

Mysterious Craft Over South California Causes Gunfire, Blackout, Lateness to Work

Policeman Killed In Traffic, Heart Attack Kills Guard

(Associated Press)
San Francisco, Feb. 25.—No bombs were dropped and no planes were shot down during the anti-aircraft firing in the Los Angeles area early today, the western defense command announced.

(Associated Press)
Los Angeles, Feb. 25.—Anti-aircraft guns thundered over the metropolitan area early today for the first time in the war, but hours later what they were shooting at remained a military secret.

Tracer bullets and exploding shells lit the heavens.

An unidentified object moving slowly down the coast from Santa Monica was variously reported as a balloon and an airplane.

Some observers claimed to have seen two planes over Long Beach.

Army intelligence, altho uncommunicative, scoffed at reports of civilian observers that as many as 200 planes were over the area.

There were no reports of bombing, but several instances of damaged property from anti-aircraft shells.

A garage door was ripped off in a Los Angeles residential district and fragments shattered windows and tore into a bed where a few moments before Miss Blanche Sedgwick and her niece, Josie Duffy, had been sleeping.

A Santa Monica bomb squad was dispatched to remove an unexploded anti-aircraft shell in a driveway there.

Eight Japanese, several described by police as aliens, were detained for questioning as widespread investigations were started into reports, many of them from official civilian air-raid wardens, that flights

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Mysterious Craft Over Los Angeles

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suspected of being possible signals to the enemy were seen blinking from vantage points thruout the entire blacked-out area.

These reports said flares were sent up singly and in a series of three to five. Search was instituted for burned residue that might come from the suspected signals but none was found immediately. The reports came from such localities as Beverly Hills, Baldwin Hills, Tarzana Hills, Dugbank, Redondo Beach, Hermosa Beach, Point Fermina at San Pedro and numerous points in the hills inland from the coast.

Three Japanese, two men and a woman, were seized by police at the beach city of Venice on suspicion of signalling with flashlights near the pier. They were removed to FBI headquarters, where Richard B. Hood, local chief, said "at the request of army authorities we have nothing to say."

Police Killed; Guard Dies

A Long Beach police sergeant, E. Larson, 59, was killed in a traffic accident while enroute to an air raid post.

Henry B. Ayers, 63 year old state guardman, died at the wheel of an ammunition truck during the blackout. Physicians said a heart attack apparently was responsible.

No Planes Shot Down

Police ran down several reports that planes had been shot down, but reported all were false alarms.

Aircraft factories continued operation behind blackened windows, while Ack-Ack guns rattled from batteries stationed nearby.

Firing for Half Hour

Firing, first heard shortly after 3 a.m. (4 a.m. mwt) ceased suddenly at 3:30 a.m. after the object disappeared south of Signal Hill, at the east edge of Long Beach. Anti-aircraft guns fired steadily for two minute periods, were silent about 45 seconds, and continued that routine nearly half an hour.

All of southern California from the San Joaquin valley to the Mexican border was blacked out. Los Angeles doused its lights first, at 2:25 a.m. (3:25 a.m. mwt). San Diego, just 17 miles from the border, did not receive its lights out order until 3:05 a.m.

Army Ordered Blackout

Unofficial sources said army officials at Riverside, 40 miles east of Los Angeles, ordered the blackout. The all clear sounded at 7:19 a.m. (8:19 a.m. mwt).