

# 'Flying Saucer' Story Deflated By Air Force

## Experimental Craft Will Be Examined For Other Clues

The Air Force's long search for "flying saucers" has turned up two contraptions almost as weird as anything yet described by the most wild-eyed "witnesses" of two summers ago.

Held for the examination of experts are two weather-beaten remnants of an inventor's dream uncovered yesterday in a tobacco shed near Glen Burnie, Md., an outer suburb of Baltimore.

An official Air Force statement issued today said "the two experimental aircraft found near Baltimore yesterday have absolutely no connection with the reported phenomenon of flying saucers." This does not mean, however, that they will not be examined for other clues by Air Force representatives, it was said.

The relics are more than 10 years' old, and so far as can be determined, only one of them ever got off the ground under its own power. This occurred in Washington almost 10 years ago, and ended in near-disaster after a flight of about 60 seconds.

### Pilot Tells of Test Hop

The inventor, Jonathan E. Caldwell, who is now over 70, is still living, and his wife and son left Glen Burnie in 1940 after Maryland authorities ordered Mr. Caldwell to "cease and desist" from selling stock to finance his aeronautical ideas. None of the neighbors have heard from them since.

Willard E. Driggers of 1530 Olive street N.E., now with the Civil Aeronautics Administration at National Airport, made the first and only test hop in Mr. Caldwell's helicopter, the Gray Goose, at the old Benning Race track in 1940.

Mr. Driggers said he helped design the helicopter.

The machine rose about 40 feet and after some 60 seconds in the air, Mr. Driggers became aware the controls were not operating properly, he told The Star.

He decided if he took it any higher he might not get down safely and he crash landed on the race track. He was uninjured, but the machine was damaged.

**Lived Here Several Years.**  
Mr. Driggers said the saucer from which the rotors was designed to act as a wing after the ship had attained cruising altitude. The rotor would then be stopped and the ship flown with the conventional propeller. He explained, however, that this was theory, because the ship was never flown again.

Mr. Caldwell lived in Washington for several years before his disappearance, and seems to have returned here briefly from Glen Burnie before dropping from sight. The model tested here was a small helicopter whose rotors projected from a saucerlike disc mounted on a tripod above the cockpit.

Tattered remnants of this disc, covered with cloth, and the battered fuselage were found in the shed, along with a plywood box, like a huge circular cheesebox, whose top and bottom sections were designed to revolve in opposite directions with short rotors projecting from the rims. The pilot was to have ridden in the middle, near the motor mount.

Capt. Claudius Belk, head of the Baltimore office of Special Investigation of the Air Force, revealed that his office has "been investigating the machines for months" as possible prototypes of the flying saucers reported so frequently. He said efforts are being made to locate Mr. Caldwell in the hope of getting engineering data on his roto-plane ideas.

The remains of the two machines were placed in storage by Maryland State police, who helped locate them at the request of the Air Force. The material will be held, it was said, until it can be determined if experts from the Wright-Patterson Air Force Base at Dayton, Ohio, wish to examine it.

**Builder Was Carpenter.**  
The helicopter consisted of a light wingless fuselage with a propeller in front and a tripod over the cockpit which mounted the saucer-like rotor and its projecting blades.

Except for the pancake structure around the inner sections of the rotor, the model was much the same as other experimental jobs of that time.

Mr. Caldwell, a former carpenter, whose friends said he had studied the science of aeronautics in several books, had a far less conventional idea in his "flying cheesebox."

The upper and lower lids, containing short rotor blades jutting from their outer rims, were supposed to rotate in opposite directions, giving rapid life and some stability in flight, Mr. Caldwell's friends said. They admitted the 1,500-pound contraption never flew, but said Mr. Caldwell had claimed that a light model proved successful.

The inventor earlier had tried a third model.

This looked something like a complicated hay rick on wheels, and had rotors designed to fan the air somewhat after the fashion of the paddle wheels on old steamboats. There were no claims that this machine ever left the ground, and Mr. Caldwell abandoned it in favor of later ideas.

Attorney Robert E. Clapp, who was Assistant Attorney General of Maryland at the time of Mr. Caldwell's disappearance, and helped administer the blue-sky laws, conducted a hearing in 1940 into the affairs of two of Mr. Caldwell's companies—Gray Goose

Always, Inc., and Rotor Planes, Inc. He later restrained the firms from selling stock in Maryland.

"All he had was models," Mr. Clapp said, "and whenever one failed and he needed more funds, he went out and sold stock."

In his report, Mr. Clapp said: "The literature used in connection with these stock sales clearly indicates that the public was led to believe that the invention was on the verge of perfection and would be completed and ready for general production within a very short time, whereas, the fact as testified by Mr. Caldwell indicate that no machine on which he had ever worked had been successfully flown or was in any condition for manufacture and sale upon a satisfactory commercial basis."

"The history of the development of these companies indicated that they were organized merely for the purpose of raising money to develop the ideas of Mr. Caldwell, and that as soon as this money was raised, it was treated as belonging solely to him and as the subject of any use which he deemed proper.

"No meeting of stockholders has ever been held by either company and no financial report to stockholders has ever come out since organization."

Tolson \_\_\_\_\_  
Ladd \_\_\_\_\_  
Clegg \_\_\_\_\_  
Glavin \_\_\_\_\_  
Nichols \_\_\_\_\_  
Rosen \_\_\_\_\_  
Tracy \_\_\_\_\_  
Harbo \_\_\_\_\_  
Mohr \_\_\_\_\_  
Tele. Room \_\_\_\_\_  
Nease \_\_\_\_\_  
Gandy \_\_\_\_\_  
*Whitcomb*  
*Mossburny*  
*Edm*

*0 Flying Disc*

INDEXED - 80

162-83894-A  
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84 SEP 23 1949

3035  
62 SEP 20 1949

1- AUG 20 1949