Allies Warned Secret Weapons of Germany May Prolong War

Informants Reveal Vast Oil Stores, Factories Built Underground

Bern, Jan. 4—(AP)—Information from inside Germany, discounting Nazi propaganda, indicates that German armies equipped with a series of new weapons must be reckoned a fighting force capable of continued effective resistance—perhaps for many months.

Moreover, the Nazis apparently believe they can still win the war by taking advantage of Allied mistakes and difficulties.

Reports dealing with the German military situation, and use of secret weapons coming from a half-dozen independent sources in the Reich stress these factors:

While a fluke might end the war tomorrow, or a new Allied offensive might quickly smash massing Nazi forces, it appears that the Germans have sufficient gasoline to carry out their present battle plan; new secret weapons are being turned out steadily in underground factories, and troop reinforcements are still available in large quantity.

It is difficult to determine the degree these informants have unconsciously absorbed Nazi propaganda, but they are in a position to be well informed and have proved reliable in the past.

Observers in Berlin are convinced that the Nazis had far greater underground stores of gasoline than the Allies believed. Synthetic gasoline is still being manufactured, and the Germans need far less fuel for their operations than in the days when the Luftwaffe went out steadily.

One German said of the Luftwaffe, "we now go into action only after good scouting and intelligence reports indicate it will be worth while."

These informants believe firmly that "V-weapons," being turned out in underground factories in Czechoslovakia as well as in the Reich, now number up to ten. They say a new airplane, ready for use, is shot from the ground like a rocket.

Carrying a crew, it switches to gasoline until approaching the target. Then the plane can use compressed air to permit a silent swoop. After leaving the target, and launching its one torpedo, it can switch back to gasoline and land normally. The plane is said to mount two cannons, and has a cruising range of about 1,000 miles.

One-Man Rocket Machine

Berlin declares a new portable rocket machine, strapped to one man, and firing effectively over a 400-yard range, was used in the von Rundstedt offensive.

Meanwhile, the Nazis are studying constantly Allied propaganda, military policy and political maneuvering, especially in Greece, Belgium and France. This course is being pursued by Germans who believe they can yet win a worthwhile bargain by fighting on.

While the truth is difficult to distinguish second hand by any reporter, this is what non-German friends who have been on the spot, say:

The Nazis believe the political upheavals in Greece, and Belgium, and the still uncertain political situation in France, have done much to convince the Germans their best chance is to keep fighting, and that as the Allies involve themselves in more bickering a compromise will become more welcome.

These sources say the Germans who might be tempted to revolt, or offer passive resistance, are disheartened by Allied propaganda, because they are able to check and find errors. Consequently, they hesitate to accept that which is correct.

As an example, one informant said that on one day 800 Allied planes bombed and heavily damaged a factory outside Berlin. The Allied radio subsequently claimed the factory was put out of business.

"Out of business?" queried German employes. "It has been six months underground. The bombing accomplished nothing."

These non-German informants believe Germany will be beaten, but feel Allied propaganda is harmful to their cause, in that it builds false pictures of victories and impending Nazi collapse.

They declare that Berlin leaders were surprised at the Allies' "surprise" over the von Rundstedt offensive.

Stimson says Germans can Launch New Drive

Washington, Jan. 4—(AP)—Secretary of War Stimson said today that the Germans still hold enough power to launch another, though smaller, offensive on the Western Front.

The Germans, he told his weekly news conference, are a tough, disciplined enemy, and will never rest on a passive defense.

Philadelphia Bulletin

Jan. 4, 1945

Chicago Tribune

January 2, 1945

MYSTERY FLARES TAG ALONG WITH U.S. NIGHT PILOTS

Yanks Call Nazi Weapon a 'Foo Fighter.'

A U. S. NIGHT FIGHTER BASE, France, Jan. 1 (AP).—The Nazis have thrown something new into the night skies over Germany—the weird, mysterious "Foo-Fighter," balls of fire which race alongside the wings of American fighter planes flying intruder missions over the reich.

American pilots have been encountering the eerie "Foo-Fighter" for more than a month in their night flights. No one apparently knows exactly what this sky weapon is.

The balls of fire appear suddenly and accompany the planes for miles. They appear to be radio controled from the ground and manage to keep up with planes flying 300 miles an hour, official intelligence reports reveal.

Three Kinds of Lights.

"There are three kinds of these lights we call 'Foo-Fighters,'" said Lt. Donald Meiers of Chicago. "One is red balls of fire which appear off our wing tips and fly along with us. The second is a vertical row of three balls of fire which fly in front of us, and the third is a group of about 15 lights which appear off in the distance—like a Christmas tree up in the air—and flicker on and off."

