

THIS FILE IS MADE AVAILABLE THROUGH THE DECLASSIFICATION EFFORTS AND RESEARCH OF:

# THE BLACK VAULT

THE BLACK VAULT IS THE LARGEST ONLINE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT / GOVERNMENT RECORD CLEARING HOUSE IN THE WORLD. THE RESEARCH EFFORTS HERE ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DECLASSIFICATION OF THOUSANDS OF DOCUMENTS THROUGHOUT THE U.S. GOVERNMENT, AND ALL CAN BE DOWNLOADED BY VISITING:

[HTTP://WWW.BLACKVAULT.COM](http://www.blackvault.com)

YOU ARE ENCOURAGED TO FORWARD THIS DOCUMENT TO YOUR FRIENDS, BUT PLEASE KEEP THIS IDENTIFYING IMAGE AT THE TOP OF THE .PDF SO OTHERS CAN DOWNLOAD MORE!



the national archives

(c) crown copyright

UNCLASSIFIED  
RESTRICTED/UNCLASSIFIED

MOD Form 329D  
(Revised 2/99)  
PPQ = 100

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

Date opened (date of first enclosure)

10 Dec 96

Registered file number

D/SECCAS/64/3/S

Part No. A

1. Attention is drawn to the notes on the inside flap.
2. Enter notes of related files on page 2 of this jacket

DIVISION/ESTABLISHMENT/UNIT/BRANCH

SECCAS

SUBJECT "UFOs"

PUBLIC CORRESPONDENCE -

PERSISTENT CORRESPONDENCE -

MR Section 40

Referred to	Date	Min/Encl	Referred to	Date	Min/Encl	Referred to	Date	Min/Encl	Referred to	Date	Min/Encl
<b>CLOSED</b>											
<b>21/3/07</b>											

FOR DRO USE ONLY

1st Review date

2nd Review date

PA ACTION

(MOD Form 262F must be completed)



RCU001337072



# Registered File Disposal Form

MOD Form 262F  
(Revised 9/01)

FILE TITLE: (Main Heading - Secondary Heading - Tertiary Heading etc)  
**UFOS - PUBLIC CORRESPONDENCE**  
**PERSISTENT CORRESPONDENCE.**  
 mn **Section 40**

Reference:  
(Prefix and Number):  
**01sec(AS)64/3/S**  
 Part: **A**

PROTECTIVE MARKING (including caveats & descriptors): **b/c**

Date of last enclosure: **27/3/03**

Date closed: **21/3/07**

**PART 1. DISPOSAL SCHEDULE RECOMMENDATION**  
 (To be completed when the file is closed)

Destroy after \_\_\_\_\_ years

Forward to INFO(EXP)-R after \_\_\_\_\_ years

No recommendation

**FOR DEFENCE INFO(EXP)-R USE ONLY**

\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_

Date of 1st review      \* Date of 2nd review      Forward Destruction Date

Reviewer's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_      Reviewer's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

**PART 2. BRANCH REVIEW**  
 (To be fully completed at time of file closure)  
 (Delete as appropriate)

a. Of no further administrative value and not worthy of permanent preservation. DESTROY IMMEDIATELY (Remember that TOP SECRET and Codeword material cannot be destroyed locally and must be forwarded to INFO(EXP)-R.

b. (i) To be retained until the end of the year \_\_\_\_\_ for the following reason(s):

LEGAL <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	DEFENCE POLICY + OPERATIONS <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
CONTRACTUAL <input type="checkbox"/>	ORIGINAL COMMITTEE PAPERS <input type="checkbox"/>
FINANCE/AUDIT <input type="checkbox"/>	MAJOR EQUIPMENT PROJECT <input type="checkbox"/> [ _____ ]
DIRECTORATE POLICY <input type="checkbox"/>	OTHER (Specify) <input type="checkbox"/>

(ii) Key enclosures which support the recommendation are:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

(iii) At the end of the specified retention period the file is to be:

Destroyed

Considered by DR for permanent preservation

PERMANENT  
RETENTION.

c. Of no further administrative value but worthy of consideration by INFO(EXP)-R for permanent preservation.

**PART 3. BRANCH REVIEWING OFFICER (not below C2/equivalent)**

Section 40

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: Section 40  
(Block Capitals)

Grade/Rank: GRADE 7 Date: 21/3/07

Branch Title and Full Address:

Tel No:

**PART 4 DESTRUCTION CERTIFICATE**

It is certified that the specified file has been destroyed.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Block Capitals)

Grade/Rank: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Witnessed by (TOP SECRET\* and SECRET only)

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Block Capitals)

Grade/Rank: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\*(FOR DR USE ONLY)

2/29

1. 76. Nov. 1st letter re. a "fighting". Also in corresp with CIAA.

Sun.

2. '97. wrote to MD about predecessor's reporting etc.

3. Received corresp in <sup>①</sup> Apr. app. ~~July~~ 8. <sup>Canadian</sup> mentioning research by the PRO. mentioning, among other matters, incident in 1990.

May '98

4. Sent copy <sup>Howard extract</sup> of a "fighting apt" ~~document~~ <sup>document</sup> mentioning 1990 event.

5. May '99 <sup>②</sup>. wrote again to Sec(AS) re. 1990 event (and case in 1974 in Wales). Asked for copy of "signal" sent by aircrew.

6. This was sent to him in Jun 2000.

7. He wrote again to MOD in Jul. and Sept. <sup>③</sup>  
x received detailed replies.

8. Wrote again 22 Nov. <sup>④</sup>



From: **Section 40**  
Directorate of Air Staff (Lower Airspace)  
Operations & Policy 1  
**MINISTRY OF DEFENCE**  
Room 6/73, Metropole Building, Northumberland Avenue, London,  
WC2N 5BP



Telephone	(Direct dial)	020 7218 2140
	(Switchboard)	020 7218 9000
	(Fax)	020 7218 <b>Section 40</b>
	(GTN)	

**Section 40**

Your Reference

Our Reference  
D/DAS/64/3/5  
Date  
27 March 2003

Dear **Section 40**

Thank you for your letter of 24 March including additional information about the UFO report of 5<sup>th</sup> November 1990.

As requested, the enclosed letter has been forwarded to the pilot concerned.

Yours sincerely,

**Section 40**



From: **Section 40**  
 Directorate of Air Staff (Lower Airspace)  
 Operations & Policy 1  
**MINISTRY OF DEFENCE**  
 Room 6/73, Metropole Building, Northumberland Avenue, London,  
 WC2N 5BP



Telephone	(Direct dial)	020 7218 <b>Section 40</b>
	(Switchboard)	020 7218 9000
	(Fax)	020 7218 <b>Section 40</b>
	(GTN)	MB <b>Section 40</b>
CHOs	DAS-LA-Ops+Pol1	
E-Mail	das-laopspol1@defence.mod.uk	

**Section 40** RAF  
 Royal College of Defence Studies  
 Seaford House  
 37 Belgrave Square  
 London  
 SW1X 8QS

Your Reference  
 Our Reference  
 D/DAS/64/3/5  
 Date  
 27 March 2003

Dear **Section 40**,

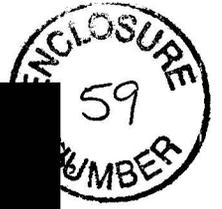
Thank you for your letter concerning **Section 40**'s questions about a UFO report in 1990.

Your response was forwarded to **Section 40** and he has now replied asking us if we would forward a further letter to thank you for troubling to reply to him. This is enclosed. The letter was already sealed when received, so I trust it is just a thank you and not more questions.

Yours sincerely,

**Section 40**

Section 40



Section 40

Directorate of Air Staff  
Operations & Policy1,  
Room 673,  
Metropole Building,  
Northumberland Avenue  
LONDON.

Your Reference: D/DAS 64/3/5  
24/03/03.

Dear Section 40

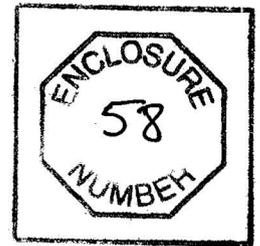
Thank you very much for forwarding my correspondence to the Tornado  
aircrew member who reported the incident of November 5th, 1990. It may be  
of interest to you that the pilot who reported the incident was a singleton  
inbound to Laarbruch from the UK. The other aircraft were a two-ship  
formation outbound from Laarbruch to the UK.

I would appreciate your passing on a further letter to the pilot - who  
understandably preferred not to identify himself - thanking him for troubling  
to reply to me.

Please find enclosed a stamped envelope ready to be addressed which  
contains aforementioned correspondence.

Yours faithfully,

Section 40



[Redacted] Section 40 [Redacted] RAF

*Royal College of Defence Studies  
Seaford House  
37 Belgrave Square  
London SW1X 8QS*

Section 40 [Redacted]

DAS  
102No. ....  
14 MAR 2003  
FILE \_\_\_\_\_

Dear [Redacted]

UFO SIGHTING 5 NOV 1990

Reference: D/DAS/64/3/5 dated 5 Mar 03.

Thank you for your note at Reference regarding [Redacted]'s letter. Please find enclosed a response to his questions. As you can probably appreciate, I would not like my name connected with this event and would be grateful if you could forward the answers to [Redacted].

If you consider that my answers may cause more contention than is worthwhile then I am happy for you not to forward my response. Please only do so if you consider the information to be in the MOD's interest.

I am very happy to discuss the issue with you.

Yours,

[Redacted] Section 40 [Redacted]

Original forwarded to  
18 March 2003

Section 40

Section 40

12 Mar 03

**UFO SIGHTING – 5 NOVEMBER 1990**

Dear **Section 40**,

The MOD has recently forwarded to me a copy of your letter concerning the UFO sighting over the North Sea in November 1990. I have decided to answer your questions but I hope you appreciate that I wish to remain anonymous with regard to the event. I will simply respond to your questions in the order given:

- Q1. I did not lock the UFO on radar. My navigator and I were so surprised that we did not think to do so. Indeed, for the majority of the sighting, the UFO was out to one side of my aircraft which would have required me to maneuver the aircraft to place within the radar field of view. Of more interest, despite repeated radio calls to Dutch Military Radar, the controller insisted that he could not see the UFO. After landing, our Dutch Exchange Officer, on my squadron, called Dutch Military to discuss the event. The controller insisted that no other radar contact was made at the time in the vicinity.
- Q2. No we were talking to Dutch Military at the time and did not go back and call any UK controller.
- Q3. As covered in Q2. 
- Q4. The UFO did not look like any aircraft that I know to be in service with any air force either today or at the time of the sighting.
- Q5. There was some interest from a senior British military officer who was serving in Belgium at the time (I cannot remember his role).
- Q6. No.
- Q7. I would describe the UFO as being C-130 aircraft in size (certainly in length but much shorter wingspan).
- Q8. We did not file an airprox, as we never considered the event to be a flight safety consideration.
- Q9. The UFO was close to the same altitude, perhaps a little higher, and I could see detail in the area of the engine exhaust which contained a light blue afterburner type flame which was steady but changing in intensity.
- Q10. Details of my rank are not relevant to the sighting. As far as the formation was concerned, you appear to have part of the story. I was in a singleton aircraft returning from a night low level mission in the UK to RAF Laarbruch. Another and quite separate pair of aircraft were outbound from Laarbruch heading for the UK when they also saw

the UFO at about the same time. These aircraft would have been close to being head-on to the UFO while from our Tornado, the UFO came down our right-hand side at great speed (i.e. coming from the direction of the UK). We were doing 0.8 Mach and it readily overtook us.

Q11. See comment above on rank.

This was definitely not a Russian satellite - I am 100% certain of that. This was a large "aircraft" and I could see detail of the lights and the engine area. I have never since seen anything like it.

I hope this is useful,

Yours,

Laarbruch Tornado pilot from 1990



From: **Section 40**  
Directorate of Air Staff (Lower Airspace)  
Operations & Policy 1  
**MINISTRY OF DEFENCE**  
Room 6/73, Metropole Building, Northumberland Avenue, London,  
WC2N 5BP



Telephone (Direct dial) 020 7218 2140  
(Switchboard) 020 7218 9000  
(Fax) 020 7218 **Section 40**  
(GTN)

**Section 40**

Your Reference

Our Reference  
D/DAS/64/3/5  
Date  
5 March 2003

Dear **Section 40**

Thank you for your letter of 17 February.

The letter you enclosed has been forwarded to the person named in the 'UFO' sighting report of 5 November 1990 as requested.

With regard to the article which appeared in the Sun newspaper in May 2002, as I said in my letter of 20 June 2002, aircrew are not taught how to spot UFOs. If the Tornado crew did 'film' the object, there is no evidence of this in our records.

Yours sincerely,

**Section 40**



From: **Section 40**  
Directorate of Air Staff (Lower Airspace)  
Operations & Policy 1  
**MINISTRY OF DEFENCE**  
Room 6/73, Metropole Building, Northumberland Avenue, London,  
WC2N 5BP



Telephone	(Direct dial)	020 7218 <b>Section 40</b>
	(Switchboard)	020 7218 9000
	(Fax)	020 7218 <b>Section 40</b>
	(GTN)	MB <b>Section 40</b>
CHOs	DAS-LA-Ops+Pol1	
E-Mail	das-laopspol1@defence.mod.uk	

**Section 40** RAF  
Royal College of Defence Studies  
Seaford House  
37 Belgrave Square  
London  
SW1X 8QS

Your Reference  
Our Reference  
D/DAS/64/3/5  
Date  
5 March 2003

Dear **Section 40**,

This Department is the focal point within the MOD for correspondence with the public on 'unidentified flying objects'. One of our regular correspondents, **Section 40**, has a particular interest in a sighting report you made to RAF West Drayton on 5 November 1990, which was passed to this Department for action. The only material this office holds on this incident is the report and a copy has been supplied to **Section 40** under the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information. In doing so, your name, rank and squadron at the time were removed to protect your identity in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998. In order to pursue his enquiries **Section 40** has now requested that a letter be forwarded to the aircrew mentioned in the report. This is enclosed and I will leave it to you as to whether you wish to reply, but in deciding, you may wish to take the following into consideration.

It is the MOD's policy to examine any reports of 'UFOs' received solely to establish whether what was seen might have some defence significance; namely, whether there is any evidence that the UK's airspace might have been compromised by hostile or unauthorised air activity. Unless there is evidence of a potential threat to the UK from an external military source, we do not attempt to identify the precise nature of each reported sighting. In this case, the report would have been examined by air defence experts at the time and there is no evidence on our files that it was considered to represent anything of defence concern.

There is a large public interest in the subject of UFOs and **Section 40** has a keen interest in this particular event. He has had several articles on his research published in *UFO Magazine*, which has a wide international distribution and an internet website. These articles have included copies of correspondence with this Department.

I hope this is helpful. Should you choose to reply to **Section 40** but would prefer to remain anonymous, we would be happy to forward a statement through this office. I would appreciate a copy of any reply you do send and if you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

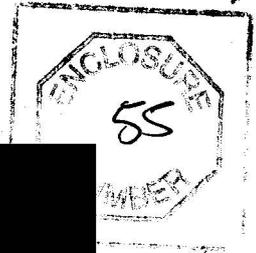
**Section 40**



SECRETARIAT (AIR STAFF) 2a  
Room 845

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE  
MAIN BUILDING,  
WHITEMALL,  
LONDON  
SW1A 2HB

DAS  
102No. ....  
17 2003  
FILE \_\_\_\_\_



Section 40

DAS  
102No. ....  
18 FEB 2003  
FILE \_\_\_\_\_

Section 40

Directorate of Air Staff  
Operations & Policy 1,  
Room 673,  
Metropole Building,  
Northumberland Avenue  
LONDON.

Your Reference: D/DAS 64/3/5  
17/02/03.

Dear Section 40

Thank you very much for your letter dated 29 October, 2002, and for your offer to forward correspondence from me to the Tornado aircrew member who reported the incident of November 5th, 1990.

I apologise for the delay in writing back (Christmas, family, work etc.) and hope that the offer still stands!

You may recall that I asked on June 5th, 2002 for your comments regarding an article which appeared in the Sun newspaper of Thursday, May 16, 2002. This claimed that the object seen in November, 1990 was in fact 'filmed' by the Tornado aircrew. It may be of interest to know that the story was given to the press by a former Section 40 editor, who has also 'leaked' ufo stories to the tabloids in the past!

Please find enclosed a stamped envelope ready to be addressed which contains aforementioned correspondence.

With best wishes for 2003,  
Yours faithfully,

Section 40

P.S. Don't know if you are aware of the FSR story which I have enclosed for your perusal...

54

one thing seems clear — namely that all of us — Soviets and Westerners and others alike — are today cowering beneath a nasty "Sword of Damocles" which may mark the beginning of the end of the reign of this conceited and myopic creature *Homo Sap.*

#### POSTSCRIPT BY EDITOR, FSR

I wrote this article in the summer of 1990. Since then, I have not seen a single report about any more such deaths in any British newspaper! I therefore recently asked Mr Tony Collins what he thought about this, and it seems that he too knows of no new cases. But, since the only official "explanation" for such cases so far has been "STRESS", the situation now becomes astounding. For there has been a continued severe deterioration in the British economic situation

over the past year, and consequently "STRESS" must now be far more prevalent here than ever! Mr Collins admitted that he had not thought of this, and found my suggestion startling.

If, then, "STRESS" has truly been the cause, we would then have to accept that, since the end of 1988, the British authorities have been censoring the situation so closely that not one single further report of the suicide of a British scientist has got into our newspapers!

But, is it conceivable that such a drastic censorship can be in force and can be sustained? Personally I doubt it very much. Therefore it looks as though the situation is even more mysterious than ever, and one is still left to wonder whether an alien influence is responsible? — G.C.

