

'Disk' Near Bomb Test Site Is Just a Weather Balloon

Warrant Officer Solves a Puzzle That Baffled His Superiors—'Flying Saucer' Tales Pour in From Round the World

By MURRAY SCHUMACH

Celestial crockery had the Army up in the air for several hours yesterday before an Army officer explained that what a colleague thought was "a flying disk" was nothing more than a battered Army weather balloon.

This denouement closed the New Mexico chapter in the "flying saucer" saga that already had contributions from forty-three other states in the Union as well as from Australia, England, South Africa, Mexico and Canada.

However, none of the previous or subsequent reports of strange heavenly bodies created as much confusion as the startling announcement from an Army lieutenant that "a flying disk" had been found on a ranch near Roswell, N. M., near the scene of atomic bomb tests. The officer, Lieut. Warren Haught, public information officer of the Roswell Army Air Field, made no bones about the discovery in his detailed report as carried by The Associated Press.

"The many rumors regarding the flying disk became a reality," his statement began. He told which Intelligence Office of what Bomb Group of the Eighth Air Force had passed "the flying disk" along "to higher headquarters."

Then phones began to buzz between Washington and New Mexico and the "disk" was well on the way to showing how the circle could be squared. One by one, as the rank of the investigating officer rose, the circle lost arcs and developed sides until it was roughly octagonal.

Within an hour after Lieutenant Haught had given new impetus to the "flying saucer" derby, his boss, Brig. Gen. Roger Ramey, had a somewhat different version of "the flying disk."

He said that while it was true it had been found on a ranch, no one had seen it in the air; it was "of flimsy construction," apparently

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made "of some sort of tin foil." Subsequently, it was reported being flown to a research laboratory at Wright Field, Ohio.

In Washington, Lieut. Gen. Hoyt Vandenberg, Deputy Chief of the Army Air Forces, hurried to his headquarters' press section. Atomic experts in the capital were certain that whatever had been found was not any of their doing, but no one seemed to know just how to dispose of the object.

Finally, a lowly warrant officer, Irving Newton, a forecaster at the Fort Worth, Tex., weather station, solved the mystery. He said it was just a part of a weather balloon, such as is used by eighty weather stations in the country to determine velocity and direction of winds at high altitudes.

Several hours before the New Mexico mystery had been solved, a Canadian meteorologist suggested the same answer in connection with rumors of "flying saucers" in Circleville, Ohio. This was soon after a couple in the Ohio town had jubilantly proclaimed their "capture" of a mysterious disk.

However, the midwest was spurred in its hunt by offers of \$3,000 rewards for "proof" that America was not succumbing to an epidemic of hallucinations. One of the first to put in a claim for the prize was an Iowa salesman, who produced a steel disk, nearly seven inches in diameter. He said he found it in his yard in the morning after hearing it "crash through the trees." According to The United Press, reporters thought the disk was playing truant from an ash tray.

Then there was the Nebraska farmer who added a bucolic touch to the story. He said the heavenly bodies were "flaming straw hats,"

that careened through the night, sometimes pausing for a rest.

Michigan's contributor for the day was a toolmaker from Pontiac. According to The United Press, he turned over to newspapers a picture showing two circular objects against a black background. Examination showed holes in the disks.

Also in the act was Wisconsin, where it was reported that on Monday 250 pilots of that state's Civil Air Patrol would take off in search of "flying saucers."

Proof that "flying saucers" were not indigenous to the United States and Canada began coming in late in the afternoon. Two residents of Johannesburg, South Africa, said, according to Reuters, that they not only saw the objects, but that these "traveled at tremendous speed in V-formation and disappeared in a cloud of smoke."

In England, a clergyman's wife, who said she had kept her discovery secret for fear of defision, finally came forth yesterday with a story about seeing "a dark ring, with clear-cut edges," that sped across the sky on Monday.

The Australian variations of "the flying saucer," though reported by six persons in Sydney, were quite ordinary. Observers said they were a bit brighter than the moon, seemed to prefer an altitude of about 10,000 feet and moved along rather briskly.

It may have been the weather, but the only allusion to "flying saucers" in New York City were a few skeptical remarks by Admiral William H. P. Blandy, commander in chief of the Atlantic Fleet. Said the admiral, in response to questions:

"I remain to be convinced there is any such thing. I am convinced that they are nothing the Army and Navy is concerned with. I am curious, like everybody else, to see what's behind it."