The pilots of this night fighter squadron find these fiery balls the weirdest thing they have as yet encountered. They are convinced that the "Foo-Fighter" is designed to be a psychological weapon as well as military altho it is not the nature of the fire balls to attack planes.

"A 'Foo-Fighter' picked me up recently at 700 feet and chased me 20 miles down the Rhine valley," Meiers said. "I turned to starboard and two balls of fire turned with me. I turned to the port side and they turned with me. We were going 260 miles an hour and the balls were keeping right up with us.

Finally Zooms Up.

"On another occasion when a 'Foo-Fighter' picked us up, I dove at 360 miles per hour. It kept right off our wing tips for awhile and then zoomed up into the sky.

"When I first saw the things off my wing tips I had the horrible thought that a German on the ground was ready to press a button and explode them. But they don't explode or attack us. They just seem to follow us like will-o'-the-wisps."

[An Associated Press report from Paris on Dec. 31 said the Germans had thrown silvery balls into the air against day raiders. Pilots then reported they had seen these objects, both individually and in clusters, during forays over the reich.]

"Looked Like Shooting Stars."

Lt. Wallace Gould of Silver Creek, N. Y., said the lights followed his wing tips for a while and then, in a few seconds, zoomed 20,000 feet into the air out of sight.

Lt. Edward Schlater of Oshkosh, Wis., said he had seen the "Foo-Fighter" on two occasions and it "looked like shooting stars."

Pilots agreed that the balls of fire were more numerous over large German cities. None saw any structure on the fire balls.

Other pilots at this base who have encountered "Foo-Fighters" include Lieutenants Henry Bockstige, Evansville, Ind., and Chester Buoscio, 9752 Avenue M, Chicago; Radio Navigators Lieutenants Anderson Henshaw, Carrier Mills, Ill., and Richard Early, Kalamazoo, Mich.

Many Encounter Flares.

Among other flyers who have reported encountering the flares were Lieutenants Garland Moore, Charleston, W. Va., Hubert Moore, Greenwood, Miss., Austin Tetry, York, Pa., Warren Rodich, New Orleans, La., Frank Sardon, El Segundo, Cal., and Flight Officers Murphy Painter, Gonzales, La., Razomond Meyer, Middletown, Conn., and Lt. Richard Urich, Trenton, N. J.

Others included Capt. Charles Horne, Doerun, Ga.; Lieutenants Richard Wanda, Cleveland, O.; Charles Tournier, Lewiston, Me.; Henry Giblin, Santa Rosa, Cal.; Owen Davis, St. Petersburg, Fla.; Charles Ingraham, Waynesburg, Pa.; George Schroch, Willoughby, O., and William Flanagan, Meridien, Miss.

Detroit News

Jan. 2, 1945

Germans Send Up a Ghostly Weapon

'Balls of Fire' Haunt Yank Planes at Night

U. S. NIGHT FIGHTER BASE, France, Jan. 2.—(AP)—American fighter pilots engaged in night intruder missions over Germany report the Nazis have come up with a new "secret weapon"—mysterious "balls of fire" which race along beside their planes for miles like will-o'-the-wisps.

Yank pilots have dubbed them "foo fighters," and at first thought they might explode, but so far there is no indications that any planes have been damaged by them.

Some pilots have expressed belief that the "foo fighter" was designed strictly as a psychological weapon. Intelligence reports seem to indi- Intelligence reports indicate it can keep pace with planes traveling 300 miles an hour.

Lieut. Donald Meiers, of Chicago, says there are three types of "foo fighters"—red balls of fire that fly along at wing tip; a vertical row of three balls of fire which fly in front of the planes, and a group of about 15 lights which follow the plane at a distance, flickering on and off.

* * *

Clue to 'Foo Fighters' Seen in Magntism

Floating and plane-following balls in fire-like color, added to the silver globes encountered over the German lines by American airmen, might not be as mysterious as would seem in cabled dispatches, C. E. Butterfield, Associated Press radio editor, says:

This is just a guess, but, on the little information available, the colored and glowing globes might well be added elements in attempts to interfere with radio signals and radar detection.

While dispatches hint that they are radio-controlled, the fact that they travel along with a plane or stay a certain distance ahead would tend toward the belief that they instead are magnetic. Thus, the metal of a plane would attract them, at the same time holding them at a distance. Radio control from the ground or another plane would not permit such apparent accuracy in control.