## SPECIAL REPORT TO FSR (MAY 1991)

B.A. PILOTS REPORT UFOs OVER CONTINENT AND NORTH SEA. R.A.F. "TORNADO" TAKES EVASIVE ACTION AS UFOs "FORMATE" ON PLANES OVER THE NORTH SEA

By Paul Whitehead, FSR Director and Consultant

It was dark, early evening (6.15 pm local time), on November 5th 1990, and a British Airways passenger aircraft was en route to London, flying over the Alps at 31,000 ft. The crew heard a nearby Lufthansa jet report and query "traffic ahead". The BA captain peered intently ahead into the night sky. What he saw was hardly what he expected!

(At the time, the European press reported the incident, and the "official line" was given: the UFOs were in fact "space debris from an old satellite re-entering the atmosphere".)

Well, *maybe!* But more details have now emerged. An airline pilot, well known to me and based in the UK, has spoken personally to the BA captain who logged the report, at the request of SIGAP (Surrey Investigation Group on Aerial Phenomena). SIGAP has agreed to the captain's request not to make public his name, in order to protect him from publicity, and FSR respects that request. The airline pilot who spoke to the BA captain also wishes to remain anonymous.

What did the BA captain see? Here is his comment...

"I looked ahead and saw, somewhat to my surprise, ahead and to the right and higher than we were, a set of bright lights. One of the lights, the leading one, was brighter than the others, and appeared bigger, *almost dislike*. It was followed closely by another three that seemed to be in a V formation. As I watched, I heard another aircraft crew also reporting seeing lights!

"I watched the objects intently as they moved across my field of view, right to left, ahead and high. It was then, on hearing the report from the other aircraft, that I realised I was watching something much further away than I first thought. The other report came from France."

Was it a satellite re-entry? The pilot stated: "It certainly didn't look like that to me. I have seen a re-entry before and this was different."

But it was the BA captain's further comments that are causing amazement and intense interest. SIGAP

has released the information to UFO researcher and writer Tim Good, and we hope to have more comprehensive details this year.

That same night a colleague of the captain, in another BA aircraft, reported two "very bright mystifying lights" while flying over the North Sea. Two days later, an RAF Tornado pilot told the captain that on the same evening (5th November) his Tornado — while flying with another squadron aircraft, had been "approached by bright lights". The lights, he reported, "formatted on the Tornados". (The expression "formate" is apparently used to indicate a deliberate intent.)

The accompanying Tornado pilot was so convinced that they were on collision course with the lights (*apparently nine of them were seen*) that he "broke away" and took "violent evasive action". This same pilot later added that he thought he was heading directly for a *C.5 Galaxy*, a giant US transport plane. The formation of UFOs carried "straight on course and shot off ahead at speed — they were nearly supersonic. Some *C.5*", he said, indicating that they were going faster than the speed a *C.5* can achieve. *Some C5!*

The pilot known to Paul Whitehead commented. "This is all a good true story, and could do with an explanation. All the pilots are adamant that what they had seen was definitely not satellite debris — and they should know."

It is to be noted that the North Sea lies to the east of Britain and just north of Belgium, and the Belgian Air Force have recently pursued and filmed UFOs over land close to the North Sea, and possibly over the North Sea itself. (See Reports on "Huge Triangular Craft Over Belgium" in FSR 35/2 and 35/4. The attention of readers is also specially drawn to Omar Fowler's report of an extremely similar case, "UFO SEEN FROM 'TRIDENT' NEAR LISBON" in July 1976, which was published in FSR 22/4 (1976).



Section 40

e-mail: Section 40

17/02/03.

Dear Sir,

It is with the greatest respect that I write to you, and hope you can spare some of your time to respond to my letter. I am a Section 40, and have been interested in military aircraft since childhood, when as a family we used to attend the 'At Home' days at RAF St. Athan, South Wales. Nowadays, I find myself Section 40 Caernarfon, North Wales, where my eldest of Section 40 and a very Section 40. He hopes to have a career in the RAF as a fixed-wing pilot. We also travel as often as possible over to RAF Valley to watch the aircraft.

I have been researching an incident since 1996, which involved a Tornado three-ship on a transit flight from the UK to RAF Laarbruch, Germany. In June of 2001, the MoD (through the office of the Directorate of Air Staff Operations & Policy 1) released a copy of the pilots' report, which I believe was forwarded by yourself. I have enclosed a copy for your perusal. To try and put some further detail on what was seen, I would appreciate your comments to some questions I have.

My aim is not to 'expose' any person in fantastic stories, while my research is purely personal and unconnected to my professional work Section 40. I only wish to discover some more details so as to build up a more complete picture of what was seen, and to confirm or otherwise what is already published. To this end I agree to complete confidentiality, should you request it - while hoping you reply! Of course, I would understand perfectly if you choose to reply without identifying yourself. I will try to keep my questions brief and to the point.

- 1) Was the phenomena 'painted' by any ground or airborne radar units? (including your formation aircraft)
- 2) Why did you decide to report the sighting to the UK authorities when the aircraft was under the control of Dutch military aircraft controllers?
- 3) What response did you receive from Air Traffic controllers (both Dutch and UK) to your report?
- 4) Is the description of the observed phenomena identifiable as an aircraft type with which you are familiar by now?

- 5) Was any follow-up debriefing carried out upon landing or subsequently?
- 6) Did any of the Tornado aircraft film or photograph the phenomena?
- 7) As an approximation, how large would you categorize a 'large aircraft'?
- 8) Did any of the aircrew consider filing an airprox (near-miss) report, and if not, why?
- 9) How certain were you that the phenomena was at the same altitude, and a quarter-mile distant?
- 10) What rank did you hold at the time of the incident, and were you the formation leader?
- 11) What current rank do you hold, or, if retired, what rank did you hold at the time you left the service?

As background information, which you may find interesting, I enclose some cuttings. I would appreciate your comments regarding the story related by British Airways Captain **Section 40** as to his conversations with 'a Tornado pilot' who thought he was on a collision course with a C5 Galaxy aircraft, and the assertions that violent evasive manouvers were engaged. It has been claimed by some that what you actually saw that night was the re-entry of the Russian Gorizont 21 Communications satellite. This ties in with the reports of aerial phenomena reported by civilian airline pilots at 18.15hrs GMT, whereas your report was logged at 18.00hrs.

The Sun and News of The World newspapers published a story on the day the further declassified report was released to me (I had received a heavily censored copy of your report in May, 2000). This claimed that your flight 'filmed' the object, and that this film is used to train pilots at RAF Cranwell in how to identify Ufos! The source of this story was a guy called **Section 40**, a former editor of **Section 40**, who insists his sources are entirely reliable.

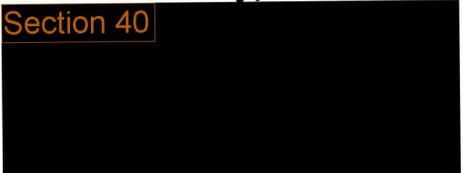
Finally, thirteen years down the line, what are your thoughts on the phenomena that you encountered back in 1990?

Should you require any further background material related to published articles on this incident, I would be only too happy to forward them to you.

I realise this subject is very contentious, but hope you can help!

With very best wishes and many thanks,  
Yours faithfully,

**Section 40**



# WANSARD EXTRACT

Official Report - Written Answers

- Column 424 - 24 JULY 1996

## Unidentified Craft

**Mr. Redmond:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what is his Department's assessment of the incident that occurred on 5 November 1990 when a patrol of RAF Tornado aircraft flying over the North sea were overtaken at high speed by an unidentified craft; and if he will make a statement;

[39245]

(2) if he will make a statement on the unidentified flying object sighting reported to his Department by the meteorological officer at RAF Shawbury in the early hours of 31 March 1993.

[39246]

**Mr. Soames:** Reports of sightings on these dates are recorded on file and were examined by staff responsible for air defence matters. No firm conclusions were drawn about the nature of the phenomena reported but the events were not judged to be of defence significance.

↑  
FEED  
DIRECTION

64/2

U N C L A S S I F I E D

CWD197 06/1542 310C2587

FOR CAB

ROUTINE 061340Z NOV 90

FROM RAF WEST DRAYTON  
TO MODUK AIR

U N C L A S S I F I E D  
SIC Z6F

SUBJECT: AERIAL PHENOMENA

- A. 5 NOV 1800Z
- B. ONE LARGE AEROPLANE (SHAPE). 5 TO 6 WHITE STEADY LIGHTS. 1 BLUE STEADY LIGHT. CONTRAILS FROM BLUE AREA
- C. IN THE AIR M.C.6 AREA. FL270 YPENBURG
- D. NAKED EYE
- E. HEADING 100 DEGREES. SAME ALT FL270
- F. INTO OUR 12 OCLOCK
- G. ONE QUARTER MILE AHEAD
- H. STEADY
- J. N/K
- K. N/K
- L. WORKING DUTCH MILL RADAR
- M. [REDACTED]

REDACTION ON ORIGINAL DOCUMENT

PAGE 2 RBD AID 0009 UNCLAS

N. NIL

O. 2 OTHERS FROM LAARBRUCH

P. OTHER INFO. AIRCRAFT WAS UNDER DUTCH MIL CONTROL UFO APPERRED IN OUR RH SIDE SAME LEVEL, WE WERE TRAVELLING AT MACH POINT 8. IT WENT INTO OUR 12 OCLOCK AND ACCLLERATED AWAY. ANOTHER 2 TORNADOS SEEN IT AND POSSIBLE IDENTED IT AS A STEALTH AIRCRAFT  
BT

DISTRIBUTION Z6F

F

CAB 1 SEC (AS) ACTION ( CXJ 1 AFDO )  
CYD [REDACTED]  
CAV 1 DI 55  
CAV 2 DGSTI

REDACTION ON ORIGINAL DOCUMENT

one thing seems clear — namely that all of us — Soviets and Westerners and others alike — are today cowering beneath a nasty “*Sword of Damocles*” which may mark the beginning of the end of the reign of this conceited and myopic creature *Homo Sap.*

#### POSTSCRIPT BY EDITOR, FSR

I wrote this article in the summer of 1990. Since then, I have not seen a single report about any more such deaths in any British newspaper! I therefore recently asked Mr Tony Collins what he thought about this, and it seems that he too knows of no new cases. But, since the only official “explanation” for such cases so far has been “STRESS”, the situation now becomes astounding. For there has been a continued severe deterioration in the British economic situation

over the past year, and consequently “STRESS” must now be far more prevalent here than ever! Mr Collins admitted that he had not thought of this, and found my suggestion startling.

If, then, “STRESS” has truly been the cause, we would then have to accept that, since the end of 1988, the British authorities have been censoring the situation so closely that not one single further report of the suicide of a British scientist has got into our newspapers!

But, is it conceivable that such a drastic censorship can be in force and can be sustained? Personally I doubt it very much. Therefore it looks as though the situation is even more mysterious than ever, and one is still left to wonder whether an alien influence is responsible? — G.C.

## SPECIAL REPORT TO FSR (MAY 1991)

B.A. PILOTS REPORT UFOs OVER CONTINENT AND NORTH SEA. R.A.F. “TORNADO” TAKES EVASIVE ACTION AS UFOs “FORMATE” ON PLANES OVER THE NORTH SEA

By Paul Whitehead, FSR Director and Consultant

IT was dark, early evening (6.15 pm local time), on November 5th 1990, and a British Airways passenger aircraft was en route to London, flying over the Alps at 31,000 ft. The crew heard a nearby Lufthansa jet report and query “traffic ahead”. The BA captain peered intently ahead into the night sky. What he saw was hardly what he expected!

(At the time, the European press reported the incident, and the “official line” was given: the UFOs were in fact “space debris from an old satellite re-entering the atmosphere”.)

Well, *maybe!* But more details have now emerged. An airline pilot, well known to me and based in the UK, has spoken personally to the BA captain who logged the report, at the request of SIGAP (Surrey Investigation Group on Aerial Phenomena). SIGAP has agreed to the captain’s request not to make public his name, in order to protect him from publicity, and FSR respects that request. The airline pilot who spoke to the BA captain also wishes to remain anonymous.

What did the BA captain see? Here is his comment . . .

“I looked ahead and saw, somewhat to my surprise, ahead and to the right and higher than we were, a set of bright lights. One of the lights, the leading one, was brighter than the others, and appeared bigger, *almost disklike*. It was followed closely by another three that seemed to be in a V formation. As I watched, I heard another aircraft crew also reporting seeing lights!

“I watched the objects intently as they moved across my field of view, right to left, ahead and high. It was then, on hearing the report from the other aircraft, that I realised I was watching something much further away than I first thought. The other report came from France.”

Was it a satellite re-entry? The pilot stated: “It certainly didn’t look like that to me. I have seen a re-entry before and this was different.”

But it was the BA captain’s further comments that are causing amazement and intense interest. SIGAP

has released the information to UFO researcher and writer Tim Good, and we hope to have more comprehensive details this year.

That same night a colleague of the captain, in another BA aircraft, reported two “very bright mystifying lights” while flying over the North Sea. Two days later, an RAF Tornado pilot told the captain that on the same evening (5th November) his Tornado — while flying with another squadron aircraft, had been “approached by bright lights”. The lights, he reported, “formated on the Tornados”. (The expression “formate” is apparently used to indicate a deliberate intent.)

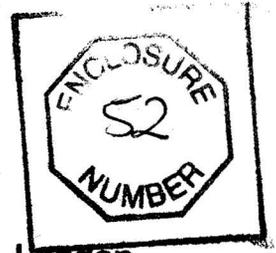
The accompanying Tornado pilot was so convinced that they were on collision course with the lights (*apparently nine of them were seen*) that he “broke away” and took “violent evasive action”. This same pilot later added that he thought he was heading directly for a *C.5 Galaxy*, a giant US transport plane. The formation of UFOs carried “straight on course and shot off ahead at speed — they were nearly supersonic. Some *C.5*”, he said, indicating that they were going faster than the speed a *C.5* can achieve. *Some C5!*

The pilot known to Paul Whitehead commented. “*This is all a good true story, and could do with an explanation. All the pilots are adamant that what they had seen was definitely not satellite debris — and they should know.*”

It is to be noted that the North Sea lies to the east of Britain and just north of Belgium, and the Belgian Air Force have recently pursued and filmed UFOs over land close to the North Sea, and possibly over the North Sea itself. (See Reports on “Huge Triangular Craft Over Belgium” in FSR 35/2 and 35/4. The attention of readers is also specially drawn to Omar Fowler’s report of an extremely similar case, “UFO SEEN FROM ‘TRIDENT’ NEAR LISBON” in July 1976, which was published in FSR 22/4 (1976).



From: **Section 40**  
Directorate of Air Staff (Lower Airspace)  
Operations & Policy 1  
**MINISTRY OF DEFENCE**  
Room 6/73, Metropole Building, Northumberland Avenue, London,  
WC2N 5BP



Telephone

(Direct dial)  
(Switchboard)  
(Fax)  
(GTN)

020 7218 2140  
020 7218 9000  
020 7218

**Section 40**

**Section 40**

Your Reference

Our Reference  
D/DAS/64/3/5  
Date  
29 October 2002

Dear **Section 40**,

Thank you for your letter of 17 October in which you asked further questions concerning the 'UFO' report of the 5<sup>th</sup> November 1990.

You asked for clarification of the time of the reported sighting. Zulu time is set at Greenwich Mean Time and is used throughout the World as a means of referring to a specific time regardless of differences in time zones. In the UK when clocks are put back one hour for British Summer Time, Zulu time remains constant, thus Zulu time becomes Local Time minus 1 hour. When the clocks go forward again in the Autumn, Zulu and Local Time are the same. With regard to the report of 5<sup>th</sup> November 1990, as it was winter, Zulu and Local Time in the UK would have been the same, 18.00. Dutch Local time would be one hour ahead of Zulu Time, thus 19.00.

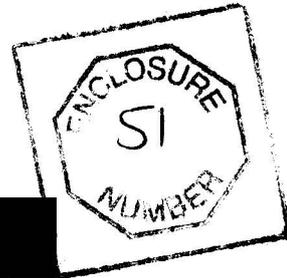
You also enquired about the possibility of the forwarding of a letter to any of the aircrew involved in this sighting. The report only identifies one person by name, but if you would like to send your letter to us, we will ensure it is forwarded to him.

I hope this is helpful.

Yours sincerely,

**Section 40**

DAS  
102No. ....  
21 OCT 2002  
FILE \_\_\_\_\_



Section 40

Section 40

Directorate of Air Staff  
Operations & Policy 1,  
Room 673,  
Metropole Building,  
Northumberland Avenue  
LONDON.

Your Reference: D/DAS 64/3/5  
17/10/02.

Dear Section 40,

Thank you very much for your letter dated 21 May, 2002, and for your efforts which resulted in the further copy of the Tornado pilots' report from November 5th, 1990.

I have one further question regarding this report, namely what time did the aircrew actually observe the phenomena? While accepting it as 18.00 hrs Zulu (local time, as documented in section A of the report) how does this translate to Greenwich Mean Time? As the aircraft were flying in Dutch airspace, was this 18.00hrs Dutch local time (i.e. 17.00hrs GMT) or West Drayton local time?

After having unsuccessfully tried to contact any of the aircrew involved in the incident, by way of paying for classified advertisements in various publications, I would greatly appreciate any advice you may be able to offer as to how I may be able to forward correspondence to them, even through a third party, which would preserve their anonymity.

Yours faithfully,

Section 40

Advice from PMA(csd)3

Section 40

is now

Section 40

RAF Manham.



