



Ministry of Defence

Air Command Secretariat
Spitfire Block
Headquarters Air Command
Royal Air Force
High Wycombe
Buckinghamshire
HP14 4UE

[REDACTED]

Our Ref: FOI-2014-01746

9 June 2014

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your email of 24 May 2014 requesting the following information:

"....Information regarding the Rendlesham UFO incident in December 1980 ...and.... any information available regarding an incident that happened in the peak district west of Sheffield on 25th March 1997 at 10pm."

I am treating your correspondence as a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000. We have now completed a search of our paper and electronic records for the information you have requested and I can confirm that the MOD does hold some of the information within the scope of your request.

Some of the information you have requested is already available in the public domain and is therefore exempt under Section 21(1) and Section 21(2)a of the FOIA – "information available to the applicant by other means" or "information may be reasonably accessible to the applicant even though it is accessible only on payment." Summaries of the UFO sightings reports received by the MOD between 1997 and 2009 can be accessed on the Ministry of Defence website via the link below:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ufo-reports-in-the-uk>

The MOD expects to complete the final stages of an ongoing programme to release some 160 UFO related files going back to the late 1970s to The National Archives (TNA) later this year. Those files which have already been released are available to view on TNA website via the following link:

<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/ufo/>

As a small number of files are yet to be released your request therefore also falls under Section 22 of the FOIA – "Information intended for future publication." This means the MOD is not obliged to comply with your request. Section 22 is a qualified exemption, meaning that the MOD must assess the balance of the public interest in release of this information.

While there is undoubtedly public interest in this information being released to the public as it will enable them to have a more informed view of the MOD's role in UFO matters, there is no overriding reason why the public should have the information immediately. Indeed it could be argued, that by releasing files and the information they contain in chronological order, the public will be able to follow the role of the MOD in a more logical and orderly fashion, and to view actions in their correct historical perspective.

It is part of effective administration of government that the publication of information is planned and managed within the department responsible. The release of this information will undermine this release process, and delay the release of other files (which other members of the public may be waiting for) as work on them would necessarily have to be put off.

It is for these reasons that we do not believe it would be in the public interest to release this information at the moment.

If you are not satisfied with this response or wish to complain about any aspect of the handling of your request, then you should contact me in the first instance. If informal resolution is not possible and you are still dissatisfied then you may apply for an independent internal review by contacting the Information Rights Compliance, 1st Floor, MOD Main Building, Whitehall, SW1A 2HB (e-mail CIO-FOI-IR@mod.uk). Please note that any request for an internal review must be made within 40 working days of the date on which the attempt to reach informal resolution has come to an end.

If you remain dissatisfied following an internal review, you may take your complaint to the Information Commissioner under the provisions of Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act. Please note that the Information Commissioner will not investigate your case until the MOD internal review process has been completed. Further details of the role and powers of the Information Commissioner can be found on the Commissioner's website, <http://www.ico.gov.uk>.

Please remember to quote the reference number in any future communications.

Yours sincerely

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Air Command Secretariat