

Press release

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The National Archives releases eighth batch of UFO files

Latest files lift the lid on government UFO policy

The truth about the government's interest in UFOs is finally revealed in files released to The National Archives. In one of 34 new files released today, Ministry of Defence (MoD) officials admit that "higher priorities" had prevented a full-scale study of the thousands of UFO reports they had received since the Second World War.

The revelations are contained in a 1995 internal memo from a Wing Commander in DI55, the branch of the Defence Intelligence Staff (DIS) which was responsible for assessing UFO reports. The author concludes that there was no longer any reason to continue denying intelligence interest in UFOs, although the public perception of the unit as a "defender of the Earth from the alien menace" was "light years from the truth". However he thought few people would believe the truth, that lack of funds and higher priorities had prevented a full study of UFO sightings.

Following the memo, a limited investigation of unidentified aerial phenomena (UAPs) was commissioned by the MoD. The secret four-volume report concluded in 2000 that UFOs did not pose a threat, eventually leading to the closure of the UFO desk in 2009. The UAP report was released to the public following a Freedom of Information request in 2006.

The eighth batch of UFO files released to The National Archives today contains 34 files covering 1985 to 2007 and includes almost 9,000 pages of UFO sightings and incidents, photographs and drawings, RAF investigations, Freedom of Information requests, parliamentary briefings and government UFO policy documents.

Dr David Clarke, author of the book "The UFO files" and Senior Lecturer in Journalism from Sheffield Hallam University said: *"The famous catchphrase from The X-Files was 'the truth is out there.' Many people continue to believe the governments of the world know 'the truth' about UFOs and are concealing the fact that we are not alone in the universe. But I believe the truth is in these files. The files suggest that the UK government knows as much as we do about alien visitors and has no evidence to suggest we have ever been visited, despite the interest it has taken in sightings over the years. This is the truth, but will people believe it?"*

Other files reveal that "defence experts" were called in to examine a 2004 photo of a "flying saucer" taken outside Retford town hall in Nottinghamshire. Experts from the Defence Geographic and Imagery Intelligence Agency (DGIA) could not reach any "definitive conclusions" on the contents of the picture.

The files also contain the remarkable first-hand testimony of retired RAF Fighter Controller Freddie Wimbledon and retired MoD official Ralph Noyes on the famous 1956

UFO incident at RAF Lakenheath in Suffolk. Freddie Wimbledon remembers the RAF scrambling fighter planes to intercept a UFO seen on radar and by observers on the ground. The UFO reportedly latched onto a fighter plane, “following its every move” before speeding off at “terrific speed”. Wimbledon and the staff involved were sworn to secrecy, while Ralph Noyes recalls being shown gun camera footage of the UFOs taken from aboard the aircraft at a special MoD screening in 1970.

One of the more bizarre tales from the files is the 2003 sighting of “worm-shaped” UFOs over East Dulwich in London. A mother and daughter reported it to the police but according to testimony she later gave to the MoD’s UFO desk, the two police constables who attended the scene, were joined by two men dressed in “space suits and dark glasses who called themselves ‘Mork and Mindy’”. The woman complained of being made “to look foolish”.

Other highlights from the files include:

- **Mysterious lights seen moving over the Pyramid Stage at the 2003 Glastonbury Festival**
- **UFOs spotted by the pilot and passengers of an aircraft over the Channel Islands in 2007**
- **Files relating to the threat from asteroids and other Near Earth Objects (NEOs)**
- **F-16s scrambled to intercept UFOs over Belgium in 1990**
- **Files on the Rendlesham Forest incident including the *News of the World* splash which first broke the story**

The files are available to download for free for a month from the website:
www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/ufos

For further information, interviews or images please contact The National Archives’ Press office: t.020 8392 5277 or e-mail: press@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk

Notes to editors:

The UFO files - The inside story of real-life sightings by Dr Clarke is available from The National Archives online bookshop.

Images

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The National Archives

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