DIRECTORATE OF AIR STAFF, (LOWER AIRSPACE)

OPERATIONS & POLICY 1,

Room 673,

METROPOLE BUILDING,

NORTHUMBERLAND AVENUE,

LONDON

WC2N 5BP

**GREAT FREE  
COMPETITION!**

**UFOs • SPACE • SCIENCE • ASTRONOMY • ENVIRONMENT • GLOBAL NEWS • EVENTS**

# **UFO MAGAZINE** <sup>TM</sup>

***THE TRUTH IS COMING...***

OCTOBER 2002

£2.50

**CROP CIRCLES 2002**



**INSIDE!**

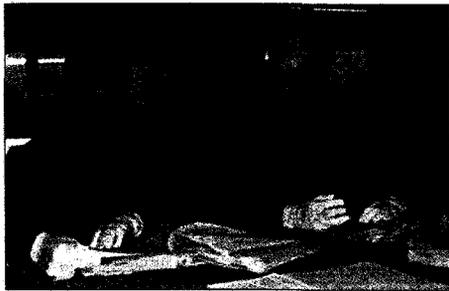
The Search For  
**EXTRA-TERRESTRIAL  
INTELLIGENCE**



...the most important mistake of S.E.T.I.

# THE 1990 TORNADO UFO SIGHTING

## Re-entry by satellite booster cited as likely explanation



DR. DAVID CLARKE & ANDY ROBERTS

We were interested to read Richard Foxhall's article on the sighting made by the crews of three RAF Tornado aircraft above the North Sea on 5 November 1990. Richard should be congratulated for perseverance and determination in his dealings with the Ministry of Defence that led to the release of the signal sent to Whitehall.

In his article Richard poses a number of questions concerning the possible identity of the UFO reported by the aircrew, and asks why the MoD apparently have no record of an investigation into this incident. Richard's speculation concerning secret Stealth aircraft are interesting and probably correct with reference to other incidents, but we believe they are in this case a red herring, and we will explain why.

Richard does not appear to be aware that many other UFO reports were filed on the same night, at the same time, by the crews of civilian airliners in different parts of Europe.

These shed new light on the report by the Tornado crews, and may explain why the MoD decided no further investigation was required.

Firstly, readers should be aware that the Tornado sighting was *not* first published in Nick Pope's *Open Skies, Closed Minds* (1996). It was in fact reported in *Flying Saucer Review* Vol 26, No 2 (May-June 1991), in an article by FSR consultant Paul Whitehead, just seven months after the event. He obtained an account of what was seen from one of the Tornado pilots who had spoken to a British Airways' captain. Reports also appeared in a number of British newspapers at the time, including the *Sunday Telegraph* and the *Daily Herald* (Glasgow).

Captain Mike D'Alton was at the controls of a Boeing 737 en route from Rome to London when, above the Alps at 06.03pm on 5

November 1990, he and the cabin crew saw "a set of bright lights.. ahead and to the right and higher than we were.."

D'Alton's timing was within three minutes of that reported by the Tornado pilot in his signal to the MoD, so we can safely assume that they saw the same UFO, which would therefore have been many tens of miles away.

D'Alton was quoted as saying: "What we saw was one large, fairly bright light. Ahead of it was a formation of three fainter lights in a triangle. Another faint light was behind the large light and was slightly slower.. we watched the lights for two minutes then it took a lightning-fast right-angle turn and zoomed out of sight."

Note how similar the captain's description is to that of the Tornado pilot, "...five to six white steady lights, one blue steady light... UFO appeared in our [right hand] side same level... it went into our 12 o'clock and accelerated away."

One of the Tornado aircrew told D'Alton: "...all the pilots are adamant that what they had seen was definitely not satellite debris" and the captain himself was quoted as saying: "This thing was not of this world. In all my 23 years of flying I've never seen a craft anything like that."

Before we discover what this 'UFO' may have been, readers should also be aware that this formation of lights was seen by the crews of at least three other civilian aircrew at that same moment.

These included the captain of a Lufthansa airlines flight and an Air France pilot who was flying at 33,000 feet above the Pyrenees. In none of these cases was the UFO tracked by radar, which adds weight to the conclusion that it was much further away than the witnesses believed.

At the same time in Belgium, dozens of people on the ground reported a "triangular object with three lights, flying slowly and soundlessly to the southwest."

The Air Forces of France, Belgium and Germany collected dozens of these reports and concluded the 'object seen was actually tens of miles high.' Recording equipment also detected two sonic booms which suggested something had entered the earth's atmosphere.

When all the observations are gathered together and times are corrected for neighbouring zones, it becomes clear that the same, relatively slow moving object was sighted right across Europe that night. The date and time of the sightings correlate with the re-entry of the Gorizont/Proton rocket body (satellite booster), which burned up in the atmosphere across northern France and Germany around 6 to 6.30pm [GMT] on the evening of 5 November 1990.

This explanation was confirmed afterwards by the French Service for the Investigation of Re-entry Phenomena (reported in the *Glasgow Herald*, 7 November 1990).

We can speculate that both the British MoD and Dutch authorities would have been informed about the satellite re-entry when they scrutinised the report made by the Tornado crews. If the date and time of the report tied in with the re-entry, as it did, established procedure would require no further investigation.

This is the answer to Richard Foxhall's question. The conclusion that the UFO reported was part of a satellite burning up in the earth's atmosphere may not be accepted by everyone. We agree that it does fit all aspects of the description provided by the aircrews, but we don't have a clear statement from them nor do we know if they are aware of the facts concerning the re-entry which occurred that night.

We would point out that aircrews are human beings, and no matter how highly trained they may be for combat, this would not be the first time that pilots have seen and reported a spectacular and unexpected re-entry of space junk as a UFO.

This does not imply that all UFO reports by pilots can be so easily explained away, and indeed we will be presenting one case we feel remains inexplicable in a future issue of *UFO Magazine*. But we believe that in this instance, taking all the evidence into account, the facts point more directly towards a man-made rocket body re-entering earth's atmosphere rather than a Stealth aircraft, or indeed an 'unknown'.

# UFO MAGAZINE™

**THE TRUTH IS COMING...**

SEPTEMBER 2002

£2.50



## “The End Of The World As We Know It”

Earth's magnetic  
field is shifting



### INSIDE

*Russian Cosmonauts  
Admit UFOs Are Real*

42 UFO CASE  
INCIDENTS

110 POLICE  
OFFICERS  
TESTIMONY TO FACT

## Crop Circles & THE MoD



09

9 770966 110051

# THE 1990 TORNADO UFO SIGHTING

## UPDATE

In our last issue, Richard Foxhall reported the results of his in-depth investigation into an incident involving a flight of three Tornado GR1 aircraft which departed from the UK to RAF Laarbruch in Germany, through controlled airspace, encountered a large 'aeroplane'-shaped craft to the right hand side of their formation.

The incident, on 5 November 1990, was including by Nick Pope in his best-selling book *Open Skies, Closed Minds* [Simon & Schuster, London, 1996]. As Richard explained in his previous article, a newly-awarded contract to publish the first ever Welsh language book on UFOs persuaded him to look further into this incident.

With the aid of newly-released hitherto classified documents, and correspondence between MoD officials, Richard was able to provide a detailed picture of not only the incident itself, but of the procedures and mechanisms involved when such incidents are notified to the relevant authorities concerned, and what action, if any, they might take.

In the context of the 5 November 1990 incident, and pertaining to documents and letters published last issue, Richard has since received further correspondence from Linda Unwin, Directorate of Air Staff (Lower Airspace), Operations & Policy 1, Ministry of Defence; Nick Pope, [left] former head of Secretariat (Air Staff) 2a (The MoD's 'UFO Desk' on which Nick served between 1991-1994); and Wing Commander Andrew Brookes of The International Institute for Strategic Studies.



### Ms. Linda Unwin

Question 1. No, it would not be useful for aircraft to be directed within a quarter of a mile of other aircraft. Air Traffic Control Agencies endeavour to maintain standard separation between aircraft. If a pilot believes his/her aircraft may have been endangered by the proximity of another aircraft (or, in regulated airspace,

where an incident has been reported, a miss report.

Question 2. Yes, if a similar incident occurred today in controlled airspace it is likely that the pilot would report it to the air traffic controller.

Question 3. If this Department received a report such as this today, we would examine the report in conjunction with the appropriate Departmental air defence experts. Once it was established that the report contained nothing of defence concern, no further investigation would be made.

Question 4. We are unable to disclose details of the Squadron involved, but I can confirm that it is still operational today.

Question 5. RAF aircrew are not taught how to spot UFOs. Throughout their careers aircrew are taught aircraft recognition skills and this may be what has been misreported in the newspaper article. [see *Mirrors of Whitehall*, UFO Magazine, June 2002] You may also wish to note that the sighting report which we sent to you makes no mention of a "cigar-shaped object" or the fact it was seen for "six minutes".

Question 6. We are not aware of any video footage of these events.

### Nick Pope

Given that serial L on these signals details the response to the question "To whom reported", it does indeed seem clear that the incident was reported to Dutch Military Radar. This ties in with the information under serial P - clearly the initial report was made to the authorities controlling the aircraft at the time of the incident. It is not clear whether this involved speaking to someone by radio when the incident occurred, or making a signalled/written report after the flight.



Question 7. The prefixes to the distribution list are almost certainly three letter designators (See my answer to your second question) that are unique to the particular recipients.

Question 8. The word "Action" indicates that Sec(AS) is the distribution addressee (Action addressees are those on the distribution list) while "Miscellaneous" (z) main heading.

Question 9. I believe that each signals' machine has a three letter designator, and that CAB was the one in the Sec(AS) registry. Referring back to your previous question, CWD would relate to West Drayton's machine, while 197 might mean that the signal concerned was the 197th sent on that particular day. I was not entirely sure on these points.

Question 10. As mentioned above, this is the DTG, and shows when the signal was drafted (i.e. 1340Z on 6 November 1990). Routine is the lowest of four degrees of urgency, the others being Priority, Immediate and Flash.

Question 11. SIC stands for "Subject Indicator Code", a three-layered system that codifies every subject on which military/MOD signals are likely to be sent. Z6F relates to UFOs, and comes under the "Miscellaneous" (z) main heading.

Question 12. This is where the witness was at the time of the sighting. I believe this means the Tornados were at a height of 27,000 feet over Ypenburg, the former military airport in The Hague. M.C. probably stands for Military Control, though I am unsure of this.

*- I think this is restricted*

*? No*

7. The prefixes to the distribution list are almost certainly three letter designators (See my answer to your second question) that are unique to the particular recipients.

8. The word "Action" indicates that Sec(AS) is the distribution addressee (Action addressees are those on the distribution list) while "Miscellaneous" (z) main heading.

9. I believe that each signals' machine has a three letter designator, and that CAB was the one in the Sec(AS) registry. Referring back to your previous question, CWD would relate to West Drayton's machine, while 197 might mean that the signal concerned was the 197th sent on that particular day. I was not entirely sure on these points.

10. As mentioned above, this is the DTG, and shows when the signal was drafted (i.e. 1340Z on 6 November 1990). Routine is the lowest of four degrees of urgency, the others being Priority, Immediate and Flash.

11. SIC stands for "Subject Indicator Code", a three-layered system that codifies every subject on which military/MOD signals are likely to be sent. Z6F relates to UFOs, and comes under the "Miscellaneous" (z) main heading.

12. This is where the witness was at the time of the sighting. I believe this means the Tornados were at a height of 27,000 feet over Ypenburg, the former military airport in The Hague. M.C. probably stands for Military Control, though I am unsure of this.

I understand your concern but I can assure you that there was probably no flying object involved. I have many thousands of flying hours to my name and at night, over the sea, your eyes play all sorts of tricks.

Lights can merge and distance has such little meaning that a light 20 miles away looks next to one at half that distance. To illustrate the point, no aircraft carries a blue light. Ships may and oil rig exhausts certainly burn that way.

In sum, I have seen many strange phenomena in my time in the air. In my day, we did not report such sightings - now aircrew are encouraged so to do. That said, I believe this was no more than an optical illusion. I have worked alongside the US Air Force for many years and there is no way that they would run an unannounced stealth mission through some of the most crowded airspace in the world.'

## EDITORIAL COMMENT

Richard Foxhall's investigation into this incident has been thorough and he has received detailed answers for the majority of questions posed and, thanks to the cooperation and assistance of Mr. Unwin, West Pope, Lt. Col. Bob Van Bommel (Royal Netherlands Air Force), the RAF's own Department 197 and a host of other experts, the paper provides in respect of official procedures.

Wing Commander Andrew Brookes suggests that the UFO seen by the six-man aircrew on board the three Tornado aircraft was 'no more than an optical illusion' because 'at night, over the sea, your eyes play all sorts of tricks'.

He insinuates (for why else would he allude to them) that the Tornado's aircrew may have been confused by navigational lights cast from distant surface ships or flames being omitted from oil rigs.

The pilots make clear in their report that the unidentified object was, for the duration of the sighting, at the same flight level as the Tornado formation - 27,000 feet [FL270].

The object then crossed their flight path (heading 100 degrees) into their twelve o'clock (straight ahead) at a distance of no more than one quarter of a mile.

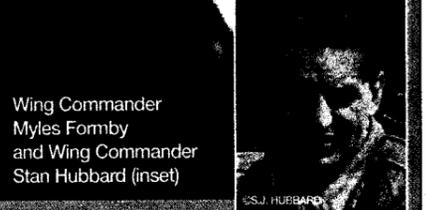
The Tornado's airspeed was Mach 0.8 (550-600mph, depending on barometric pressure and temperature) when the UFO was seen to accelerate away. The UFO was not reported as displaying standard strobe and anti-collision lights, but five to six steady white lights and an illuminated blue area which emanated contrails.

Wing Commander Stan Hubbard (above) will doubtless have some empathy with the six highly experienced Tornado aircrew (pilots and navigators) whose observational skills and credibility would, under any other normal circumstance, be considered unimpeachable. Stan Hubbard was twice accused of being the 'victim of an optical illusion' by the Flying Saucer Working Party when reporting on his two UFO sightings over the Royal Aircraft Establishment, Farnborough, on 1 June and 5 September 1950, respectively.

It was Wing Commander Myles Formby, of course, who led the Flying Saucer Working Party 50 years ago and injected the term 'optical illusion' to explain P/L Hubbard's sightings. How ironic then, to see the same terminology 50 years on, albeit by a Wing Commander who is now retired, but seemingly very active in his new role.

Wing Commander Brookes states that he has worked alongside the US Air Force for many years and there is no way that they would run an unannounced stealth mission through some of the most crowded airspace in the world.

For someone who has undoubtedly expertise in unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), here was a surprising comment.



Wing Commander Myles Formby and Wing Commander Stan Hubbard (inset)

Evolution of the versatile target drone, the Firebee, into an operational RPV (Remotely Piloted Vehicle) is reckoned to date from the time of the Cuban missile crisis in 1962.

An American Lockheed U-2 spy-plane and its pilot were shot down during a vital reconnaissance flight over Cuba. Its mission over the mushrooming missile sites could have been performed equally efficiently by a remotely-controlled, unmanned aircraft. So, with only two more U-2s immediately available to keep an eye on such trouble-spots, the US government initiated an urgent programme to develop unmanned vehicles capable of supplementing them.

Within 90 days Teledyne Ryan, which began flight testing its original Firebee 1 target in 1951, had produced its first Model 147 RPV (based on the Firebee 1).

Under a top secret programme code-named *Big Safari*, production Model 147As were tested first against America's own sophisticated air defences. They were able to make repeated penetrations without detection, and became the first members of a family of front-line RPVs.

To test the effectiveness of new aircraft against enemy radar - be it manned or unmanned - what better way than to see how it fares against 'friendly' ground and airborne radar systems?

That certainly was the case back in 1962 and in all likelihood is a practice that has been repeated ever since - not least with aircraft employing stealth characteristics.

*Big Safari*, Jane's Pocket Book 15 - RPVs, Royal Aeronautical Society (Macdonald and Jane's Publishers Limited, 1977), edited by John W. Taylor, page 26.

UFOs • SPACE • SCIENCE • ASTRONOMY • ENVIRONMENT • GLOBAL NEWS • EVENTS

# UFO MAGAZINE™

*THE TRUTH IS COMING...*

AUGUST 2002

£2.50



Earth in  
Asteroid

'Near Miss'

**HAVE YOU  
HEARD THE NEWS?**

**Seeking  
UFOs?  
Visit Scotland!**

**INSIDE**

**PRINCE PHILIP,  
THE ROYAL EQUERRY  
& FLYING SAUCERS**



WORLD EXCLUSIVE!

# The 1990 Tornado UFO Sighting



By Richard Foxhall

There are many reasons why people decide to investigate UFO sightings. In my case, I was a fairly contented armchair enthusiast until my own sighting on 7 May, 1996.

Leading on from my enquiries into this incident (which led me into writing the first book in the Welsh language on the UFO subject) I decided to try and obtain further information on an incident reported by Nick Pope in his book *Open Skies, Closed Minds*. This briefly mentioned that a patrol of RAF Tornado aircraft flying at high speed over the North Sea were overtaken by an unidentified aircraft. In the context of his book, this was alluded to as a possible 'Aurora' aircraft sighting.

Interest in this revelation appeared to wane following the death of Martin Redmond MP, and I wrote my first letter to Secretariat (Air Staff)2a, the MoDs 'UFO Desk' on 7 April, 1998, requesting a copy of the pilots' report of the incident.

The reply I received from Miss K. Philpot dated 12 May 1998 states:

"On 24 July 1996 the Minister of State for the Armed Forces, the Hon Nicholas Soames MP, answered a Parliamentary Question from the late Martin Redmond MP about this alleged incident. I enclose a copy of the Official report for your information."

On opening the accompanying 'Official report' I was disappointed to find not an official report, but a photocopy of a Hansard extract!