The glow, coupled with the possible magnetic action, might come from the type of gas they contain to aid in their electrical qualities and to add to their buoyancy.

Philadelphia (Pa) Bulletin

Jan. 2, 1945

NAZI 'FOO FIGHTERS' HAUNT U. S. PLANES

'Balls of Fire' Following Night Bombers; Believed to be Radio-Controlled

A U. S. night fighter base, France, Jan. 2— (AP) —American fighter pilots engaged in flying night intruder missions over Germany report that the Nazis have come up with a new secret weapon—mysterious "balls of fire" which race along beside their planes for miles like will o' the wisps.

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Three Types

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"A 'foo-fighter' picked me up recently at 700 feet and chased me 20 miles down the Rhine Valley," Meiers said. "I turned to the port side and they turned with me. We were going 260 miles an hour, and the balls were keeping right up with us.

"On another occasion when a 'foo-fighter' picked us up, I dived at 360 miles per hour. It kept right off our wing tips for awhile, and then zoomed up into the sky.

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Los Angeles Times

Jan. 2, 1945

GERMAN 'FOO-FIGHTERS' CHASE AMERICAN PLANES

A U.S. NIGHT FIGHTER BASE, FRANCE, Jan. 1. (AP)—The Nazis have thrown something new into the night skies over Germany—the weird, mysterious "foo-fighter," balls of fire which race alongside the wings of American Beaufighters flying intruder missions over the Reich.

U.S. pilots have been encountering the eerie "foo-fighter" for more than a month in their night flights. No one apparently knows exactly what this sky weapon is.

The balls of fire appear suddenly and accompany the planes for miles. They appear to be radio-controlled from the ground and manage to keep up with planes flying 300 miles an hour.

"There are three kinds of these lights we call "foo-fighters," said Lt. Donald Meiers of Chicago. "One is red balls of fire which appear off our wingtips and fly along with us, the second is a vertical row of three balls of fire which fly in front of us, and the third is a group of about 15 lights which appear off in the distance—like a Christmas tree up in the air—and flicker on and off."

The pilots of this night fighter squadron are convinced that the "foo-fighter" is designed to be a psychological weapon as well as military, although it is not the nature of the fire balls to attack planes.

"A 'foo-fighter' picked me up recently at 700 feet and chased me 20 miles down the Rhine Valley," Meiers said. "I turned to starboard and two balls of fire turned with me. I turned to the port side and they turned with me."

The Milwaukee Journal - Jan 19, 1945

'Spook Bombs' in Sweden

Stockholm, Sweden (AP) Sweden is rife with reports of mysterious streaks and flashes which appear in the sky both in daylight and at night. The strange lights have stirred officials, sages and scientists who think they may be indications of German V weapons running wild.

However, since the first "spook bomb" was spotted a week ago over southern Sweden, nothing more explosive than rain mixed with snow—and four American bombers—has landed on Swedish territory.

If the streaks and flashes are made by robot bombs or rockets, which Swedish military observers are inclined to doubt, they obviously are observing Sweden's neutrality and heading for some other country.

'Balls of Fire' Race Raiders Over Reich

A U. S. Night Fighter Base, France, Jan. 2 (AP) — American fighter pilots engaged in flying night intruder missions over Germany report the Nazis have come up with a new "secret weapon"—"balls of fire" which race along beside their planes for miles like Will o' The Wisps.

* * *

Yank pilots have dubbed them "Foo Fighters," and at first thought they might explode, but so far there is no indication that any planes have been damaged by them.

Some pilots expressed belief that the "Foo Fighter" was designed strictly as a psychological weapon. Intelligence reports seem to indicate it is radio-controlled from the ground and can keep pace with planes flying 300 miles an hour.

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(C. E. Butterfield, A.P. radio editor, says the globes might well be added elements in attempts to interfere with radio signals and radar detection.

* * *

(While dispatches hint they are radio controlled, the fact that they travel along with a plane or stay a certain distance ahead would tend toward the belief that they instead are magnetic. Thus, the metal of a plane would attract them, at the same time holding them at a distance. The glow might come from the type of gas they contain.)

Louisville Ky. Times Jan 2 1945

Christian Science Monitor Jan 3, 1945

Foo-Fighters That Dog Fliers In Europe Partly Explained

By the Associated Press Natural Science Editor

NEW YORK, Jan. 3 — The descriptions of the new German foo-fighters, or balls of fire, fit into several well-known electrical phenomena.

These are induction, ball lightning and have some, though not all the aspects of St. Elmo's fire. If they are electrical, they are something created in the air close to the planes, rather than anything shot like artillery shells or anything floating in the air in wait for planes.

