

THE "ATTACK" ON LOS ANGELES

SOME WITNESSES of the "enemy air attack" on Los Angeles and environs early Wednesday "saw" at least two waves of bombers—"two hundred planes"—flying over and dropping bombs.

Other witnesses saw only one wave of planes, and they couldn't be certain whether they were Japanese or American craft. Still others who watched the spectacle, if it can be called that, sighted no planes in the glare of the army's searchlights. A number, however, reported seeing "something that looked like a giant butterfly." It might have been a blimp, they said.

At least one Reno resident received a telegram from a Los Angeles relative that "bombs are dropping everywhere." One alleged witness "saw" at least one plane shot down by the anti-aircraft barrage.

Most or all of these versions were carried yesterday morning in radio broadcasts. Some of the radio reports failed to explain that there was no official confirmation of an attack. They carried the numerous varied and conflicting reports of jittery Los Angeles area citizens as if they were facts. The result, of course, was unnecessary panic.

The radio broadcasters should be more discreet on such occasions. If they cannot get official information, they should exercise the utmost care to impress upon their radio listeners the source of their reports.

The broadcasters had a partial alibi on this occasion, however. They can say that if the secretary of war and the secretary of the navy still can't agree on the necessity for the Los Angeles alarm, their own confusion should be excused.