Written Answers, Column 424, 24 July 1996

## Unidentified Craft

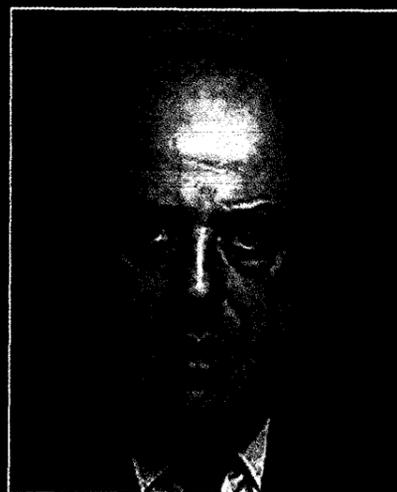
Mr. Redmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what is his Department's assessment of the incident that occurred on 5 November 1990 when a patrol of RAF Tornado aircraft flying over the North sea were overtaken at high speed by an unidentified craft; and if he will make a statement; [39245]

(2) if he will make a statement on the unidentified flying object sighting reported to his Department by the meteorological office at RAF Shawbury in the early hours of 31 March 1993. [39246]

Mr. Soames: Reports of sightings on these dates are recorded on file and were examined by staff responsible for air defence matters. No firm conclusions were drawn about the nature of the phenomena reported but the events were not judged to be of defence significance.

Having corresponded with the Ministry over a period of nearly two years regarding my own sighting, I decided there was little point in pursuing this further and, somewhat reluctantly, let the matter rest.

With initial interest shown by publishers in my idea of a Welsh language book having seemingly evaporated, it came as something of a surprise when a contract arrived in late April 2000. As a consequence, I immediately decided to continue researching the 'Tornado incident' with a view to publishing my findings.



Nicholas Soames

On 8 May, 2000, I wrote again to Sec(AS)2a, this time requesting a copy of the signal sent to the Ministry by the aircrew. In due course (15 June) the reply arrived. It was worth the wait, for enclosed with the reply was a copy of the actual report sent in by the aircrew, albeit with a note to the effect that "...some details have been deleted to protect the confidentiality of the witness concerned. As Mr. Soames said, the event was not judged to be of defence significance." [Doc 1]

From reading the report it became apparent that the UFO was seen by six qualified aircrew (each Tornado is manned by two personnel). Having digested its contents, I wrote again on 11 July 2000, to ask:

- a) for a copy of the reporting form questions
- b) Whether the unidentified craft was detected by the aircrafts' on board, or ground-based radar
- c) Whether any of the aircraft involved succeeded in capturing the unidentified aircraft photographically or electronically
- d) Under what criteria would an intrusion of UK airspace by unidentified aircraft be deemed of defence interest
- e) Was an investigation carried out to determine the nature of the unauthorised incursion of UK airspace and, if so, would it be possible to obtain a copy of the report detailing the investigation undertaken, including recommendations and conclusions

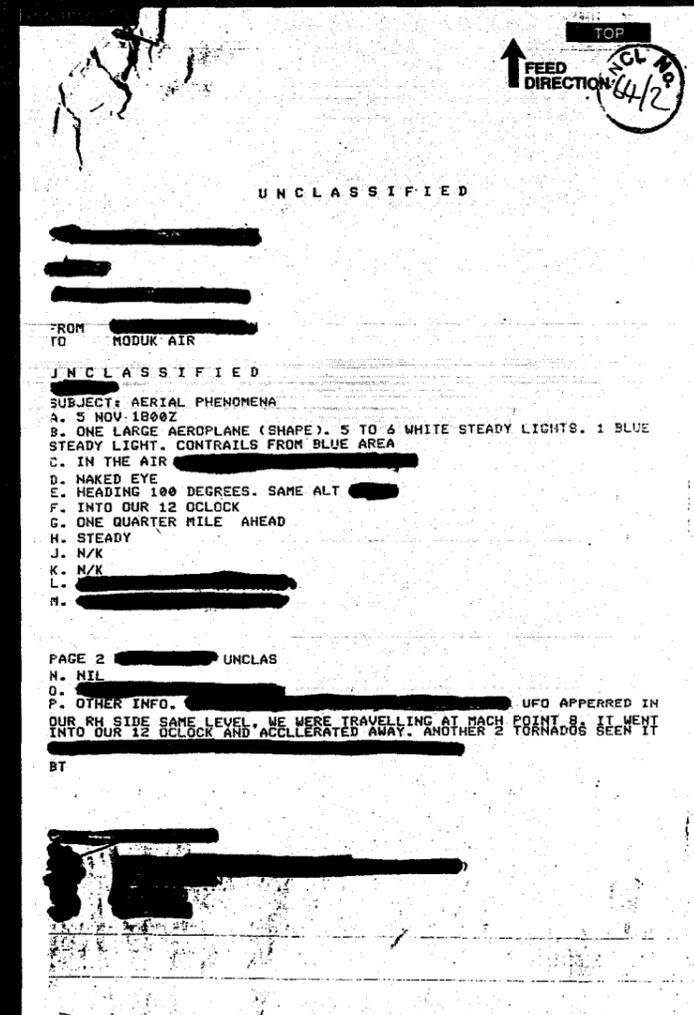


The reply, dated 4 August, 2000, was interesting. Firstly, it seemed that the response was passed on to a higher authority, i.e. Mrs. Linda Unwin, of Sec (AS)2a1. Secondly, there is, apparently, no standard form used for handling reports through official channels. Thirdly, questions b, c and e could not be answered, although it was heartening to receive acknowledgement of how the UK Air Defence Region is monitored. Fourthly, I found it strange that "The report is the only information we have on file regarding the sighting..."

If this were the case, how could a Government minister state with any confidence that the incident was "...not judged to be of defence significance."? [Doc 2]

I raised these concerns to Sec(AS)2a1 on 5 September, 2000, and enquired:

- 1) How a report from operational air force personnel ends up with the Department, such as in the Tornado aircraft incident of 5 November 1990
  - a) Would aircrew contact a Military Air Traffic Controller while still airborne?
  - b) Who would normally take any statements from the aircrew upon landing?
  - c) Would that report automatically go to an internal distribution list, or directly and exclusively to Sec(AS)2a?
  - d) Would the Station Commander be informed routinely? >





From: Mrs L C Unwin SEC(AS)2A1  
 MINISTRY OF DEFENCE  
 Room 8245, Main Building, Whitehall, London, SW1A 2HB

Telephone (Direct dial) 020 7218 2140  
 (Switchboard) 020 7218 9000  
 (Fax) 020 7218 2880  
 (G711)

Your Reference  
 Our Reference  
 D/Sec(AS)64/3/5  
 Date  
 4 August 2000

Dear Mr Foxall

Thank you for your letter of 11 July addressed to my colleague, Mr Fowie, requesting further information concerning the 'UFO' sighting report, a copy of which was sent with our letter of 15 June. I will answer your questions in the same order as your letter.

Q1. a) 'UFO' sightings are reported to us in a variety of ways. Some of these reports follow a standard list of questions and some do not. However, having examined the copy of the report sent to you, I believe it follows the following format:

- A. Date and time of sighting
- B. Description of object
- C. Exact position of observer
- D. How object was observed
- E. Direction in which object was first seen
- F. Angle of Sight
- G. Distance
- H. Movement of Object
- I. Meteorological conditions during observation
- J. Nearby objects or buildings
- L. To whom reported
- M. Informant's details
- N. Any background of informant that may be revealed
- O. Other witnesses

Q1. b), c) and e). The report is the only information we have on file regarding the sighting and I am unable to speculate on what may or may not have taken place at the time.

Q1. d) The integrity of the UK's airspace in peacetime is maintained through continuous surveillance of the UK Air Defence Region by the Royal Air Force. This is achieved by using a combination of civil and military radar installations, which provide a continuous real-time "picture" of the UK Airspace. Any threat to the UK Air Defence Region would be handled in the light of the particular circumstances at the time (it might be deemed appropriate, involve the scrambling or diversion of air defence aircraft). From that perspective, reports provided to us of 'UFO' sightings are examined, but consultation with air defence staff and others as necessary is considered only where there is sufficient evidence to suggest a breach of UK air space. The vast majority of reports we receive are very sketchy and vague. Only a handful of reports in recent years have warranted further investigation and none revealed any evidence of a threat.

Q2. MOD files are generally released to the Public Record Office when they reach the 30 year point. A wide range of files for 1974 would, therefore, be considered for release in early 2005. As Mr Fowie said, information about the incident may exist on archived files from other Branches. However, without knowing what information there might be and thereby, tracing it to a particular Branch, there is simply no way of identifying the files. It is also the case that although 'UFO' files are routinely preserved and made available at the 30 year point, other Departmental files may be destroyed when it is judged that their contents are of no specific interest or importance in terms of preservation. To carry out a search of MOD archived files to try and identify in the first instance those that might contain relevant information and subsequently check them to see if a particular incident was recorded would involve scrutiny of a considerable volume of paper records. For this reason, your request was refused under Exemption 9 of the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information (voluminous or vexatious request).

Q3. As you know, the MOD's only interest in 'UFO' sightings is whether they reveal any evidence that the United Kingdom's airspace might have been compromised by hostile or unauthorised foreign military activity. Unless there is evidence of a potential threat to the United Kingdom from an external military source, we do not attempt to identify the precise nature of each sighting reported to us. MOD does not therefore have a library of photographs of 'unusual aerial phenomena'. Any photographs sent to the Department by members of the public are either returned to them or placed on file with the associated correspondence.

Q4. I enclose a copy of your sighting report of 7 May 1996.

If you are unhappy with the decision to refuse your request for access to MOD files and wish to appeal, you should write in the first instance to the Ministry of Defence, DOME, Room 619, Northumberland House, Northumberland Avenue, London WC2N 5BP requesting that the decision be reviewed. If following the internal review you remain dissatisfied, you can ask your MP to take up the case with the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration (the Ombudsman) who can investigate on your behalf. The Ombudsman will not, however, consider an investigation until the internal review process has been completed.

Yours sincerely,

*L C Unwin*

e) If an unauthorised intrusion of the UK air defence region were to happen in a real time situation, and deemed to be of an aggressive nature, what would the chain of command be on deciding to intercept that intruder and what would Sec(AS)2a's role be within the command structure?

2) I noted with interest that a flight of three UK front line defence aircraft (aircraft type was unknown at this point) intercepted an unidentified aircraft heading into the UK air defence region, and yet Sec(AS) had no record of whether the defence radar network, let alone the aircraft, onboard radar detected this intrusion. I also asked whether records should have been made of any visual or photographic images obtained.

3) Despite assurances that an investigation revealed no evidence to suggest that the aircraft was a threat to the region it flew over, a statement that Sec(AS)2a had offered by the way of means of a press release, that Sec(AS)2a had offered to investigate the incident, and that Sec(AS)2a had offered to investigate the incident, and that Sec(AS)2a had offered to investigate the incident.

4) I asked whether also to be investigated, and whether any other details were held with any other division within the MOD.

5) I asked whether also to be investigated, and whether any other details were held with any other division within the MOD.

6) I asked whether also to be investigated, and whether any other details were held with any other division within the MOD.

7) I asked whether also to be investigated, and whether any other details were held with any other division within the MOD.

8) I asked whether also to be investigated, and whether any other details were held with any other division within the MOD.

9) I asked whether also to be investigated, and whether any other details were held with any other division within the MOD.

10) I asked whether also to be investigated, and whether any other details were held with any other division within the MOD.

11) I asked whether also to be investigated, and whether any other details were held with any other division within the MOD.

12) I asked whether also to be investigated, and whether any other details were held with any other division within the MOD.

e) What evidence did the MOD/RAF have to justify the statement that this incident was not deemed to be of defence significance or of interest?

1) In addition regarding the records not for release of Air defence air staff investigating unidentified or uncorrelated radar returns, I asked:

a) How many records of this type existed?

b) Between what dates were the reports received?

c) Whether a date was allocated for the release of these files?

d) How long it would take until 5 February 2001 before a reply was forthcoming?

e) How long it would take until 10 July 2001 that a reply was forthcoming?

f) How long it would take until 10 July 2001 that a reply was forthcoming?

g) How long it would take until 10 July 2001 that a reply was forthcoming?

h) How long it would take until 10 July 2001 that a reply was forthcoming?

i) How long it would take until 10 July 2001 that a reply was forthcoming?

j) How long it would take until 10 July 2001 that a reply was forthcoming?

k) How long it would take until 10 July 2001 that a reply was forthcoming?

l) How long it would take until 10 July 2001 that a reply was forthcoming?

m) How long it would take until 10 July 2001 that a reply was forthcoming?

n) How long it would take until 10 July 2001 that a reply was forthcoming?

o) How long it would take until 10 July 2001 that a reply was forthcoming?

p) How long it would take until 10 July 2001 that a reply was forthcoming?

q) How long it would take until 10 July 2001 that a reply was forthcoming?

r) How long it would take until 10 July 2001 that a reply was forthcoming?

s) How long it would take until 10 July 2001 that a reply was forthcoming?

t) How long it would take until 10 July 2001 that a reply was forthcoming?

u) How long it would take until 10 July 2001 that a reply was forthcoming?

v) How long it would take until 10 July 2001 that a reply was forthcoming?

w) How long it would take until 10 July 2001 that a reply was forthcoming?

x) How long it would take until 10 July 2001 that a reply was forthcoming?

y) How long it would take until 10 July 2001 that a reply was forthcoming?



From: Mrs L C Unwin DAS 4a1(Sec)  
 MINISTRY OF DEFENCE  
 Room 8245, Main Building, Whitehall, London, SW1A 2HB

Telephone (Direct dial) 020 7218 2140  
 (Switchboard) 020 7218 9000  
 (Fax) 020 7218 2880  
 (G711)

Your Reference  
 Our Reference  
 D/DAS (Sec)64/3/5  
 Date  
 17 November 2000

Dear Mr Foxhall

Further to my letter of 26 September regarding your request for additional information about an 'unidentified flying object' sighting on 5<sup>th</sup> November 1990, I am now in a position to provide a substantive reply.

In order to provide you with a reply we have made some enquiries. Given the fact that the event you mention occurred some 10 years ago these have taken a while to complete.

It appears that a Tornado aircraft, probably one of a formation of three, was conducting a routine eastbound journey from an airfield in the UK to Laarbruch in Germany during the evening of Monday 5 November 1990. The aircraft was leaving UK airspace when it was overtaken by an aircraft shaped object. Shortly before control of the aircraft was transferred by the London Military air traffic controller at RAF West Drayton to his counterpart at Dutch Military Radar in the Netherlands in accordance with standard procedure. We assume that the aircraft was still in contact with RAF West Drayton on its second radio and chose to report the incident to UK authorities. We do not know if it was also reported to Dutch authorities. Since the event involved aircraft departing UK airspace, it is unlikely that the situation generated any UK Air Defence interest.

I will now answer your questions in the same order as your letter.

**Question 1(a-e)**

When Air Defence aircraft are scrambled for a real air policing mission, they are deemed operational and the Ministry of Defence has no role in the chain of operational command. That chain of command involves an Air Defence Commander and an Air Defence Control and Reporting Centre. During an operational mission, orders to the aircraft and reports of findings are passed up and down this chain. An operational summary of the mission is written by the aircrew on landing and passed to the appropriate staff in the operational chain of command. The Station Commander is neither part of the operational command chain during the mission nor involved in subsequent analysis, however, he would probably be informed of events as matter of courtesy.

Sec(AS) (now called DAS 4a(Sec)) has no role in command or in the processing of any operational data. DAS 4a (Sec) is the focal point within MOD for correspondence relating to 'UFOs' and passes correspondence, as appears appropriate, to air defence experts.

**Question 2**  
 The Tornados involved in the report of 5 November 1990 were Tornado GR1. These are not air defence aircraft and they were merely in transit, not engaged on an operational mission.

**Question 3**  
 As the incident did not threaten UK airspace, it was judged to be of no defence significance.

**Question 4**  
 MOD's interest in unusual air activity is to ascertain whether any threat exists to the integrity of UK airspace. Any incident would be investigated from an operational perspective in which Provost and Security Services would have no role.

**Question 5**  
 Air Defence aircraft occasionally investigate unidentified airborne 'targets'. Records of this activity are not for release, however, there is no evidence of any air defence aircraft employed on any air defence mission ever having intercepted, identified or photographed an object of an extra-terrestrial nature.

**Question 6**  
 As I mentioned in my previous letter, occasionally members of the public do send us photographs of objects in the sky which they have been unable to identify. These are usually of lights at night for which there could be rational explanations, such as aircraft lights. It is not the function of the MOD to provide an aerial identification service and there is therefore no reason for us to keep a database of these photographs.

**Question 7**  
 All notifications of sightings and letters are kept and placed on file.

**Question 8**  
 The larger part of duties falling to DAS 4a(Sec) (formerly Sec(AS)2a) concerns military low flying training in the UK, advice on non-operational RAF activities overseas, RAF Exchange Officer deployments and management of Diplomatic flight clearance procedures.

I hope this is helpful.

Yours sincerely,

*L C Unwin*



From: Mrs L C Unwin DAS 4a1(Sec)  
 MINISTRY OF DEFENCE  
 Room 8245, Main Building, Whitehall, London, SW1A 2HB

Telephone (Direct dial) 020 7218 2140  
 (Switchboard) 020 7218 9000  
 (Fax) 020 7218 2880  
 (G711)

Your Reference  
 Our Reference  
 D/DAS (Sec)64/3/5  
 Date  
 5 February 2001

Dear Mr Foxhall

I am writing further to my letter of 13 December 2000, as I am now in a position to provide a substantive reply to your letter of 22 November 2000.

In your letter of 5 September 2000 you asked a number of hypothetical questions, citing as an example the sighting on 5 November 1990. The answers given addressed a likely sequence of events but not necessarily those arising on the date in question.

You mention the handling of the "additional information". Our letter of 17 November 2000 contained no "new" information. In our efforts to be helpful, we sought advice of current air defence staff who provided their interpretation of the likely events, based on the data in the signal filed by RAF West Drayton, a copy of which was provided to you. I am not able to say whether there was, or was not, an "investigation" into the incident of 5 November 1990 as departmental records for that period were destroyed some time ago, in accordance with standard administrative procedures. We have no idea if any report was ever made to the Dutch authorities.

