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Mystery Objects Called Mirage by Astronomer

By the Associated Press

A Harvard astronomer says mysterious objects reported from various parts of the country and the Gulf of Mexico are mirages stemming from natural causes.

Dr. Donald H. Menzel, director of the Harvard College Observatory, said yesterday in Cambridge, Mass., that the whole thing amounts to "another flying saucer scare."

The Air Force has started an investigation of the reported sightings of the strange glowing objects in the sky. The Air Force for years has had the responsibility of checking reports of unidentified flying objects, but as one officer put it, "We don't investigate all of them."

A rash of such reports has developed since Sunday, with some of the sightings said to have been made near secret military installations in the Southwest. Some of the persons making the reports said the objects caused their auto engines to stall and their radios to fade.

Cutter Claims Sighting

Yesterday the Coast Guard Cutter Sebago radioed from the Gulf of Mexico that an object resembling a brilliant planet with a high rate of speed was seen for about three seconds, and that it was tracked by radar.

Dr. Menzel said it is probable the cutter's crewmen got a false image "quite likely from bubbles of hot air in the at-

mosphere which would give a radar reflection."

As for reports of the auto engines stalling, he said, "It would not be surprising that a nervous foot could stall an engine."

Dr. Menzel, author of a book about flying saucers, said he has been studying them for about 10 years and has yet to hear of one which could not be explained by natural phenomena.

"They are caused by a layer of heated air . . . acting as a lens and forming an image of objects as much as 40 or 50 miles away," he said.

Common in West

"They are nothing more than a mirage. They are prevalent just after nightfall as the heated air begins to cool off at the ground, and they are common in the West where they have clear air."

The Air Force said that during the first half of this year only 1.9 per cent of the 250 reported sightings of flying saucers and other strange objects in the air have been classed as "unknown." And the Air Force wasn't ready to believe that even this small percentage has sinister implications.

It seemed a good bet the Air Force will agree with Dr. Menzel's opinion that the current sightings have explanations in nature, or that the reported objects are actually aircraft or similar man-made things.

Flying Saucers

Boatman
Bradigan
K. W. Kelly
Sanders

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- Wash. Post and Times Herald _____
- Wash. News _____
- Wash. Star A-10
- N. Y. Herald Tribune _____
- N. Y. Journal-American _____
- N. Y. Mirror _____
- N. Y. Daily News _____
- N. Y. Times _____
- Daily Worker _____
- The Worker _____
- New Leader _____

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