

## Is there anyone out there . . . Yes, 15,000 times, yes

IAN BRUCE, Defence Correspondent 25<sup>th</sup> July 2005



THE Ministry of Defence has examined more than 15,000 alleged sightings of flying saucers and other unidentified flying objects over Britain since 1959 and is still keeping an open mind on the existence of aliens.

The sightings were reported from John o' Groats to Land's End by RAF and civilian pilots, air traffic controllers, policemen and even MoD employees as well as members of the public, according to documents released under the Freedom of Information Act. They were examined by a special section of the directorate of air staff "to establish whether the UK's airspace might have been compromised by unauthorised air activity", a spokesman said. To date, there was no evidence of extraterrestrial activity.

The most common sightings included reports of orange-coloured discs, spheres, triangles and balls of fire which could change formation. An undisclosed but "considerable" number were seen over RAF and US air force bases in England.

The official policy line is that "the MoD does not have any expertise or role in respect of UFOs or flying saucer matters or to the existence or otherwise of extraterrestrial lifeforms, about which it remains totally open-minded".

The spokesman added: "We know of no evidence which substantiates the existence of such phenomena. Unless there is evidence of a potential threat to the UK from an external source, and so far no report has revealed such evidence, we do not investigate the precise nature of each sighting.

"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." The figures show that the peak years for sightings were 1978, with 750 reports, and 1999, with 609.

As The Herald revealed in March, West Kilbride in Ayrshire was Scotland's UFO hotspot last year with 12 sightings.

Source: <http://www.theherald.co.uk/news/43647-print.shtml>