With regard to your question concerning records of Air defence aircraft investigating unidentified or uncorrelated radar returns, it appears you may have misunderstood the context in which we use the term "unidentified airborne targets". For air defence purposes, air defence staff endeavour to identify all aircraft that are detected on radar operating within the UK Air Defence Region. Those that cannot be immediately identified and which are considered a potential threat are intercepted in order that visual identification can be made. Aircrew submit reports on completion of their missions and there are no instances on record of anything other than man made aircraft being intercepted. A request for an individual report would be likely to be refused under Exemption 1a of the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information (Information whose disclosure would harm national security or defence), as they relate to the conduct of military operations.

We have made enquiries to see if the number of reports is readily available. Unfortunately there are no figures prior to 1990, as most files and log books are destroyed after a five to ten year period. It is estimated that since 1990 the number of reports made was less than five in each year.

Finally, you asked whether files previously available to Sec(AS)2a would still be available to DAS 4a(Sec). I can assure you that Secretariat(Air Staff)'s merger with Director of Air Staff has meant our files have simply been stamped with our new title, for instance the file this letter has been placed on was previously D/Sec(AS)64/3/5. All files that were available to us as Sec(AS)2a are still available to DAS 4a(Sec).

Yours sincerely,

*L C Unwin*

Further to my letter of 26 September regarding your request for additional information about an 'unidentified flying object' sighting on 5<sup>th</sup> November 1990, I am now in a position to provide a substantive reply.

In order to provide you with a reply we have made some enquiries. Given the fact that the event you mention occurred some 10 years ago these have taken a while to complete.

It appears that a Tornado aircraft, probably one of a formation of three, was conducting a routine eastbound journey from an airfield in the UK to Laarbruch in Germany during the evening of Monday 5 November 1990. The aircraft was leaving UK airspace when it was overtaken by an aircraft shaped object. Shortly before control of the aircraft was transferred by the London Military air traffic controller at RAF West Drayton to his counterpart at Dutch Military Radar in the Netherlands in accordance with standard procedure. We assume that the aircraft was still in contact with RAF West Drayton on its second radio and chose to report the incident to UK authorities. We do not know if it was also reported to Dutch authorities. Since the event involved aircraft departing UK airspace, it is unlikely that the situation generated any UK Air Defence interest.

I will now answer your questions in the same order as your letter.

**Question 1(a-e)**

When Air Defence aircraft are scrambled for a real air policing mission, they are deemed operational and the Ministry of Defence has no role in the chain of operational command. That chain of command involves an Air Defence Commander and an Air Defence Control and Reporting Centre. During an operational mission, orders to the aircraft and reports of findings are passed up and down this chain. An operational summary of the mission is written by the aircrew on landing and passed to the appropriate staff in the operational chain of command. The Station Commander is neither part of the operational command chain during the mission nor involved in subsequent analysis, however, he would probably be informed of events as matter of courtesy.

Sec(AS) (now called DAS 4a(Sec)) has no role in command or in the processing of any operational data. DAS 4a (Sec) is the focal point within MOD for correspondence relating to 'UFOs' and passes correspondence, as appears appropriate, to air defence experts.

Further to my letter of 26 September regarding your request for additional information about an 'unidentified flying object' sighting on 5<sup>th</sup> November 1990, I am now in a position to provide a substantive reply.

In order to provide you with a reply we have made some enquiries. Given the fact that the event you mention occurred some 10 years ago these have taken a while to complete.

It appears that a Tornado aircraft, probably one of a formation of three, was conducting a routine eastbound journey from an airfield in the UK to Laarbruch in Germany during the evening of Monday 5 November 1990. The aircraft was leaving UK airspace when it was overtaken by an aircraft shaped object. Shortly before control of the aircraft was transferred by the London Military air traffic controller at RAF West Drayton to his counterpart at Dutch Military Radar in the Netherlands in accordance with standard procedure. We assume that the aircraft was still in contact with RAF West Drayton on its second radio and chose to report the incident to UK authorities. We do not know if it was also reported to Dutch authorities. Since the event involved aircraft departing UK airspace, it is unlikely that the situation generated any UK Air Defence interest.

I will now answer your questions in the same order as your letter.

**Question 1(a-e)**

When Air Defence aircraft are scrambled for a real air policing mission, they are deemed operational and the Ministry of Defence has no role in the chain of operational command. That chain of command involves an Air Defence Commander and an Air Defence Control and Reporting Centre. During an operational mission, orders to the aircraft and reports of findings are passed up and down this chain. An operational summary of the mission is written by the aircrew on landing and passed to the appropriate staff in the operational chain of command. The Station Commander is neither part of the operational command chain during the mission nor involved in subsequent analysis, however, he would probably be informed of events as matter of courtesy.

Sec(AS) (now called DAS 4a(Sec)) has no role in command or in the processing of any operational data. DAS 4a (Sec) is the focal point within MOD for correspondence relating to 'UFOs' and passes correspondence, as appears appropriate, to air defence experts.



From: Mrs L C Unwin  
 Directorate of Air Staff  
 Operations & Policy  
**MINISTRY OF DEFENCE**  
 Room 6/73, Metropole Building, Northumberland Avenue, London,  
 WC2N 5BP

Telephone (Direct dial) 020 7216 2140  
 (Switchboard) 020 7216 9000  
 (Fax) 020 7216 2690  
 (G719) #

Your Reference  
 Our Reference  
 D/DAS/64/3/5  
 Date  
 9 August 2001

Dear Mr Foxhall,

Thank you for your letter of 10 July in which you ask for clarification of several points arising from your previous correspondence. I will answer these in the same order as your letter.

**Question 1**

The Public Records Act 1958 and 1967 requires all government departments to review their records before they are 30 years old. This is to ensure that material of historic value is preserved for the nation, while material which is not worthy of preservation, is destroyed when it ceases to have administrative value. Material selected for preservation generally remains closed for 30 years after the last action has been taken and is then transferred to the Public Record Office. Occasionally records are retained for longer periods, for example where their release could be damaging to national security, but this is only with the express permission of the Lord Chancellor. All other material is destroyed.

Until 1967 all "UFO" files (that is the files originating from this branch) were destroyed after five years, as there was insufficient public interest in the subject to merit their permanent retention. However since 1967, following an increase in public interest in this subject "UFO" report files are now routinely preserved. Air defence files, on the other hand, contain material of an operational nature and these files are normally destroyed after five years, unless, unusually, they are considered to contain information of historic significance.

**Question 2**

It is standard procedure for neighbouring NATO air defence and air traffic control units to liaise closely. In this case, the object was detected visually by aircraft that had just been transferred from London Military to Dutch Military air traffic control and the air defence system was not involved. It is likely that the aircraft were still in communication with both agencies and would have at least verbally reported the presence of a potentially conflicting aircraft to their primary control unit.

**Question 3**

There is no evidence to suggest that this was tracked by any airborne or ground based radar units.

**Question 4**

There has been no change in our policy for the release of "UFO" files and no decision has been made to retain them for fifty years. Files from the 1970's will be release to the Public Record Office at the 30 year point.

Finally, you may wish to note that we have recently moved to a new location and due to a reorganisation within the Directorate of Air Staff, our title has changed, as shown at the top of this letter. There has, however, been no change to our duties regarding correspondence about "UFO's".

I hope this is helpful.

Yours sincerely,

L C Unwin

assist with answering your questions we have attempted to interpret what was likely to have occurred, based on the information contained in the report and current practices.

In all fairness to Mrs. Unwin, she had also made a search of the Operations Record Books for the Squadrons the aircraft were likely to have originated from, but again could find no mention of the incident.

Having determined that XV Squadron, flying the Tomado GR1 were based at RAF Laarbruch back in November, 1990, I had written to XV (R) squadron, now based at RAF Lossiemouth. A reply dated 24 September 2001 stated that there would be no record of an incident of this type within squadron records, their archives apparently only chronic sporting and social events!

With continuing research avenues dwindling, the only remaining course would be to try and track down the aircrew involved.

Without knowing whether the aircraft involved were from XV Squadron, I wrote to three former aircrew, all now retired from the RAF. All were stationed at RAF Laarbruch with XV Squadron in 1990, and flying the Tomado GR1 two years and enough to recall, but stated honestly that they had not heard of the incident. One, now retired from the RAF on 2 January 2002, the day he had received it.

However, I am extremely grateful that he at least answered the few questions that I put to all three men, (besides whether they were aware of the incident) namely:

1) Would it have been likely that the aircrew involved would have had an operational airborne radar device available during the transit flight?

2) Were transit flights conducted with all radar devices switched off?

3) Whether the description of the lights observed was recognisable to them?

The substantive reply is contained here and labelled 10001.

I suppose it is safe to say that the aircraft involved were not from XV Squadron. Of course, they could have been GR1's from any RAF GR1 Squadron, temporarily deployed to Laarbruch.

I then decided to place a classified advertisement in RAF News in an appeal for witnesses, which

was published just before Christmas, 2001, and waited until the beginning of April 2002 for any response before contacting the Ministry once more.

This time I asked:

a) Whether the sighting could have been of a stealth aircraft?

b) Whether anyone attempted to ascertain whether the UFO was under the jurisdiction of an air traffic controller?

c) Why the aircrew were not advised to report the situation to their primary aircraft controller? (After all, the unidentified aircraft was entering their airspace!)

d) Was it considered usual for ATC to vector a lone aircraft to within a quarter mile of another flight, at the same altitude, the same heading and at high speed without informing the three ship formation that they had high speed traffic approaching them?

e) What is the MoD/RAF definition of a large aircraft?

In her reply, dated 8 May 2002, Ms. Unwin stated: "In light of your questions, we have reviewed the copy of the report that was sent to you and feel it may be of assistance to you if we could release more details of the report. We are consulting with other departments to see what further material may be released, and as soon as we have received their advice, I will write to you again."

In the meantime, I ran my classified ad in issue 1,048 of RAF News which was published on 10 May 2002. Six days later, an article was printed in *The Star* and *Sun* newspapers, alleging that "new RAF pilots" at RAF Cranwell, Lincolnshire, are shown video footage of a 1990 sighting. Tomado pilots watched a cigar shaped object for six minutes near the Dutch border.

Was this the same incident detailed above?

While being wary of tabloid newspapers, was there a connection between this story, my classified advertisement in RAF News six days previously, and the release of the further declassified report five days later on 21 May? (Do you?)

And that is the state of my enquiry to date. Does anyone out there have anything to add? Noting the revelations contained in Graham W. Birdsall's article 'The Mirrors of Whitehall' last issue, I wouldn't bet against it! Opposite is a summary of what was, and remains, a fascinating incident.

[REDACTED]

2<sup>nd</sup> January 2001

Dear Richard,

Thank you for your letter, which I received today! It certainly took a pretty circuitous route to finally reach me, which explains why I have not written sooner.

Your introduction has brought many fond memories flooding back. I almost accepted a tour of duty at St Athan, as the Unit Test Pilot, when I returned from the Gulf War.

As to your investigations of the aerial phenomena on 5<sup>th</sup> November 1990, I'm not sure that I can be of much help. My own flights surrounding that date were on 18<sup>th</sup> October and 12<sup>th</sup> November, both were daylight sorties. I'm not sure what I was up to in the interim. I heard nothing about such an encounter on XV Squadron, and I'm pretty sure I would have done. People often ask me if I have seen a UFO and the honest answer is no. Nevertheless, I have listened to some pretty interesting tales from friends and colleagues and I believe they saw what they say they saw! Thus, you are not writing to a sceptic.

Now, to answer your specific questions:

It is probable that the aircrew involved would have been operating their radars during the transit flight. However, the GR 1 radar is optimised as a ground-mapping device and has certain limitations air-to-air. At 1/4 mile range, any target would be difficult to pick out on radar.

We were trained to limit the use of our radar whenever possible: short bursts, so that an enemy tracker would have difficulty locking on. This was a hectic time, during the build up to war. Then more than ever we were flying as we meant to fight, with peacetime constraints well and truly removed.

What was it? I have no idea! But all sorts of stuff was being tried, tested and installed in weeks, whereas in peacetime it would have taken months, probably years. I had my first sight of the Stealth Fighter around that time (soon to be nick-named the wobbilin' goblin). The Americans had been operating it for a number of years. They definitely know how to keep a secret!

I wish you luck in your investigations; sorry you've drawn a bit of a blank here.

**SUMMARY**

On 5 November, 1990, a flight of three Tomado GR1 aircraft were transferring from the UK to RAF Laarbruch, Germany through controlled airspace. They were not on an operational mission. Shortly after Military Air Traffic Control at RAF West Drayton had handed control of the aircraft to their colleagues at Dutch Military at 18.00Z (6.00pm local time) a large 'aeroplane' shaped craft appeared to the right hand side of the Tomado formation.

Whilst recognising that this was Bonfire night, please note that the unknown craft was, for the duration of the sighting, at the same flight level as the Tomado formation, FL270 (27,000 feet). Hardly a firework.

The craft then crossed the Tomados flight path (heading 100 degrees) into their twelve o'clock (straight ahead) at a distance of no more than one quarter mile ahead.

The Tomados' airspeed was Mach 0.8 (eighty per cent of the speed of sound, or between 550-600 mph, depending on barometric pressure and temperature) and the 'unknown' accelerated away.

The craft was not reported as displaying standard strobe and anti-collision lights, but five to six

steady white lights were seen, and an illuminated blue area which emanated contrails.

It may be worth noting from contemporary military aviation brochures that a comforting red glow is the norm at night from jet aircraft engines. Could it have been a stealth aircraft? Obviously the six RAF aircrew who saw it didn't recognise it as such.

Having seen the F117A Nighthawk from both fairly close on the ground, and during its display routine at Fairford in 1999, I wouldn't particularly describe it as a large aeroplane.

Could it have been a B-2?

Quite possibly. However, as I understand it, great care is taken to ensure stealth aircraft (or any others on a mission) do not create contrails at altitude. Also, it is reported that both the above mentioned aircraft are fully capable of high sub-sonic speeds to maintain their stealth characteristics. Of course, the actual speeds of these aircraft are classified, but there appears to be no end of speculation that counter such capabilities. Was it possibly a B-1 bomber deploying some advanced (as at November, 1990) stealth characteristics? >

↑ FEED DIRECTOR

UNCLASSIFIED

CWD197 06/1542 310C2587

FOR CAB

ROUTINE 061340Z NOV 90

FROM RAF WEST DRAYTON  
 TO MODUK AIR

UNCLASSIFIED

SIC Z6F

SUBJECT: AERIAL PHENOMENA  
 A. 5 NOV 1800Z  
 B. ONE LARGE AEROPANE (SHAPE), 5 TO 6 WHITE STEADY LIGHTS, 1 BLUE STEADY LIGHT, CONTRAILS FROM BLUE AREA  
 C. IN THE AIR M.C.6 AREA, FL270 YPENBURG  
 D. NAKED EYE  
 E. HEADING 100 DEGREES, SAME ALT FL270  
 F. INTO OUR 12 OCLOCK  
 G. ONE QUARTER MILE AHEAD  
 H. STEADY  
 J. N/K  
 K. N/K  
 L. WORKING DUTCH MILL RADAR  
 M. [REDACTED]

PAGE 2 RBD AID 0009 UNCLAS

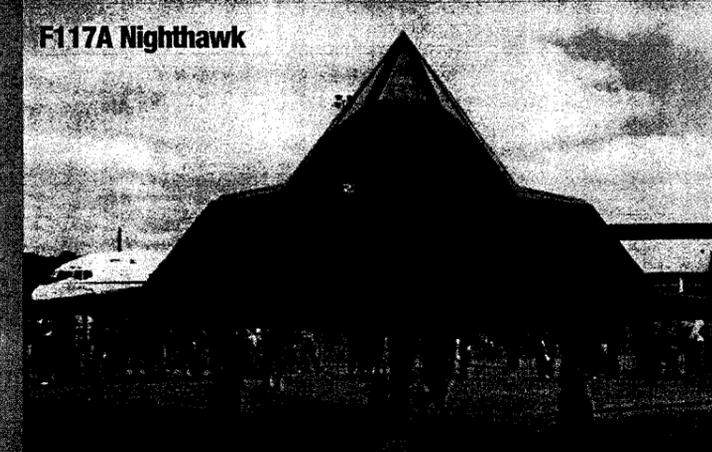
N. MIL  
 O. 2 OTHERS FROM LAARBRUCH  
 P. OTHER INFO. AIRCRAFT WAS UNDER DUTCH MIL CONTROL UFO APPERED IN OUR RH SIDE SAME LEVEL, WE WERE TRAVELLING AT MACH POINT B, IT WENT INTO OUR 12 OCLOCK AND ACCELERATED AWAY. ANOTHER 2 TORNADOS SEEN IT AND POSSIBLE IDENTED IT AS A STEALTH AIRCRAFT  
 BT

DISTRIBUTION Z6F

AFB	1	SEC (AS)	ACTION	(CXJ)	1	AFDO
CYB	1					
CAV	1	DI 55				
CAV	2	DC8TI				



B-1 bomber

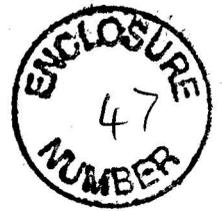


F117A Nighthawk





From: **Section 40**  
Directorate of Air Staff (Lower Airspace)  
Operations & Policy 1  
**MINISTRY OF DEFENCE**  
Room 6/73, Metropole Building, Northumberland Avenue, London,  
WC2N 5BP



Telephone (Direct dial) 020 7218 2140  
(Switchboard) 020 7218 9000  
(Fax) 020 7218 **Section 40**  
(GTN)

**Section 40**

Your Reference

Our Reference  
D/DAS/64/3/5  
Date  
20 June 2002

Dear **Section 40**,

Thank you for your letter of 5 June. I will answer your questions in the same order as your letter.

Question 1. No, it would not be usual for aircraft to be directed within quarter of a mile of other aircraft. Air traffic Control Agencies endeavour to maintain standard separation between aircraft. If a pilot believes his/her aircraft may have been endangered by the proximity of another aircraft (or, in regulated airspace, where an Air Traffic Controller believes there has been a risk of collision) they will file an airmis report.