Induction is suggested by the reports that the foo-fires keep up with the plane, at fixed distances, regardless of plane speed, changes in speed or changes in direction.

Electrical induction of some sort would explain such marvelous synchronization. Nothing else that is well known would explain such perfect timing. Radio control from the ground does not explain the timing, unless radio control is meant to describe a beam which is part of the automatic induction.

Induction, however, fails completely to describe what happens when a fire-ball zooms upward leaving its plane. Apparently the balls fly paths of thousands of feet away from the planes.

The common experience that resembles this trick is ball lightning. How anybody could produce ball lightning is unknown. Exactly what ball lightning may be is also unknown. But it is a quite harmless thing, even as the German foo-balls are reported to be. A lightning ball can explode in your front yard, making a loud bang but doing little or no damage.

St. Elmo's fire is a brush discharge of static electricity, which streams off some solid object with a brilliant intensity. Aviators are familiar with brush discharges and would recognize them, so that the foo-balls are probably not ordinary St. Elmo's fire.

The deep purple color of brush discharge static would explain the reports that the foo-balls are red. The shade of red has not been reported. Ball lightning has been reported in slightly red shades.

A reason for the foo-balls, again based on experience, is interference, with radar, radio or perhaps with a plane's ignition. Ignition interference would stop a plane in the air. It was a real project in Italy before this war, and how to do it was well known in theory in the United States. All you needed then, to stop a plane five or more miles away, was a power plant equal to Niagara Falls.

A guess can be made that the foo-balls are evidence that German natural scientists have found some way to get around part of the power troubles in interference. The fact that they are using them, and so disclosing their secrets to the Allies, would indicate that they do not hope to attain to ignition interference power.

Hartford (Ct) Times Jan 8, 1945

Japanese Now Use Flying Bomb in China

Kunming, China —(AP)— The Japanese are using some kind of flying bomb for the air defense of China.

Announcing this today, Maj.-Gen. Claire L. Chennault said it had not been determined whether the bombs were launched from planes or the ground. So far they have had no great success. Fliers told of seeing "objects following or paralleling" the course of American planes. In each case the pilots were able to evade the objects.

Denver (Co) Post

TUESDAY, JANUARY 2, 1945

NAZIS USING MYSTERIOUS 'BALLS OF FIRE'

Devices Race Along Beside Planes For Miles.

A United States Night Fighter Base, France, Jan. 2.—(A. P.)—American fighter pilots engaged in flying night intruder missions over Germany report the Nazis have come up with a new "secret weapon"—mysterious "balls of fire" which race along beside their planes for miles like will o' the wisps.

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Some pilots have expressed belief that the "foo fighter" was designed strictly as a psychological weapon. Intelligence reports seem to indicate it is radio-controlled from the ground and can keep pace with planes flying 300 miles per hour.

Lieut. Donald Meiers of Chicago, Ill., said there are three types of "foo fighters"—red balls of fire that fly along at wing tip; a vertical row of three balls of fire which fly in front of the planes, and a group of about fifteen lights which follow the plane at a distance, flickering on and off.

Nazi Fire Balls May Be Magnetic

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Darwin NT Army News January 9 1945

"BALLS OF FIRE" CHASED FIGHTERS

WASHINGTON.—Pilots flying over Germany at night report that "strange balls of fire are following them around" on their missions and they have christened these strange phenomena "Foo Fighters."

One pilot reported. "A Foo fighter picked me up recently at 700 feet and chased me down the Rhine Valley.

"I turned to starboard and two red balls of fire turned with me.

"I turned to port and they turned, too.

"I was doing 260 miles an hour, but they kept up with me.

"I had a horrible thought that the Germans on the ground would press a button and explode them, but they don't explode or attack us—they merely follow us like will-o-the-wisps."

Physicists suggest that what was seen was St. Elmo's fire which, in stormy weather sometimes appears at the masthead of ships and, on land, at the tops of trees or steeples.

It is a sort of electrical discharge, red when positive and blue when negative.

Another suggestion is that they might be gaseous balls of fire controlled by radio from the ground and designed to interfere with radar signals.

Toronto Globe + Mail Jan 3, 1945

Foo-Fighters

Nazi Stunt Electrical Phenomena

By HOWARD W. BLAKESLEE

New York, Jan. 2 (AP). — The descriptions of the new German foo-fighters, or balls of fire, fit into several well-known electrical phenomena.

