

'Raid' Puzzles Californians

Incident Called 'False Alarm' by Sec. Knox

BY FRANK FRAWLEY

Los Angeles, Cal., Feb. 25.
A 'Thousands of sleepy citizens, who had thrills and chills early today watching what they thought was an enemy air raid, were wondering to-night what it was all about.

Navy Sec. Knox' statement in Washington that, from information reaching him, the incident was "a false alarm" echoed the already expressed opinions of many Southern Californians.

But it brought no immediate relaxation in the tight-lipped silence of the army's Western defense command. That silence was broken just once during the day, to admit that there was a blackout and shooting, and to add that no bombs were dropped and no planes shot down.

At 3:45 o'clock this afternoon Fourth Army headquarters issued this statement, without elaboration:

"The aircraft which caused the blackout in the Los Angeles area for several hours this morning have not been identified."

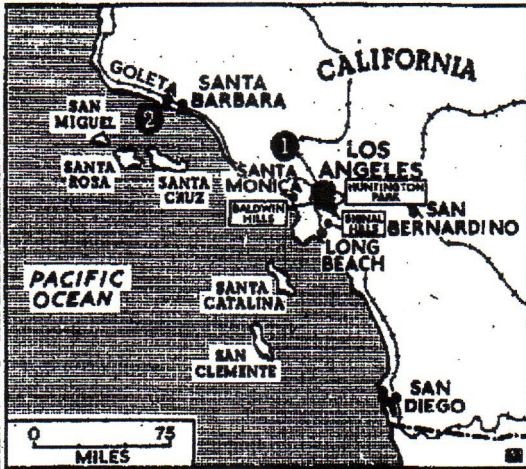
If it was a false alarm, however, it was an impressive and spectacular one. Anti-aircraft guns pumped thousands of rounds of ammunition toward an objective presumed fixed in the piercing beams of uncounted searchlights. Southern California from the San Joaquin Valley to the Mexican border was blacked out from 2:25 a. m. (PWT) to 7:21 a. m.

Sirens Screech.

The screeching wails of sirens awakened most of the area's 3,000,000 sleepers and within a few minutes they saw a slow-moving object, which many thought was a blimp, caught in an intensely bright patch of light where scores of searchlights converged. The "poom, poom poom" of anti-aircraft guns rattled windows in some of the beach areas and there were brilliant bursts of fire, somewhat like the spreading of Fourth of July skyrockets, around the sky craft.

A Breath-Taking Sky Drama.

It was noisy, breath-taking sky drama, played in almost utter blackness before an enormous and silent audience, a thrill-packed preview of war where the sleepy-eyed



WHERE ANTI-AIRCRAFT GUNS OPENED UP—Map spots areas (1) about Los Angeles where anti-aircraft guns opened up and searchlights sought out either a plane or a blimp. The object moved down the coast from Santa Monica and disappeared south of the Signal Hill oil fields. All of Southern California was blacked out. At Goleta (2) a submarine previously had fired 23 shells into an oil field.