Question 2. Yes, if a similar incident occurred today in controlled airspace it is likely that the pilot would report it to the air traffic controller.

Question 3. If this Department received a report such as this today, we would examine the report in conjunction with the appropriate Departmental air defence experts. Once it was established that the report contained nothing of defence concern, no further investigation would be made.

Question 4. We are unable to disclose details of the Squadron involved, but I can confirm that it is still operational today.

Question 5. RAF aircrew are not taught how to spot UFOs. Throughout their careers aircrew are taught aircraft recognition skills and this may be what has been misreported in the newspaper article. You may also wish to note that the sighting report which we sent to you makes no mention of a "cigar-shaped object" or the fact it was seen for "six minutes".

Question 6. We are not aware of any video footage of these events.

I hope this is helpful.

Yours sincerely,

**Section 40**



**FILE NOTE**

This letter was discussed with DAO ADGE 1 **Section 40**. His advice is as follows;

Q1. It would not be usual for ATC to direct one aircraft to fly close to another. See DAOs LM of 1 May 02 – Enclosure 40.

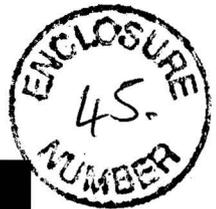
Q2. If this happened today the pilot would talk to the ATC.

Q3. This is for us to answer.

Q4. It would not be advisable to release details of the Squadron as **Section 40**'s next move is likely to be to write to the Squadron and this could lead to him trying to trace the pilot. The Squadron was 2(AC) Sqdn which are now based at RAF Marham and **Section 40** thought there was no harm in telling **Section 40** that the Sqdn was still operational.

Q5. **Section 40** said aircrew are not taught to spot UFOs but he thought they were taught aircraft recognition skills. I spoke to the Senior Naval Officer (Cdr **Section 40**) at the Joint Elementary Flying Training School, RAF Cranwell (**Section 40**). He confirmed that aircrew are taught aircraft recognition during their careers but not specifically during the elementary stage of their training at Cranwell. Wg Cdr **Section 40** (DAS(LA)Ops) confirmed that aircrew do this training throughout their careers.

20<sup>th</sup> June 2002



Section 40  
[Redacted]

[Redacted]

Section 40

Directorate of Air Staff  
Operations & Policy 1,  
Room 673,  
Metropole Building,  
Northumberland Avenue  
LONDON.

Your Reference: D/DAS 64/3/5  
05/06/02.

Dear Section 40

Thank you for your letters dated 8th and 21st of May, 2002, and the amended copy of the pilots' report. I was in two minds as to whether I should have sent a postcard from the sunny (and warm) Algarve, but unfortunately there was not enough room for your address!

I am grateful for your your continued efforts regarding my questions, and apologise if some appear to be repeated, albeit in a different wording. I may be at fault in this, as some of my queries should probably been worded in the present tense. Also, some ATC questions I have posed are because I can not find anyone else (retired from military service, even) who is willing to comment. Therefore, I would once again ask your advice on the following:-

1. Would it be considered usual in 2002 (bearing in mind deconfliction of aircraft with regard to air safety and night flying), to vector a high speed aircraft to within a quarter mile of other aircraft (not on an operational mission) at the same altitude and heading without alerting aircrew to other air traffic in the same vicinity?
2. Were a similar incident to occur today, in a controlled airspace environment, would Standard Operating Procedures dictate that the aircrew involved would report the observed contact to their designated air traffic controller?
3. Were a similar incident to occur today, what would be your Departments' likely response, and how far up the chain of command would the report go?
4. While fully accepting the need for witness confidentiality, would it be possible, twelve years on from the incident, to disclose from which squadron(s)

<b>DAS</b>	
102No. ....	
- 7 JUN 2002	
15 DAYS -	
FILE	27 JUNE

the Tornado GR1 aircraft or the aircrew were generated? If not, could you confirm whether the squadrons are still operational at this time?

5. I would also appreciate your comments on an article which appeared in the Sun newspaper of Thursday, May 16, 2002-

*RAF LEARN TO SPOT 'ALIENS'*

*New RAF pilots are being taught how to spot and report UFOs. Cadets at the RAF College in Cranwell, Lincolnshire, are shown video footage of a 1990 sighting. Tornado pilots watched a cigar-shaped object for six minutes near the Dutch border.*

What, if any, truth is behind this article? Do trainee officers undergo any kind of 'Ufo' recognition course at Cranwell or elsewhere?

6. Does the MOD in fact have video footage of the 1990 Tornado incident?

With many thanks as always,

Yours sincerely,

Section 40





From: **Section 40**  
Directorate of Air Staff (Lower Airspace)  
Operations & Policy 1  
**MINISTRY OF DEFENCE**  
Room 6/73, Metropole Building, Northumberland Avenue, London,  
WC2N 5BP

44

Telephone	(Direct dial)	020 7218 2140
	(Switchboard)	020 7218 9000
	(Fax)	020 7218 <b>Section 40</b>
	(GTN)	

**Section 40**

Your Reference

Our Reference  
D/DAS/64/3/5  
Date  
21 May 2002

Dear **Section 40**

Further to my letter of 8 May, I am now in a position to send a substantive reply to your letter of 11 April.

In light of your continual interest in this incident and with the forthcoming Freedom of Information Act in mind, we have reviewed the report that was originally sent to you and I am pleased to be able to enclose a second copy with much less information removed. Paragraph M and one addressee from the distribution list will continue to be withheld under the Data Protection Act 1998 as they contain the name of the pilot who made the report, and the actual post of an individual working within the MOD. I can, however, inform you that their Department was the Directorate of Air Operations. I hope the extra information that has now been revealed will assist you with your enquiries.

With regard to your questions about what may, or may not, have been seen on radar screens and the actions of air traffic control staff, we have provided the only document we are aware of about this incident. Air traffic and radar records are not kept for long periods and we are unable to speculate on what occurred almost 12 years ago.

In your letter you also asked for details of the aircrew mentioned in the report and if they had been killed on active service. I am unable to discuss details of individual servicemen and their careers.

Finally, you asked about the RAF's definition of a large aircraft. There is no official definition. The reference to "one large aeroplane (shape)" in the report was merely the perception of the person making the report.

Yours sincerely,

**Section 40**

FEED  
DIRECTIO

UNCLASSIFIED

CWD197 06/1542 310C2587

FOR CAB

ROUTINE 061340Z NOV 90

FROM RAF WEST DRAYTON  
TO MODUK AIR

UNCLASSIFIED  
SIC Z6F

SUBJECT: AERIAL PHENOMENA

- A. 5 NOV 1800Z
- B. ONE LARGE AEROPLANE (SHAPE). 5 TO 6 WHITE STEADY LIGHTS. 1 BLUE STEADY LIGHT. CONTRAILS FROM BLUE AREA
- C. IN THE AIR M.C.6 AREA. FL270 YPENBURG
- D. NAKED EYE
- E. HEADING 100 DEGREES. SAME ALT FL270
- F. INTO OUR 12 OCLOCK
- G. ONE QUARTER MILE AHEAD
- H. STEADY
- J. N/K
- K. N/K
- L. WORKING DUTCH MILL RADAR
- M. [REDACTED] REDACTION ON ORIGINAL DOCUMENT

PAGE 2 RBD AID 0009 UNCLAS

N. NIL  
 O. 2 OTHERS FROM LAARBRUCH  
 P. OTHER INFO. AIRCRAFT WAS UNDER DUTCH MIL CONTROL UFO APPERRED IN OUR RH SIDE SAME LEVEL, WE WERE TRAVELLING AT MACH POINT 8. IT WENT INTO OUR 12 OCLOCK AND ACCLLERATED AWAY. ANOTHER 2 TORNADOOS SEEN IT AND POSSIBLE IDENTED IT AS A STEALTH AIRCRAFT  
 BT

DISTRIBUTION Z6F  
F

CAB	1	SEC (AS)	ACTION ( CXJ 1 AFDD )
CYD	1	[REDACTED]	REDACTION ON ORIGINAL DOCUMENT
CAV	1	DI 55	
CAV	2	DGSTI	

**FILE NOTE**

43

Advice was taken from Commander **Section 40** – MA to the Chief Executive Defence Communications Services Agency (tel **Section 40**) with regard to whether we should redact the signal addresses, time/date group and SIC from signals sent to the public.

His advice is that this is not classified information and these are only used for ease of distribution. For example the SIC (Signal Identification Code) Z6F is a miscellaneous category and one of the subjects listed under it is UFOs. This is therefore an aid to getting the signal to the right Department. Cdr **Section 40** see no harm in releasing this information to the public.

With regard to the distribution list at the bottom of signals, Cdr **Section 40** he had no objection to this being released but it was really a matter for us to decide whether we wished to give this information to the public. In the case of **Section 40** one addressee has been removed under the Data Protection Act as it refers to an actual post (unique identifier). However, we are willing to explain to **Section 40** which branch is mentioned.

**Section 40**

21 May 2002



**From:** CL(FS)-Legal1  
**Sent:** 24 April 2002 17:23  
**To:** DAS-LA OpsPol1  
**Cc:** Info-Access2  
**Subject:** RE: The redaction of names from documents released under the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information

**Section 40**

The advice **Section 40** has given about redaction in relation to DPA 98 is sound! Further guidance is available in our Guidance Note 12 - Redaction of Personal Data available on the Data Protection Website on MODWeb (Policy, then Legal, then Data Protection).

If you have any queries, please come back to me.

**Section 40**

-----Original Message-----

**From:** Info-Access2  
**Sent:** 24 April 2002 15:52  
**To:** DAS-LA OpsPol1  
**Cc:** CL(FS)-Legal1  
**Subject:** The redaction of names from documents released under the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information

**Section 40**

We spoke this afternoon about whether it was permissible under the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information (the Code) to withhold names of serving armed forces personnel from information (in this case a signal) that is to be disclosed to the public.

To clarify what I said on the phone. The disclosure of names of any personnel (armed services or civilian) is subject to the Data Protection Act 1998 (DPA). This is a statutory measure, and as such any information that DPA would bar the disclosure of must be withheld. The Code anticipates such instances under Exemption 15. My understanding of DPA is that we should be redacting both the names, and any other unique identifiers (such as the numbering at the end of posts) from any information we release. The only exception to this would be for public figures such as the Secretary of States. More authoritative advice on DPA is available from **Section 40** Claims and Legal who has lead on this matter. I have therefore copied this email to her, and hopefully this will ensure that I have not misled you!

I hope that this helps,

**Section 40**

**Section 40**

Info-Access2  
St Giles 821 MB **Section 40**

To: DDefSy(PerSec)-Hd/Sec  
Subject: Release of Information

It has been suggested to me that you may be able to help with a request I have received from a member of the public for release of information under the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information. If you are not the right person for this, I would be grateful if you could point me in the right direction.

My section is the focal point within the MOD for correspondence about unidentified flying objects and we receive quiet a few requests for copies of UFO sighting reports. Under the Code we are obliged to be as open as possible and can only withhold information if it falls under one of the specific exemptions of the Code. If material is withheld, the correspondent can appeal, first to DG Info(Exploitation) and then to the Parliamentary Ombudsman, both of which scrutinise the use of the exemption and determine whether it has been used correctly. In the case of the Ombudsman, this can lead to a Department being publicly criticised.

Many of the reports we have received were sent to us via signal from RAF Stations (mostly RAF West Drayton). They are usually unclassified, but contain details such as the time/date group, SIC and distribution. I would be grateful for any advice you could give as to whether there would be any security implications regarding the release of these details. Please bare in mind that if we were to attempt to withhold this the only exemption that I think it could fit under is *Exemption 1a - Information whose disclosure would harm national security or defence.*

I look forward to your advice in due course. Please give me a call if you need any further information.

Section 40  
DAS-LA-Ops+Pol1  
MT6/73 Section 40

*This query was passed to MA/CE DCSA.*



From: Section 40

Directorate of Air Staff (Lower Airspace)  
Operations & Policy 1

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

Room 6/73, Metropole Building, Northumberland Avenue, London,  
WC2N 5BP

41

Telephone

(Direct dial)  
(Switchboard)  
(Fax)  
(GTN)

020 7218 2140  
020 7218 9000  
020 7218

Section 40

Section 40

Your Reference

Our Reference  
D/DAS/64/3/5  
Date  
8 May 2002

Dear Section 40

Thank you for your letter of 11 April in which you asked some further questions regarding the 'UFO' sighting report of 5<sup>th</sup> November 1990, which was sent to you with our letter of 15 June 2000.

In light of your questions, we have reviewed the copy of the report that was sent to you and feel it may be of assistance to you if we could release more of the details of the report. We are currently consulting with other Departments to see what (if any) further material may be released and as soon as we have received their advice, I will write to you again.

I am sorry that I am unable to send a substantive reply at this stage.

Yours sincerely,

Section 40

DAO/1/13

40

1 May 02

DAS(LA)Ops+Polla

REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE – Section 40

1. You asked for comment on the points raised by Section 40 in his latest letter dated 11 Apr 02 on the UFO incident reported by a flight of RAF Tornados on 6 Nov 90.
2. We discussed the “blacked out” sections of the original report and the possibility that some of that information might now be released to help address some of the points raised by Section 40. Section 40 have reviewed the original report and, with the exception of Para M which identifies one of the aircrew by name, there would be no objection to releasing the remaining sections. None of these have any bearing on operational capability and their release may prove beneficial as they show that the aircraft were under Dutch Military control at the time and that the aircrew thought the ‘phenomena’ may have been a stealth aircraft.
3. As the incident took place in controlled airspace, the ATC agencies involved would have endeavoured to maintain the standard separation criteria with other traffic in the area. It is, therefore, highly unlikely that the ‘phenomena’ was under control of either agency. If it had been under control, by implication it would have been visible on radar, the other aircraft would have been warned of its proximity and, if it had come too close to other traffic, an air miss report would have been filed. The fact that this did not happen supports the fact that neither control agency were aware of the ‘phenomena’ because they could not see it on radar.
4. The main point in all of this is that neither ATC agency appear to have been aware of the presence of the ‘phenomena’ and thus could not have been controlling it and could not have warned the Tornado flight of its presence. The suggestion that it was a stealth aircraft was probably an attempt by the observer of the ‘phenomena’ to come up with a rational explanation. Although stealth technology was in its infancy at the time, it is possible (but I think very unlikely) that such aircraft could have been operating covertly in our airspace.
5. I will leave you to address Section 40’s questions on the identity of the aircrew, whether they survived the Gulf War and the RAF’s definition of a large aircraft!!

*Signed on CHOtS*

Section 40

Wg Cdr

DAO ADGE 1

MB4227 Section MB0

CHOtS: DAO ADGE 1

20 days - 9 May

39

Section 40 [Redacted]

Section 40 [Redacted]

Directorate of Air Staff  
Operations & Policy1,  
Room 673,  
Metropole Building,  
Northumberland Avenue  
LONDON.

Your Reference: D/DAS 64/3/5  
11/04/02.

Dear Section 40 [Redacted]

Thank you for your letter dated 20 September, 2001. In my attempts to glean further details of the unexplained aerial phenomena observed by six RAF aircrew on November 5th, 1990, I wrote to AIS (Mil) at RAF West Drayton. As I expected, this was routed to your department. Thank you for your reply, dated 19 November, 2001.

Whilst I recognise that reports of this nature are only given a cursory examination by MOD staff I would appreciate your guidance on the following:

1. Was the 'phenomena' ever considered as being attributable to a USAF Stealth type aircraft? It has been suggested to me that mention of this may be blacked out on the copy of the pilots' report in my possession, under heading 'P' Page 2.
2. Had ATC been aware of a covert flight being responsible, is it likely that a report of this nature would have been filed?
3. As the 'phenomena' overtook the Tornado flight while leaving UK airspace, was any evidence found, or even looked for, to confirm the 'phenomena' as being under air traffic control? This incident did of course take place within controlled airspace.
3. Why did LATCC not inform its Dutch NATO ATC colleagues of an unidentified aircraft approaching their region, either directly or, seeing that the aircraft were under Dutch military ATC, why were the Tornado pilots not instructed to report the incident directly to them?
4. Assuming the 'phenomena' to be friendly and under ATC instruction, would it be considered usual (bearing in mind deconfliction of aircraft with regard to air safety and night flying), to vector a high speed aircraft to within a quarter mile of other aircraft (not on an operational mission) at the same altitude and heading? Is it not usually the case that military aircraft are advised by military aircraft controllers of other traffic in their vicinity, i.e. height, position, speed

DAS
102No. ....
12 APR 2002
FILE _____

and direction, and that therefore the ufo in question was disregarded because it was not tracked by UK or associated NATO ground-based radar units?

5. Would it be possible, twelve years on from the incident, to disclose from which squadron(s) the Tornado aircraft were generated? If not, could you confirm whether the squadrons are still operational as of 2002?

6. Were any of the (presumably listed) aircrew involved killed in action during the Gulf War of 1991, or subsequently in RAF service?

7. What is the Royal Air Forces' definition of a large aircraft? i.e. 747? C-130? B52? B-1?

It has taken me many months to try and trace former aircrew who were based at RAF Laarbruch at the time of the incident, and those who I have contacted tell me they have not heard of this incident, even though some tell me they have heard many similar tales in the mess! I would therefore appreciate any advice you could offer regarding further courses of action I might take in order to contact any person who might recall the incident. My only intention is to try and add further detail to what was actually seen, and whether this unknown craft matches descriptions of other 'unexplained aerial phenomena'.

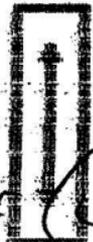
With many thanks and best wishes,

Section 40



Mrs.