These are induction, ball lightning and have some, though not all the aspects of St. Elmo's fire. If they are electrical, they are something created in the air close to the planes, rather than anything shot like artillery shells or anything floating in the air in wait for planes.

Induction is suggested by the reports that the foo-fires keep up with the plane, at fixed distances, regardless of plane speed, changes in speed or changes in direction.

Only electrical induction of some sort would explain such marvellous synchronization.

Induction, however, fails completely to describe what happens when a fire-ball zooms upward leaving its plane.

The common experience that resembles this trick is ball lightning. How anybody could produce ball lightning is unknown. Exactly what ball lightning may be is also unknown. But it is a quite harmless thing.

Static Electricity

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A reason for the foo-balls, based on experience, is interference, with radar, radio or perhaps with a plane's ignition. Ignition interference would stop a plane in the air. It was a real project in Italy before this war, and how to do it was well known in theory here. All you needed then, to stop a plane five or more miles away, was a power plant equal to Niagara Falls.

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JANUARY 2, 1945 Baltimore Md. Sun

Great Balls Of Fire! Nazis Throw Them At Our Planes

A U.S. Night Fighter Base, France, Jan. 1 (AP)—The Nazis have thrown something new into the night skies over Germany—the weird mysterious "foo-fighter," balls of fire which race alongside the wings of American Beaufighters flying intruder missions over the Reich.

United States pilots have been encountering the eerie "foo-fighter" for more than a month in their night flights. No one apparently knows exactly what this sky weapon is.

The balls of fire appear suddenly and accompany the planes for miles. They appear to be radio-controlled from the ground and manage to keep up with planes flying 300 miles an hour, official intelligence reports reveal.

Three Kinds Described

"There are three kinds of these lights we call 'foo-fighters,'" said Lieut. Donald Meiers, of Chicago. "One is red balls of fire which appear off our wing tips and fly along with us, the second is a vertical row of three balls of fire which fly in front of us, and the third is a group of about fifteen lights which appear off in the distance—like a Christmas tree up in the air—and flicker on and off."

The pilots of this night fighter squadron—in operation since September, 1943—find these fiery balls the weirdest things they have as yet encountered. They are convinced that the "foo-fighter" is designed to be a psychological weapon as well as military, although it is not the nature of the fireballs to attack planes.

"A 'foo-fighter' picked me up recently at 700 feet and chased me 20 miles down the Rhine Valley," Meiers said. "I turned to starboard and two balls of fire turned with me. I turned to the port side and they turned with me. We were going 260 miles an hour and the balls were keeping right up with us."

"Like Will-O-The-Wisps"

"When I first saw the things off my wing tips I had the horrible thought that a German on the ground was ready to press a button and explode them. But they don't explode or attack us. They just seem to follow us like will-o-the-wisps."

[An Associated Press report from Paris December 13 said the Germans had thrown silvery balls into the air against day raiders. Pilots then reported they had seen these objects, both individually and in clusters, during forays over the Reich.]

Lieut. Wallace Gould, of Silver Creek, N.Y., said the lights followed his wing tips for a while and then, in a few seconds, zoomed 20,000 feet into the air and out of sight.

The Hill Moved Up

Lieut. Edward Schlater, of Oshkosh, Wis., said he had seen the "foo-fighter" on two occasions and it "looked like shooting stars."

Capt. Fritz Ringwald, staff officer from East St. Louis, Ill., went along on a flight after hearing the numerous reports of the "foo-fighter."

"I saw lights off the right and told the pilot, who said, 'Oh, those are lights on a hill,'" Ringwald reported, adding, "I looked in that direction a few minutes later and then told him 'Well, that hill is considerably closer to us now.'"

Vancouver Sun 2 Jan 1945

Weird Balls Of Fire New Nazi Weapon

By ROBERT WILSON

A U. S. NIGHT FIGHTER BASE, France, Jan. 2 (AP)—The enemy has thrown something new into the night skies over Germany, the weird, mysterious "Foo-fighter," balls of fire which race alongside the wings of Allied Beaufighters flying intruder missions over Germany.

Allied pilots have been encountering the eerie "Foo-fighter" for more than a month in their night flights.

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AT 300 MILES AN HOUR

The balls of fire appear suddenly and accompany the planes for miles.

They appear to be radio-controlled from the ground and manage to keep up with planes flying 300 miles an hour, official intelligence reports reveal.

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DOESN'T EXPLODE

The pilots of this night fighter squadron are convinced the "Foo-fighter" is designed to be a psychological weapon.

