

Mystery Ray

Top Secret

Ray Which Detects Ships Off Shore to Be Tested Secretly at Highlands

(By Staff Correspondent)

HIGHLANDS, July 22—Shrouded in secrecy reminiscent of World War reticence, the United States Army is preparing to test its newest and most mysterious "ray" here at the Navesink Light House Station beginning at 9 P. M. next Monday and for four successive nights from 9 to 12 midnight. Tests of the "ray" will be conducted by officers and personnel from the Signal Corps experimental laboratories at Fort Monmouth. The grounds of the light house will be heavily guarded by military police to bar the inquisitive.

Plans of the army to conduct a series of tests were revealed in a bulletin of the Bureau of Light

Houses containing instructions to mariners. The bulletin simply advised that the Navesink Light House would be used for experimental purposes during the period indicated. The only physical evidence that the army contemplates anything unusual is the presence of a huge portable searchlight from Fort Monmouth on the light house grounds.

The "ray" is said to be able to detect the presence of vessels off shore even though the craft's motors are still and she is running without lights. The tests will determine if the "ray" can locate such a vessel with sufficient accuracy at night to allow coast artillery to fire upon it with efficiency.



Starting in the late 1920s, a series of top-secret experiments took place at nearby Fort Monmouth. In 1935, the U.S. military set up shop at the Twin Lights to test what the newspapers were calling a "Mystery Ray." The

secret experiments weren't a particularly well-kept secret.

Later the "mystery" was solved. These were the first radar experiments. The progress made at the Twin Lights helped to jump-start a technology program that changed the course of history. Within a few years America was at war. The radar program begun at the Twin Lights saved countless thousands of lives, and was in many ways the difference between victory and defeat.

Pearl Harbor

The radar shown in the movie Pearl Harbor is technically and historically correct. It was the US Army SCR 270-B s/n 012 - similar to the radar tested at the Twin Lights before World War II. The SCR-270 -B s/n 012 array detected the Japanese attack on the morning of December 7, 1941-but was so new that its crew was unsure how to interpret what they were seeing on-screen. The SCR-270 search radar was tested extensively at Twin Lights and later the SCR270-1's were stationed near the lighthouse until the early 1950's.

Within four years of that day, the technology developed at the Twin Lights was downscaled so dramatically that it could fit in the head of an anti-aircraft shell. These were the shells that enabled Navy ships to shoot down Kamikazes in such large numbers in the waning days of the war.

The trend of smaller, smarter, faster is a lot older than you think!