Section 40



Royal Mail  
Chester N.Wales  
Cae'r Gog Cymru  
11.04.02

Defnyddio  
Cod P  
Please  
the Post



DIRECTORATE OF AIR STAFF (LOWER AIRSPACE)

OPERATIONS & POLICY 1

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

ROOM 6/73 METROPOLE BUILDING,

NORTHUMBERLAND AVENUE,  
LONDON

WC2N 5BP



From: **Section 40**  
Directorate of Air Staff (Lower Airspace)  
Operations & Policy 1  
**MINISTRY OF DEFENCE**  
Room 6/73, Metropole Building, Northumberland Avenue, London,  
WC2N 5BP

38

Telephone (Direct dial) 020 7218 2140  
(Switchboard) 020 7218 9000  
(Fax) 020 7218 **Section 40**  
(GTN) #

**Section 40**

Your Reference

Our Reference  
D/DAS/64/3/5  
Date  
19 November 2001

Dear **Section 40**

I am writing with reference to your letter of 11 November, addressed to RAF West Drayton, in which you requested further details concerning the aerial phenomena report of 5 November 1990, which was sent to you by this Department in June 2000. Your letter has been passed to us as we are the focal point within the Ministry of Defence for correspondence regarding 'unidentified flying objects'.

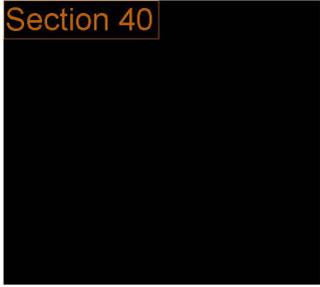
RAF West Drayton operate written and video tape air traffic records. The written records are kept for three months and the video tapes are kept for one month before being reused. Records are only retained for longer periods where they form part of an investigation into incidents such as, aircraft accidents.

I can confirm that there are no records at RAF West Drayton containing any further details on the events you are researching.

Yours sincerely,

**Section 40**

37

Section 40  


11/11/01

**Dear Sir/Madam,**

**I have, over the last four years, been researching a particular incident from November 5th, 1990 when a flight of three RAF Tornado GR1 aircraft, while transiting from the UK to RAF Laarbruch, Germany, encountered an 'Aerial Phenomena'.**

**As the report was taken by military aircraft controllers at RAF West Drayton, I wonder whether any further detail could be added to the said report.**

**I enclose a copy of the report taken by ATC, which was released to me from Secretariat (Air Staff)2a dated June 15, 2000 which you may find helpful.**

**I have also been in touch with the Dutch authorities, who have no record or recollection of the incident.**

**Many thanks,****Yours faithfully,**Section 40  


TOP

↑ FEED DIRECTION

ENCLOSURE  
36  
NUMBER  
64/2

UNCLASSIFIED

[REDACTED]

REDACTION ON ORIGINAL DOCUMENT

[REDACTED]

REDACTION ON ORIGINAL DOCUMENT

FROM [REDACTED]  
TO MODUK AIR

UNCLASSIFIED

REDACTION ON ORIGINAL DOCUMENT

SUBJECT: AERIAL PHENOMENA

- A. 5 NOV 1800Z
- B. ONE LARGE AEROPLANE (SHAPE). 5 TO 6 WHITE STEADY LIGHTS. 1 BLUE STEADY LIGHT. CONTRAILS FROM BLUE AREA
- C. IN THE AIR [REDACTED]
- D. NAKED EYE
- E. HEADING 100 DEGREES. SAME ALT [REDACTED]
- F. INTO OUR 12 OCLCCK
- G. ONE QUARTER MILE AHEAD
- H. STEADY
- J. N/K
- K. N/K
- L. [REDACTED]
- M. [REDACTED]

REDACTION ON ORIGINAL DOCUMENT

REDACTION ON ORIGINAL DOCUMENT

REDACTION ON ORIGINAL DOCUMENT

PAGE 2 [REDACTED] UNCLAS

N. NIL

REDACTION ON ORIGINAL DOCUMENT

O. [REDACTED] UFO APPERED IN  
P. OTHER INFO. [REDACTED] OUR RH SIDE SAME LEVEL, WE WERE TRAVELLING AT MACH POINT 8. IT WENT INTO OUR 12 OCLOCK AND ACCLLERATED AWAY. ANOTHER 2 TORNADOS SEEN IT

REDACTION ON ORIGINAL DOCUMENT

BT

REDACTION ON ORIGINAL DOCUMENT

REDACTION ON ORIGINAL DOCUMENT



From: **Section 40**  
Directorate of Air Staff (Lower Airspace)  
Operations & Policy 1  
**MINISTRY OF DEFENCE**  
Room 6/73, Metropole Building, Northumberland Avenue, London,  
WC2N 5BP



Telephone	(Direct dial)	020 7218 2140
	(Switchboard)	020 7218 9000
	(Fax)	020 7218
	(GTN)	# <b>Section 40</b>

**Section 40**

Your Reference

Our Reference  
D/DAS/64/3/5

Date  
20 September 2001

Dear **Section 40**

Thank you for your letter of 1 September in which you asked for further clarification of points raised in your previous correspondence.

Question 1.

In order to answer your question it may help if I explain how MOD deals with 'UFO' sighting reports. When 'UFO' sightings are reported to the MOD they are examined by staff in DAS and any that we consider could be of defence concern are passed to those within the department who have responsibility for air defence matters. I should add that the vast majority of reports we receive are very sketchy and vague. Only a handful of reports in recent years have warranted further investigation and none revealed any evidence of a threat. Once they have assessed the reports, the air defence staff will send a reply, which will be filed with the sighting report on our files. The air defence file on this subject in the main contains those requests from DAS staff asking for information and the responses that have been sent back. In recent years a specific file has been kept for these reports and this is retained for 30 years before being released to the Public Record Office in the same way as DAS 'UFO' files.

Question 2

With regard to your comments concerning airprox incidents you may wish to be aware that the regulations governing the reporting of aircraft proximity incidents are internationally recognised, and administered in the United Kingdom by National Air Traffic Services Ltd. (NATS), the organisation responsible for the management of air traffic. They state that any pilot, civilian or military, who believes that the safety of his or her aircraft has been compromised by the proximity of another may report this fact to the Joint Airprox Section (JAS), who will undertake an investigation. Regulations allow only for an aircraft proximity report (more commonly known as an airmis) filed by the pilots involved to be investigated by the JAS, this is for the simple reason that pilots are best placed to judge whether the safety of their aircraft has been compromised. As no record can be found of an airmis report being filed for this incident, it would appear that the pilot did not consider that the safety of his aircraft was compromised.

You also asked what evidence the MOD has to show that standard procedures for liaising with neighbouring NATO air defence and air traffic control units were applied. Also, what evidence the MOD has to show that the unidentified aircraft seen was not of a hostile nature?

The only surviving record of this event, that we are aware of, is the report that was sent to you on 15 June 2000. We do not have any "evidence" that the procedures you have enquired about in subsequent letters were followed, but in order to try to assist with answering your questions we have attempted to interpret what was likely to have occurred, based on the information contained in the report and current practices. With regard to the comments from the Royal Netherlands Air Force, air traffic records are not usually kept for long periods and as this event was over 10 years ago, it is perhaps not surprising that Dutch Military radar staff are unable to recall it.

Finally, you asked if we can confirm that there are no other documents within the MOD that may contain information about this incident. Although we have supplied the only record that we are aware of, we did check the Operations Record Books for the Squadrons that these aircraft are likely to have originated from, to see if there was any information on this event. However, none of them contained any mention of it.

I hope this is helpful.

Yours sincerely,

Section 40



LOOSE MINUTE

D/AHB(RAF)/5/21

18 September 2001

DAS(LA)Ops + 1

RAF Form 540

Further to your e-mail and our subsequent telecon the answers regarding your questions on the RAF Form 540 are as follows:

1. All RAF independent units, i.e., stations, flying squadrons, regiment squadrons, signals units, maintenance units etc, along with RAF elements of joint service units should produce a 540.
2. The Form 540 Operations Record Book should be submitted to this branch on a monthly basis, not later than 6 weeks after the month being reported on. Although in reality it can be more like 6 months plus.
3. The 540 was first introduced in 1936. However many of the early squadrons kept records going back to their formation during WW1.
4. As stated at 2 the unit should submit its 540 not later than 6 weeks after the month being reported on. The original document should be sent to AHB with a copy being kept on the unit. As far how long the copy of the 540 is kept on the unit is concerned, I am afraid that that this depends on the unit, some destroy them after a year and some, if they are interested in their history, keep them ad-indefinitum.
5. 540's are held at AHB for approximately 25 years, they are then sent to the departmental reviewers who clear them for release into the Public Record Office at the 30-year point.

Moving on to your next query regarding the incident on the 5<sup>th</sup> of November 1990 supposedly involving Tornados from Marham. I am afraid that I have gone through the 540's for Marham, Neatishead, 27 and 617 (the 2 squadrons based at Marham at that time) Sqns to no avail. None of them contain any reference at all to any flying object. Indeed the deployment to Laarbruch only merits a one line entry in 617's 540, and is not mentioned at all in either 27's or the stations.

In your e-mail of 14/9 you requested extracts from Coltishall and Saxa Vord's 540 for the period covering Sept 70. I have ordered these documents back from the PRO and will forward copies of the necessary pages when they arrive. Please bear with me on this as currently documents are taking anything up to 10 days to return from the PRO

**Section 40**

AHB3(RAF)

BP Bldg 266 7413BP





LOOSE MINUTE

D/DAS/64/1

11 September 2001

AHB3(RAF)

F540 Operations Record Books

1. I would be grateful for your advice regarding the retention of F540 Operations Record Books.
2. We are the focal point within the MOD for correspondence from the public regarding 'unidentified flying objects'. Some of those that write to us are keen to find as much documented information as possible, particularly where it is alleged RAF Stations or personnel may have been involved. With the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information and soon the introduction of the Freedom of Information Act, we are looking at what material may be available, and it has recently been suggested that station F540s may be a useful source of information.
3. I understand that it is unlikely that F540s would contain a record of UFO sightings, but these incidents sometimes coincide with real events at a station that have become confused, or misreported until they appear that something unusual has happened. In these cases, an entry in the Station F540 may give a possible explanation. I would, therefore appreciate your advice on the following questions;
  - a. Do all RAF stations (even non flying stations) keep a F540?
  - b. How often is an entry made in them (ie. daily, monthly)?
  - c. Approximately when were these first kept?
  - d. How long are F540s kept at the station before being sent to AHB?
  - e. How long are they retained at AHB before being transferred to the PRO?
4. In addition, I would appreciate your help regarding a particular enquiry we have received from one of our regular correspondents. He has been writing to us for some time looking for documents relating to an event on 5<sup>th</sup> November 1990 in which one (maybe more) RAF Tornado pilots reported seeing an object fly past them and heading towards Dutch Airspace. The Tornados were transiting from RAF Marham to RAF Laarbruch at the time. We have given him all the information we have on this incident, but he has now asked if we can be sure that no more exists within MOD. If you hold F540s for RAF Neatishead and RAF Marham for this period could you please see if there was any mention of this incident in either of them.
5. Thank you for any assistance you can provide. I am happy to discuss if you wish. My telephone number is MB Section 40

Section 40

DAS(Lower Airspace)Operations & Policy 1



Section 40  
[Redacted]

Section 40  
Directorate of Air Staff  
Operations & Policy,  
Room 673,  
Metropole Building,  
Northumberland Avenue  
LONDON.

Your Reference: D/DAS (Sec)64/3/5  
01/09/01.

Dear Section 40

Thank you for your letter dated 9 August, 2001.  
I would respectfully request further clarification of my interpretations to your response of 9 August in the same order as your letter.

Question 1

The only 'records' on unusual aerial phenomena held within your department are the actual reports received from various sources. Any intelligence analysis or further investigative procedures within the Ministry on a given case automatically receive the 'Air Defence' title, therefore exempting them from public access. Is this the reason why no analyses or conclusions to reported phenomena are included with the report files?

Question 2

As I understand it, an aircraft which closes to a distance within one mile of another aircraft at the same flight level or altitude is not normally allowed within controlled airspace. The Civil Aviation Authority informs me that they received no airprox incident report on the Tornado incident, and have searched their database to no avail. I have contacted Lieutenant Colonel Section 40 of the Department of Foreign Affairs, Royal Netherlands Air Force, and I quote:

*"Attempts to retrieve any information about the encounter you mentioned have been unsuccessful. There is no known documentation about any UFO-sighting around that period. I also talked to people that were working on the (civilian) Air Miss Committee and controllers of Dutch Military radar in that particular period. Nobody remembered an event that looked like the one you are investigating.*

*If in the future anything is found when cleaning a dusty attic I will inform you, but it must be assumed that the pilots of the British Tornado's never mentioned the encounter to the Dutch radar operators, nor made an official report in the*

DAS  
102No. ....  
- 4 SEP 2001  
FILE \_\_\_\_\_

Netherlands.”

From this statement, what evidence does the UK Ministry of Defence have to show that standard procedure for liaising with neighbouring NATO air defence and air traffic control units were applied?

Also, what evidence does the Ministry have from its investigation to show that an unidentified aircraft seen visually leaving controlled UK airspace by six highly trained RAF aircrew was not of a hostile nature?

Finally, with the recent release of the Ministry of Defences’ ‘Rendlesham Forest Incident’ file, can I be assured that no other documentation, either classified or unclassified, exists within the Ministry or within NATO regarding the Tornado incident of November 5th, 1990?

F540  
Operations  
Record  
Book  
for  
Neatishead

Thank you for your patience in dealing with my correspondence, I hope you are settling well in your new ‘barracks’!

Yours faithfully,

Section 40

P.S. I think the Ministry should be applauded for releasing the ‘Rendlesham Forest’ file. At least these documents prove that someone is keeping an eye on things!

Section 40

Section 40



DIRECTORATE OF AIR STAFF  
OPERATIONS & POLICY

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE,  
ROOM 6/73,  
METROPOLE BUILDING,  
NORTHUMBERLAND AVENUE,  
LONDON

Royal Mail  
Chester N.Wales  
Caer Gog, Cymru  
02 09 01  
02-42 pm  
32901820

Defnyddiwch  
Cod Post  
Please Use  
the Postcode



WC2N 5BP



Section 40

Section 40

Community Relations Officer,  
Royal Air Force Lossiemouth,  
Morayshire,  
Scotland.

07/09/01.

Dear Sir/Madam,

I would be grateful if you could advise me whether XV Squadron has an archivist or historian, or some other person to whom I could write requesting further details of an unusual phenomenon which was observed in 1990 by aircrew of a flight of three Tornado GR1 aircraft while en-route to RAF Laarbruch.

Directorate of Air Staff Operations & Policy, Ministry of Defence (previously DAS4a1(Sec) ), have kindly forwarded me a copy of the documented report in their possession, which is dated 5th November, 1990.

Unfortunately, this document bears only the most basic details and I wonder whether any further details of this event might exist in the squadrons' records?

Thank you.

Yours faithfully,

Section 40

*letter sent to RAF Lossiemouth. Copied for this file for info.*

Section 40

12/9/2001



From: **Section 40**  
Directorate of Air Staff  
Operations & Policy  
**MINISTRY OF DEFENCE**  
Room 6/73, Metropole Building, Northumberland Avenue, London,  
WC2N 5BP

30

Telephone (Direct dial) 020 7218 2140  
(Switchboard) 020 7218 9000  
(Fax) 020 7218 **Section 40**  
(GTN) #

**Section 40**

Your Reference

Our Reference  
D/DAS/64/3/5  
Date  
9 August 2001

Dear **Section 40**,

Thank you for your letter of 10 July in which you ask for clarification of several points arising from your previous correspondence. I will answer these in the same order as your letter.

Question 1

The Public Records Act 1958 and 1967 requires all government departments to review their records before they are 30 years old. This is to ensure that material of historic value is preserved for the nation, while material which is not worthy of preservation, is destroyed when it ceases to have administrative value. Material selected for preservation generally remains closed for 30 years after the last action has been taken and is then transferred to the Public Record Office. Occasionally records are retained for longer periods, for example where their release could be damaging to national security, but this is only with the express permission of the Lord Chancellor. All other material is destroyed.

Until 1967 all "UFO" files (that is the files originating from this branch) were destroyed after five years, as there was insufficient public interest in the subject to merit their permanent retention. However since 1967, following an increase in public interest in this subject "UFO" report files are now routinely preserved. Air defence files, on the other hand, contain material of an operational nature and these files are normally destroyed after five years, unless, unusually, they are considered to contain information of historic significance.

Question 2

It is standard procedure for neighbouring NATO air defence and air traffic control units to liaise closely. In this case, the object was detected visually by aircraft that had just been transferred from London Military to Dutch Military air traffic control and the air defence system was not involved. It is likely that the aircraft were still in communication with both agencies and would have at least verbally reported the presence of a potentially conflicting aircraft to their primary control unit.

Question 3.

There is no evidence to suggest that this was tracked by any airborne or ground based radar units.

Question 4.

There has been no change in our policy for the release of 'UFO' files and no decision has been made to retain them for fifty years. Files from the 1970's will be release to the Public Record Office at the 30 year point.

Finally, you may wish to note that we have recently moved to a new location and due to a reorganisation within the Directorate of Air Staff, our title has changed, as shown at the top of this letter. There has, however, been no change to our duties regarding correspondence about 'UFOs'.

I hope this is helpful.

Yours sincerely,

Section 40

DAO/1/13

13 Jul 01

DAS 4A1(Sec)

REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE – Section 40

Reference:

A. D/DAS(Sec)64/3/55 dated 5 Feb 01.

1. You asked for assistance in answering additional questions and points raised by Section 40 in his latest letter dated 10 Jul 01.

