

Request 11

I request the release of certain information concerning Unidentified Flying Objects (UFOs) in the UK. I understand the MOD's official line is that UFOs represent no threat to the defence of the UK and therefore all information relating to them is freely available under the FOI Act as it does not compromise national defence.

I understand a number of UFO crashes have occurred in the UK and the MOD holds files documenting as much information on each of them as it could compile. I am therefore requesting all information held by the MOD on the following crash incidents in the UK including copies of letter, official reports, studies and other documentation:

5th May 1955 - Brighton

10th December 1963 - Cosford RAF Air Base

26th & 27th December 1980 - Rendlesham Forest RAF / US Air Base.

Please acknowledge your receipt of this email as soon as possible and arrange for the above requested documentation to be posted in hard copy to my address at the top of this email. I understand you now have 20 working days to do this.

Response

I am writing concerning your request for information regarding UFO sighting reports. Your requests have been passed to this Department as we are the focal point within the Ministry of Defence for correspondence regarding UFOs.

First it may be helpful if I explain that the Ministry of Defence does not have any expertise or role in respect of 'UFO/flying saucer' matters or to the question of the existence or otherwise of extraterrestrial lifeforms, about which it remains totally open-minded. To date, the MOD knows of no evidence which substantiates the existence of these phenomena and we therefore have no information about alleged "UFO crashes". The MOD examines any 'UFO' reports it receives solely to establish whether what was seen might have some defence significance; namely, whether there is any evidence that the United Kingdom's airspace might have been compromised by hostile or unauthorised air activity. Unless there is evidence of a potential threat to the United Kingdom from an external source, and to date no 'UFO' report has revealed such evidence, we do not attempt to identify the precise nature of each sighting reported to us. We believe that rational explanations, such as aircraft lights or natural phenomena, could be found for them if resources were diverted for this

purpose, but it is not the function of the MOD to provide this kind of aerial identification service. It would be an inappropriate use of defence resources if we were to do so.

With regard to your particular request, I should advise you that MOD files on UFOs were routinely destroyed after 5 years until 1967 when they were generally preserved for The National Archives. A few did survive before 1967 and if these included any of the incidents you refer to in 1955 and 1963 they will now be at The National Archives. You can contact The National Archives at Ruskin Avenue, Kew, Richmond, Surrey TW9 4DU or telephone, 020 8876 3444. The National Archives also have a website giving information about the records they hold and how to access them. This can be found on the internet at <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk>.

All the surviving MOD documents concerning events at Rendlesham Forest in 1980 can be viewed at The Ministry of Defence Freedom of Information Publication Scheme www.foi.mod.uk. A search in the Scheme under 'Rendlesham Forest' will take you to this information.

I hope this will be helpful.