Foo Flying Discs

Flying Discs

But the Navy Says 'No'

'Saucers' New-Type Aircraft, Probably Navy, Magazine Says

By John G. Norris
Post Reporter

"Flying saucers" are in fact radically new type aircraft, conforming to known areodynamic laws and probably developed by the United States Navy, the magazine United States and World Report said yesterday.

This latest effort to explain the continuing reports of strange flying disks at various points over the country brought a prompt denial from the Navy Department that it is now "conducting research or flying" any such plane or missile.

A spokesman pointed out that the Navy did develop the "pancake-shaped" Chance-Vought XF5U-1, but that it never flew and was scrapped more than a year ago. A small, 3000-pound scale model of the plane was flown and pictures of it have been released, but this model is now at Norfolk awaiting shipment to the National Air Museum here.

The weekly news magazine did not quote any authority for its statement that the "flying saucers" are real American planes, but said that "engineers competant to appraise reports of reliable observers reach these conclusions:

"They are aircraft of a revolutionary type, a combination of helicopter and fast jet plane. They coform to well-known principles of aerodynamics."

They are "exactly 105 feet in diameter, circular in shape" and "are made of a metal alloy, with a dull whitish color. There are no rudders, ailerons or other protruding surfaces. From the side, the caucers appear to be about 10 feet thick."

"Each saucer appears to have a series of variable-direction jet nozzles around its rims . . . fuel used is unknown. . . . Direction of the aircraft and its velocity, in turn, evidently are controlled by the angle at which the jet nozzles are tilted, the number operating, the power applied.

"By choosing which nozzles to turn on or off and the angle of tilt, the pilot could make the saucer rise or descend vertically, hover, fly straight ahead or make sharp turns. A right-angle turn, for example, could be made by turning off the rear jets, turning on the side and front nozzles.

"Great speed can be obtained by focusing to the rear all nozzles in the after half of the aircraft. With all nozzles pointed downward, the saucer could rise straight off the ground, and with less power, could descend the same way . . .

"Jet helicopter action . . . makes takeoffs and landings almost completely safe."

The magazine said that an early model of the saucer was built by National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics experts in 1942 and made 100 successful flights. The Navy then took over development and "much more advanced models now are being built."

NACA Engineer Charles H. Zimmerman designed the first model, which had a speed of from 400 to 500 miles an hour and was powered by two piston propellers, said the article.

"Surface indications," the magazine went on, "point to research centers of the United States Navy's vast guided-missile project as the scene of present flying-saucer development." The project, it was said, has the "scientists, the engineers, the dollars, the motive and the background" for the job.

"This likelihood will remain, despite any future denials by the Navy front office, until secrecy is lifted," the magazine added.

The Navy declared it was true that its abandoned "flying pancake" was designed by Zimmerman, and was called the "Zimmerman Skimmer." It added that a still smaller scale model—one-third of actual size—is still at NACA's Langley, Va., laboratory for wind-tunnel tests, but the Navy insisted it had no such project now active.

The Air Force, after many months of investigation of "flying saucer" reports, concluded that all the evidence pointed to "misinterpretation of various conventional objects, a mild form of mass hysteria, or hoaxes."

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The Original 'Flying Saucer'?

Associated Press Photo

Model of aircraft developed in 1948 and flown by the Navy under radio control—full-size craft never flew, the Navy has announced

162-83894-A
NOT RECORDED
83 APR 11 1950

WASHINGTON POST
Dated 4-4-50