

NICK POPE

My name is Nick Pope, formerly with the British Ministry of Defence.

Since 1950 the British Government has received over 10,000 UFO reports. Responsibility for this subject rests with the Ministry of Defense, whose remit is to look for evidence of any potential threat to the UK, or anything else of any "defense significance". From 1991 to 1994 I was the desk officer responsible for these investigations.

Most UFO sightings turned out to be misidentifications of things such as aircraft, satellites and meteors, but in around 5 per cent of cases no explanation could be found. These cases include incidents where reliable witnesses such as police officers and pilots reported structured craft performing speeds and maneuvers significantly in excess of anything they had seen military jet aircraft perform. Other cases included in this category involved UFOs tracked on radar and incidents where photos or videos were produced and where the MoD's technical experts found no evidence of fakery.

The MoD takes no position on the nature of the UFO phenomenon but I and some of my colleagues were privately convinced that whatever was going on, there were important defense, national security and flight safety issues involved.

In March 1993 I investigated a case where a UFO was seen by about 60 witnesses, including military personnel at two air force bases. Witnesses included a patrol of air force police, together with a meteorological officer with 8 years experience. This latter witness described a triangular-shaped craft midway in size between a C-130 and a Boeing 747. He said that it was emitting a low frequency humming sound and he said it moved slowly at first, before accelerating away many times faster than a military jet. My Head of Division's brief to the Assistant Chief of the Air Staff concluded "In summary, there would seem to be some evidence on this occasion that an unidentified object (or objects) of unknown origin was operating over the UK". The case file - published on the MoD website - also mentions related enquiries from the US authorities, asking if the UK had a black programme that might explain some UFO sightings involving large triangular-shaped craft. That's interesting, given the US government's public position that UFOs are no longer investigated.

Britain's best known UFO sighting occurred in 1980 and involved USAF personnel from two military bases in the UK. There were multiple witnesses and an object was seen to land in a place called Rendlesham Forest. A Geiger counter was used to take radiation readings at the landing site and the assessment undertaken by the MoD's Defence Intelligence Staff stated that the levels recorded seemed "significantly higher than the average background". We are fortunate to have two of the witnesses to these events here today and I should like to hand over to one of them now, so that he can give you the specifics.

Thank you.