"A Foo-fighter picked me up recently at 700 feet and chased me 20 miles down the Rhine Valley," Meiers said. "I turned to starboard and two balls of fire turned with me.

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"We were going 260 miles an hour and the balls were keeping right up with us.

"They don't explode or attack us. They just seem to follow us like will-o-the-wisps."

'Balls of Fire' Startle U.S. Flyers Over Reich

Weird 'Foo-Fighters' Keep Pace With Planes Just Off Wing Tips

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(An Associated Press report from Paris December 13 said the Germans had thrown silvery balls into the air against day raiders. Pilots then reported they had seen these objects, both individually and in clusters, during forays over the Reich.)

Lt. Thomas Thomas of Oklahoma City, Okla., said he had seen them over Karlsruhe and the pilots agreed that the balls of fire were more numerous over large German cities like Mannheim.

Practically every member of the squadron has seen them except Capt. Ralph Angus of 520 Taylor Street, San Francisco, Calif., a veteran flyer who said, "it just so happens that I haven't run into them—yet."

Other pilots at this base who have encountered "foo-fighters" include Lt. Henry Giblin, Santa Rosa, Calif. Also radio navigators, Lts. Edward Baker, Hemet, Calif., and Frank Sardon, El Segundo, Calif.

San Francisco Examiner
Jan. 2, 1945 CCCC* 6

New York Times
Jan. 6, 1945

New Defense Tactics in Use

By Wireless to THE NEW YORK TIMES.

GUAM, Wednesday, June 6—Roused by the burning of city after city by our B-29 incendiary attacks, the defending Japanese Air Force is becoming more desperate and more and more the use of ramming tactics and suicide Baka flying bombs are being reported.

Pilots returning from yesterday's attack on Kobe said that at least one B-29 was rammed over the target while crewmen parachuting from another crippled "Superfort" were strafed by enemy fighters.

Lieutenant John G. Hoyer of Missoula, Mont., saw a Baka bomb, which is in reality a rocket-propelled small airplane that is steered toward its target at high speed, miss the formation directly ahead and then dive directly for the ground, thereby adding to the destruction wrought by the B-29's.

Christian Science Monitor
Jan 2, 1945

Balls of Fire Race Alongside As Allied Planes Skim Reich

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U. S. pilots have been encountering the eerie "foo-fighter" for more than a month in their night flights. No one apparently knows exactly what this sky weapon is.

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"There are three kinds of these lights we call 'foo-fighters,'" said Lieut. Donald Meiers, of Chicago. "One is red balls of fire which appear off our wing tips and fly along with us, the second is a vertical row of three balls of fire which fly in front of us and the third is a group of about 15 lights which appear off in the distance—like a Christmas tree up in the air—and flicker on and off."

The pilots of this night fighter squadron—in operation since September, 1943—find these fiery balls the weirdest thing they have as yet encountered. They are convinced that the "foo-fighter" is designed to be a psychological weapon as well as military although it is not the nature of the fire balls to attack planes.

"A 'foo-fighter' picked me up recently at 700 feet and chased me 20 miles down the Rhine Valley," Lieutenant Meiers said. "I turned to starboard and two balls of fire turned with me. I turned to the port side and they turned with me. We were going 260 miles an hour and the balls were keeping right up with us."

"On another occasion when a 'foo-fighter' picked us up, I dived at 360 miles per hour. It kept right off our wing tips for awhile and then zoomed up into the sky.

"When I first saw the things off my wing tips I had the horrible thought that a German on the ground was ready to press a button and explode them. But they don't explode or attack us. They just seem to follow us like will-o-the-wisps."

An Associated Press report from Paris Dec. 13 said the Germans had thrown silvery balls into the air against day raiders. Pilots then reported they had seen these objects, both individually and in clusters, during forays over the Reich.

Melbourne
Argus Vic
January 3 1945

GERMANS USING FIREBALLS AGAINST ALLIED PLANES

From Our Own Correspondent in New York

American pilots are encountering fireballs that race alongside the wings of the American fighter planes over the Reich, says American Associated Press correspondent at a US night fighter base.

Named "foo fighters," these balls keep pace with the planes. There are three varieties—those which fly alongside, others which fly in front of the plane, and a third kind seen at a distance in groups of 15.

The Americans believe they are meant to have a psychological effect. They do not attack planes, but follow like will o' the wisps.

NEW LONDON, CONNECTICUT
THE DAY
20 AUG 1945
PAGE 1

New German Weapons Revealed

WITH BRITISH FORCES IN GERMANY (AP) — The Germans were experimenting with huge bazookas as field artillery and aircraft cannon when the war ended and had perfected a new defense system against bombers.

