogs and soft drinks, dart bean bag throws, fish ponds and other games, a merry-go-round and bucking horse for children.

The Women's Assoc. will serve home-cooked pies, cake and cookies, will have a fortune telling booth and a movie. The McKenzic Circle group will have an apron booth which will also have other handmade articles for sale. The entire family is invited.

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Girl Tosses Egg At Adlai

ELKHART, Ind. (AP)—An egg was thrown at Gov. Adlai E. Stevenson Wednesday as the Democratic presidential nominee left Elkhart. Police detained a young, blonde woman for questioning.

Newsmen said the egg hit the top of the rear platform of the Stevenson train and dripped down. They said Stevenson was waving goodbye, the train was pulling out, and he probably did not see the egg.

He had just completed a brief rear-platform campaign talk before a crowd estimated at 5,000 by Police Chief Ivan Carlson.

Police did not identify the woman. She was detained without charge.

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State Sets Voter Record

SALEM (AP)—A record total of about 840,000 persons are eligible to vote in Oregon's general election.

The previous record of 777,943 was established in the primary election last May.

Official registration figures from 28 of 36 counties have been received by the State Elections Division.

The 840,000 estimate was made by adding those figures and estimating those for the five unreported counties—Douglas, Grant, Harney, Lane and Yamhill.

Dave O'Hara, chief of the elections division, estimated that 75 per cent of the registered voters would cast their ballots, or 630,000 persons.

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