The fantastic weapons which Hitler had for a last try for victory were taken off the secret list today by a team of American and British technicians.

Germany had made great strides perfecting guns without recoil. They were based on the bazooka principle of eliminating recoil through ejection of gases from the rear of the barrel.

Several giant bazookas with 11-inch bore were found. These could have been used as artillery pieces or mounted on large aircraft. Shells weighed about a half ton and had terrific penetrating power. The weapon was designed primarily for air attacks on the thick hides of battleships.

A monstrous cannon of this type was found on the channel coast trained toward London. Gases could hurl shells 120 miles. At intervals inside the huge barrel were booster points, through which charges of gas could be introduced to increase shell velocity. There was no indication the terror weapon ever was used. The Germans in anxiety to get it mounted misjudged the angle of elevation, greatly reducing the range for which it was intended.

Defense Against Bombers

The defense against bombers was by use of planes which American fighters called "foo fighters." These were tiny jet-propelled craft which were "buttoned" to the base of steel poles and shot vertically into the air at the tremendous speed of rockets. Pilots inside guided the planes at 550 miles an hour, intercepting bomber formations with sprays of rocket shells fired from the noses of the craft.

After the pilot had used his two minutes of fuel, he pulled a lever and was catapulted out to float to safety by parachute. Simultaneously, the tail of the plane dropped off, releasing another parachute which brought the craft gently to earth where the Germans could salvage the jet units. Chains of stations for these jet craft were stationed all along the bombers' routes.

Another German weapon was the spider bomb—a winged missile fired from planes and electrically guided to targets by a thread of wire attached to the bomb and the parent craft. Some spider bombs were operated as much as 15 miles from the parent plane, allowing the pilot to remain at a safe distance while attacking bomber formations.

For submarine warfare, the Germans developed a super-speed U-boat powered by ingolene, the powerful propellant used in V2 rocket bombs. The submarines attained high underwater speed.

They perfected a "splash bullet" which was used against troops with a deadly and horrible effect.

New London, Ct.
Day
Aug. 20, 1945

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New York Herald-Tribune
January 2 1945

Nazi Balls of Fire Race Along With U.S. Night-Raiding Planes

Weird New Weapon Keeps Pace With Planes for Miles, Following Every Turn; Doesn't Attack or Explode and Purpose May Be Psychological

By The Associated Press

A UNITED STATES NIGHT FIGHTER BASE, France, Jan. 1.—The Nazis have thrown something new into the night skies over Germany—the weird, mysterious "foo-fighter," balls of which which race alongside the wings of American Beaufighters flying intruder missions over Germany.

Pilots have been encountering the eerie weapon for more than a month in their night flights. No one apparently knows exactly what this sky weapon is.

The balls of fire appear suddenly, and accompany the planes for miles. They appear to be radio-controlled from the ground and manage to keep up with planes flying 300 miles an hour, official intelligence reports reveal.

"There are three kinds of these lights we call 'foo-fighters,'" said Lieutenant Donald Meiers, of Chicago. "One is red balls of fire which appear off our wing tips and fly along with us, the second is a vertical row of three balls of fire which fly in front of us, and the third is a group of about fifteen lights which appear off in the distance—like a Christmas tree up in the air—and flicker on and off."

The pilots of this night fighter squadron—in operation since September, 1943—find these fiery balls the weirdest thing they have yet encountered. They are convinced that the "foo-fighter" is designed to be a psychological weapon as well as military, although it is not the nature of the fire balls to attack planes.

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(Continued on page 2, column 3)

Balls of Fire

(Continued from page one)

twenty miles down the Rhine Valley," Meiers said. "I turned to starboard and two balls of fire turned with me. We were going 260 miles an hour and the balls were keeping right up with us.

"On another occasion when a 'foo-fighter' picked us up I dove at 360 miles an hour. It kept right off our wing tips for awhile and then zoomed up into the sky.

"When I first saw the things off my wing tips, I had the horrible thought that a German on the ground was ready to press a button and explode them. But they don't explode or attack us. They just seem to follow us like will-o-the-wisps."

(An Associated Press report from Paris Dec. 13 said the Germans had thrown silvery balls into the air against day raiders. Pilots then reported they had seen these objects, both individually and in clusters, during forays over the Reich.)

New York Herald Tribune

January 3, 1945

Nazi Fire Balls May Be Kind of Ball Lightning

Foo-Fighters Are Seen as Electrical Charges Which Trail Planes by Induction

By Howard W. Blakeslee

Associated Press Science Editor

The descriptions of the new German "foo-fighters," or balls of fire, contained in dispatches from the western front, fit into several well-known electrical phenomena.

Two of these are induction and ball lightning, which have some of the aspects of another electrical phenomenon, St. Elmo's fire. If the foo-fighters are electrical, they are something created in the air close to the Allied planes, rather than anything shot like artillery shells or anything floating in the air in wait for planes.

Induction is suggested by the reports from Allied Airmen, that the foo-fighters keep up with their planes at fixed distances, regardless of plane speed, changes in speed or changes in direction.

Electrical induction of some sort would explain such marvelous synchronization. Nothing else that is well known would explain such perfect timing. Radio control from the ground does not explain the timing, unless radio control is meant to describe a beam which is part of the automatic induction.

Induction, however, fails completely to describe what happens when a fire-ball zooms upward, leaving its plane. Apparently the balls fly paths thousands of feet away from the planes.

The common experience that resembles this trick is ball lightning. How anybody could produce ball lightning is unknown. Exactly what ball lightning may be is also unknown. But it is a quite harmless thing, even as the German foo-fighters are reported to be. A lightning ball can explode in your front yard, making a loud bang, but doing little or no damage.

Bright Electrical Discharge

St. Elmo's fire is a brush discharge of static electricity, which streams off some solid object with a brilliant intensity. Aviators are familiar with brush discharges and would recognize them, so the foo-balls are probably not ordinary St. Elmo's fire.

The deep purple color of brush discharge static would explain the reports that the foo-balls are red. The shade of red has not been reported. Ball lightning has been reported in slightly red shades.

A reason for the foo-balls, again based on experience, is interference, with radar, radio or perhaps with a plane's ignition. Ignition interference would stop a plane in the air. It was a real project in Italy before this war, and how to do it was well known in theory in the United States. All you needed then to stop a plane five or more miles away was a power plant equal to Niagara Falls.

A guess can be made that the foo-balls are evidence that German scientists have found some way to get around part of the power troubles in interference. The fact that they are using them, and so disclosing their secrets to the Allies, would indicate that they do not hope to attain to ignition intereference power.

War Department Is Silent

WASHINGTON, Jan. [illegible] (UP).—The War Department was not talking, but amateur physicists hereabouts wondered today if that ancient bugaboo, St. Elmo's fire, hadn't put in an appearance on the Western Front.

War Department authorities just looked mysterious when questioned about the balls of fire. They said they could not talk about them. Security, you know.

However, no security or censorship restrictions apply to St. Elmo's fire, which used to frighten uneasy sailors into repentance from time to time. Websters New International Dictionary describes this phenomenon as follows: "A flame-like appearance sometimes seen in stormy weather at prominent points of a ship, particularly at the masthead and the yardarm, and also on land, as at the tops of trees or steeples. . . . It is in the nature of a brush discharge of electricity, reddish when positive, bluish when negative."

Save every scrap of paper—old newspapers, magazines, wrapping paper, cardboard, everything that's paper

New London (CT) DAY 18 Dec 1944

Nazis Use V-Weapon On Western Front

Pg 1

WITH THE U. S. NINTH ARMY IN GERMANY (AP)—The Germans have launched a new "V" weapon on the Western front and are bombarding rear areas with it by night and day.

The dispatch gave no details concerning the weapon.

The Germans have used both their V-1 and V-2 weapons — the robot bomb and the "telegraph pole" rocket bomb—against troops and areas behind the front.

Supreme headquarters in Paris last week said pilots reported seeing clusters of "silver balls" over Germany, but gave no other information. It was speculated the silver balls might be a new anti-aircraft defense, or designed to interfere with Allied radio communication.

Chaleston, WVa Gazette

Jan. 11, 1945

'Foo Fighter' Declared Just Old Friend Static

LOS ANGELES, Jan. 10.—(AP)—"Foo Fighters" are just static, says Lt. G. C. Claybrook, army transport pilot.

The so-named mysterious balls of fire have been sighted by Yank pilots in Germany. Some have suggested that they are a ne wsecret *Nazi* weapon, sent up to race alongside invading planes for psychological effect.

"The 'Foo Fighter' is a concentrated mass of static electricity caused by the tremendous speed of the plane in passing through a rain cloud," Claybrook asserted. "It is familiarly known to most pilots as 'St. Elmo's Fire.'"

He said he had encountered the balls of fire in the cockpit and has seen them advance around the sides and floor of his plane.

Claybrook is here for reassignment after flying a transport on 162 missions over the hump in India.