2. In his first question, Section 40 asks why files, if they existed, were not preserved in line with the Public Records Acts. Your response at Reference A to Section 40 previous letter makes reference to the destruction of departmental records. I assume that you were referring to records from the operational departments, ie, D Air Def and operational units, and not those from your own department that are carefully preserved. If an investigation had been undertaken and conclusions reached, I would have imagined that they would have been copied to your department and would have appeared on your files. The fact that they do not reinforces our belief that no investigation was undertaken. I am not conversant with the Public Records Acts, but files and records of an operational nature are normally destroyed after 5 years unless, unusually, they are considered to contain information of historic significance. However, as you are aware, DAO files, and D Air Def files since 1992, with a "UFO" content are sent to the AHB for retention

3. Section 40 expresses concern that "a fellow NATO member was not warned of an impending airspace violation by an unidentified aircraft". It is standard procedure for neighbouring NATO air defence and air traffic control units to liaise closely. In this case, the object was detected visually by aircraft that had just been transferred from London Military to Dutch Military air traffic control and the air defence system was not involved. It is likely that the aircraft were still in communication with both agencies and would have at least verbally reported the presence of a potentially conflicting aircraft to their primary control unit.

4. Section 40 asks whether the "one large aeroplane (shape)" was tracked by any airborne or ground based radar units. Unfortunately, there is no evidence to suggest that this was the case.

Section 40

Wg Cdr  
DAO ADGE 1  
MB4227 Section 40  
CHOtS: DAO ADGE1



Reply by 10 August

Section 40



Section 40

DAS 4a1(Sec),  
M.O.D.  
Whitehall,  
LONDON.

Your Reference: D/DAS (Sec)64/3/5

10/07/01.

Dear Section 40,

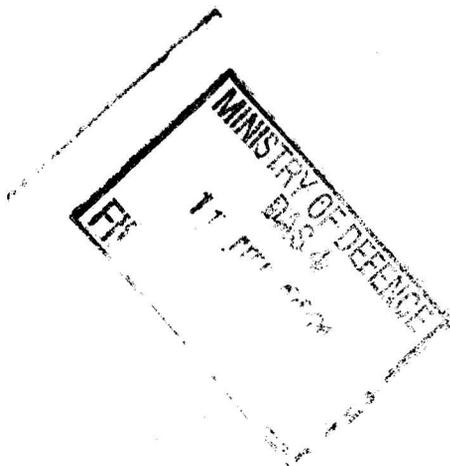
Thank you for your letter dated 5 February, 1991, and for your patience in dealing with my enquiries.

There are a few things that I would like clarification upon, and would appreciate your advice.

1. You mention that departmental records covering the period in question were destroyed some time ago, in accordance with standard administrative procedures. If files existed besides this single document (which I feel is a reasonable assumption given that an unidentified aircraft overtook three RAF Tornado GR1 front-line aircraft while leaving UK airspace), why were these files not preserved in line with the Public Records Acts of 1958 and 1967?
2. I accept the reason stated for the lack of defence interest from a UK defence position, but am concerned that a fellow NATO member was not warned of an impending airspace violation by an unidentified aircraft.
3. Was the "One large aeroplane (shape)" tracked on any airborne or ground based radar units? Presumably at least one radar unit was functioning between the GR1 three ship, if only the weather radar.
4. I read recently that the MOD will not be releasing any ufo files from the 1970's for fifty years. Is this true, and if so, why?

Yours faithfully,

Section 40





From: **Section 40** [redacted] DAS 4a1(Sec)  
**MINISTRY OF DEFENCE**  
Room 8245, Main Building, Whitehall, London, SW1A 2HB



Telephone (Direct dial) 020 7218 2140  
(Switchboard) 020 7218 9000  
(Fax) 020 7218 [redacted]  
(GTN) # [redacted] **Section 40**

**Section 40**

Your Reference

Our Reference  
D/DAS(Sec)64/3/5  
Date  
5 February 2001

Dear **Section 40**

I am writing further to my letter of 13 December 2000, as I am now in a position to provide a substantive reply to your letter of 22 November 2000.

In your letter of 5 September 2000 you asked a number of hypothetical questions, citing as an example the sighting on 5 November 1990. The answers given addressed a likely sequence of events but not necessarily those arising on the date in question.

You mention the handling of the "additional information". Our letter of 17 November 2000 contained no "new" information. In our efforts to be helpful, we sought advice of current air defence staff who provided their interpretation of the likely events, based on the data in the signal filed by RAF West Drayton, a copy of which was provided to you. I am not able to say whether there was, or was not, an "investigation" into the incident of 5 November 1990 as departmental records for that period were destroyed some time ago, in accordance with standard administrative procedures. We have no idea if any report was ever made to the Dutch authorities.

With regard to your question concerning records of Air defence aircraft investigating unidentified or uncorrelated radar returns, it appears you may have misunderstood the context in which we use the term "unidentified airborne targets". For air defence purposes, air defence staff endeavour to identify all aircraft that are detected on radar operating within the UK Air Defence Region. Those that cannot be immediately identified and which are considered a potential threat are intercepted in order that visual identification can be made. Aircrew submit reports on completion of their missions and there are no instances on record of anything other than man made aircraft being intercepted. A request for an individual report would be likely to be refused under Exemption 1a of the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information (Information whose disclosure would harm national security or defence), as they relate to the conduct of military operations.

We have made enquiries to see if the number of reports is readily available. Unfortunately there are no figures prior to 1990, as most files and log books are destroyed after a five to ten year period. It is estimated that since 1990 the number of reports made was less than five in each year.

Finally, you asked whether files previously available to Sec(AS)2a would still be available to DAS 4a(Sec). I can assure you that Secretariat(Air Staff)'s merger with Director of Air Staff has meant our files have simply been stamped with our new title, for instance the file this letter has been placed on was previously D/Sec(AS)64/3/5. All files that were available to us as Sec(AS)2a are still available to DAS 4a(Sec).

Yours sincerely,

Section 40



File 64/3/5.

64A(SEC)

**From:** DAO ADGE1  
**Sent:** 29 January 2001 17:32  
**To:** DAS4A(SEC)  
**Cc:** DAS4A1(SEC)  
**Subject:** FW: HANDLING OF CORRESPONDENCE ON AIR DEFENCE MATTERS



**Importance:** High



DAOADGEletter.doc

**Section 40**

As promised, following our conversation today on the subject of the attached note, I can confirm that I am content to continue providing support from an air defence perspective on UFO/UAP matters. Clearly, there will be occasions on which you will need an operational input on whether an incident has any operational air defence significance and, providing the workload is maintained at the current, relatively low level, I am probably best placed to continue to act as the conduit for that support.

**Section 40**

Wg Cdr  
DAO ADGE1

-----Original Message-----

**From:** DAS4A(SEC)  
**Sent:** 12 January 2001 12:29  
**To:** DAO ADGE1  
**Subject:** HANDLING OF CORRESPONDENCE ON AIR DEFENCE MATTERS  
**Importance:** High

FILE NOTE

25

File D/DAS(Sec)64/3/5

Monday 29 Jan 01.

Went with DAS4A1(Sec) to see DAO, ADGE 1, Wg Cdr **Section 40** to discuss my minute of 12 Jan 01 in which I asked him to indicate if he wished to continue to receive 'UFO' correspondence and conduct investigations as he deemed necessary.

Since the 1977 Review of Procedures (Sec(AS) ADGE 1, has received a smaller number of UFO letters and other notifications of UFO sightings. These have been, as agreed with Sec(AS), notifications from the Credible Witness, corroborated statements and any reports made during the time of the sighting. He had no idea of the numbers but felt that they were quite small.

A very few are investigated in any depth. He looks at each letter/notification from an air defence perspective and with his expert knowledge of radar decides whether he feels there is any requirement to 'investigate' any further. This he may do very occasionally; generally the extent of his work is to take a quick look at the paper and, in his capacity as a radar expert, decide that it is not a matter of concern and take no further action. If he does decide to take action he is likely to refer to 2 Group or to an air traffic controller.

He is happy to continue in this role although he is not tasked or resourced to receive a wider range of material (which was not suggested) nor to undertake detailed investigation (unless there is evidence of anything being very seriously amiss). He is content to do this in view of the fact that there is no radar expert within DAS.

**Section 40**

DAS4A(SEC)





Section 40  
OMD14  
Ministry of Defence  
Room 617,  
Northumberland House  
Northumberland Avenue  
LONDON  
WC2N 5BP



Telephone: 020 721 Section 40  
Fax: 020 721 [redacted]

# Fax

To: Section 40

Fax: Section 40

Pages: 1 (including this cover page)

Phone:

Date: 12<sup>th</sup> January 2000

Re: Section 40 - UFO files.

Section 40

Section 40 Thanks for faxing the DIS letter over to me. Having spoken with DOMD I'm happy that you treat your end of Section 40's request as complete. However I've contacted DIS about the file they mention in their letter. I can't see a reason for refusing to release the information concerned. We'll chase them up on this. If they agree to release this info to Section 40 will I get them to forward it to you?

Section 40: As long as the files withheld by the RAF would reveal details of operational procedures then exemption 1a is okay. Any other information would have to be considered separately. Was there a possibility of releasing some info but not the whole document? If not, then I'm happy with the letter to go out as is.

Once again, I'm sorry about the delay in getting back to you.

Section 40

LOOSE MINUTE

23

D/DAS(Sec)64/3/5

12 January 2001

DAO ADGE 1

**HANDLING OF CORRESPONDENCE ON AIR DEFENCE MATTERS**

1. As you will know, your desk is one of our points of call for advice on replying to a small selection of letters from members of the public on the subject of incursions into UK airspace by Unidentified Aerial Phenomena (often referred to as 'UFOs'). On occasions letters have also been sent to DI55, for any investigation they might regard necessary.

2. Consultation has taken place over many years, 25 at least, and our line has been that:

"MOD examines any reports of 'UFOs' it receives solely to establish whether what was seen might have some defence significance; namely, whether there is any evidence that the UK's airspace might have been compromised by hostile or unauthorized air activity."

Every few years some measure of internal discussion has taken place to review our public line and action taken in view of the fact that MOD interest has proved to be negligible. At the present time we remain recipients of 'reports' of sightings by members of the public, many of which are sent initially to AIS(Mil) at West Drayton. Letters and 'reports' receive a brief reply and are, generally, filed upon receipt with a very few passed on for investigation.

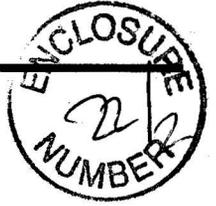
3. Recently we have been informed by DI55 that they no longer wish to see the very small selection of 'reports' from credible witnesses that we have been sending them. This leaves us with one port of call, your own desk. I would be grateful if you would let me know if you wish to continue to play a part in any consideration of the air defence significance of 'UFO' correspondence, as opposed to the role of advisor to DAS(Sec) on RAF procedure. If you see no role for yourself as assessor of events that may or may not have an air defence significance (to date they have not), then I anticipate reviewing our public line on the subject and handling of enquiries in general. It would be helpful if you would let me know the reasoning behind your decision to inform internal discussion.

Section 40

DAS4A(SEC)

MB8243 Section 40

● S4A1(SEC)



From: OMD14  
Sent: 11 January 2001 13:58  
To: DAS4A1(SEC)  
Subject: Section 40 Access to Information

Section 40

I'm sorry I'm so late in getting back to you. A combination of Xmas leave and training courses has meant I've only just seen your LM of the 28th December relating to Section 40 realise I've missed your deadline of earlier this week but do you still want something from us in writing? If so I can draft an LM and get it off to you by the end of the week.

Section 40

OMD14  
NH617 Section 40

3 Jan 01



**DAS 41 (SEC)**

**REQUEST FOR INFORMATION ON AIR DEFENCE MATTERS – Section 40**

Reference:

A. D/DAS(Sec)/64/3/5 dated 28 Dec 00.

1. At Reference, you requested clarification on the number of reports on aircraft scrambles on a year by year basis in relation to **Section 40**'s latest letter.

2. The frequency of aircraft scrambles against unidentified radar targets has changed dramatically since the end of the Cold War in 1989. Prior to 1989, it had been common for our air defence aircraft to be scrambled to intercept unidentified radar targets almost on a daily basis. However, as the Cold War drew to a close, the frequency of such incidents reduced dramatically and, since the demise of the Warsaw Pact, is now in single figures, typically only 2 or 3 times per year.

3. If necessary, I could probably ascertain the precise number of scrambles over the past 10 years, but not without some considerable effort in sifting through old operations log books. The files containing the relevant mission reports are likely to have been destroyed in repeated re-organisations of our air defence structure over the past 7 years (I personally authorised the destruction of one such file in the past year when UK CAOC became NATO CAOC 9!). I would question the value of going through such an exercise just to come up with some very small numbers. As most files and log books are routinely destroyed anyway after a 5 to 10 year period, it is highly unlikely that accurate figures could be ascertained prior to 1991.

4. I hope this is of value, but please do not hesitate to contact me if you require further assistance. Meanwhile, it is important to emphasise that there is no evidence to suggest that any of these scrambles have taken place against anything other than man-made aircraft (PS. Happy New Year!)

**Section 40**

**Section 40**

Wg Cdr

DAO ADGE 1

MB4227 **Section 40**

CHOTS: DAO ADGE1



LOOSE MINUTE

D/DAS(Sec)64/3/5

28 December 2000

OMD 14

**PROPOSAL TO REFUSE INFORMATION UNDER EXEMPTION IN THE CODE OF PRACTICE ON ACCESS TO GOVERNMENT INFORMATION**

1. I attach the latest letter from **Section 40**, a persistent correspondent on the subject of 'UFO's. I also attach at Annex A my draft reply.
2. **Section 40**'s first letter about this particular sighting on the 5 November 1990, was in April 1998 and this is his fourth letter on the subject. During this correspondence he has asked many detailed questions which we have considered in line with the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information and all have been answered as fully as possible.
3. At Question 2 of **Section 40**'s latest letter he has enquired about the reports of incidents where military air defence aircraft have been scrambled to investigate/ intercept airborne targets. I propose to withhold the files containing the reports under Exemption 1a of the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information (Information whose disclosure would harm national security or defence). I am making further enquiries to see if details of the numbers of such incidents may be released.
3. I would be grateful for any comments you may have either on my draft or the use of this Exemption, by COP Monday 8<sup>th</sup> January 2001.

**Section 40**

**Section 40**

DAS4A1(SEC)

MB8245 **Section 40**



Section 40  
[Redacted]

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE  
DAS 4a1(Sec)  
23 NOV 2000

Section 40  
Sec. (A.S.)2a1,  
M.O.D.  
Whitehall,  
LONDON.

Your Reference: D/Sec(AS)/64/3/5

22/11/00.

Dear Section 40

Thank you very much for your reply dated 17 November 2000, which was extremely helpful and informative.

There are a few points upon which I would appreciate your guidance.

1) An unidentified aircraft was seen exiting the UK Air Defence Region, and overtook three Royal Air Force low-level, supersonic capable ground attack aircraft on the evening of 5th November 1990.

Your correspondence dated 4 August 2000, stated that the reporting form forwarded to Sec (AS)2a by a pilot of the three-ship formation of Tornado GR1 aircraft, was the only information on file.

I am interested to learn:

- a) Why the additional information forwarded by DAS 4a1(Sec) to me in your previous reply, was not in the same file as the pilots' report, and therefore not readily available to DAS 4a1(Sec)?
- b) If the additional information was not in this file, where was the file containing the additional information located?
- c) Whether the additional information recently discovered will now be kept permanently with the file containing the pilots' report?
- d) Is a written copy of the MOD/RAF investigation into the incident available for public scrutiny?
- e) What supporting evidence does the MOD/RAF give to justify the statement that this incident was not a hostile act by an unknown authority, and also the reasons why it was not of defence interest?
- f) As DAS 4a1(Sec) serves as the focal point for correspondence relating to unidentified aerial occurrences, which department serves as the focal point for receiving investigation reports and their respective conclusions regarding aerial sighting reports received by UK Armed Forces personnel?

2. With regard to your answer identified as Question 5 regarding records not for release of Air defence aircraft investigating unidentified or

uncorrelated radar targets or returns: (scrambles)

- a) How many records of this type exist?
- b) Between what dates were these reports received?
- c) Is there a date allocated for the release of these files, and if so, what is it?
- d) What is the reason for withholding these files from public scrutiny?

2. With past records being misplaced due to restructuring within the MOD, what safeguards are in place to ensure that all records available to Sec (AS)2a will be accessible and readily available to DAS 4a1(Sec)?

Thank you for your efforts to deal my enquiries, they are appreciated.

Yours faithfully,

Section 40



## ANNEX A

### DRAFT

I am writing further to my letter of 13 December, as I am now in a position to provide a substantive reply to your letter of 22 November 2000.

In your letter of 5 September 2000 you asked a number of hypothetical questions, citing as an example the sighting on 5 November 1990. The answers given addressed a likely sequence of events but not necessarily those arising on the date in question, as I believe my letter made clear.

You mention the handling of the "additional information". Our letter of 17 November contained no "new" information. In our efforts to be helpful, we sought advice of current air defence staff who provided their interpretation of the likely events, based on the data in the signal filed by RAF West Drayton, a copy of which was provided to you. I am not able to say whether there was, or was not, an "investigation" into the incident of 5 November 1990 as departmental records for that period were destroyed some time ago, in accordance with standard administrative procedures. We have no idea if any report was ever made to the Dutch authorities.

With regard to your question concerning records of Air defence aircraft investigating unidentified or uncorrelated radar returns, it appears you may have misunderstood the context in which we use the term "unidentified airborne targets". For air defence purposes, air defence staff endeavour to identify all aircraft that are detected on radar operating within the UK Air Defence Region. Those that cannot be immediately

identified and which are considered a potential threat are intercepted in order that visual identification can be made. There are no instances on record of anything other than man made aircraft being intercepted. Aircrew submit reports on completion of their missions and these are handled in the same way as all other routine, operational mission reports. They are not released to the public as they relate to the conduct of military operations (and I am sure you will understand, that we can not allow information of that nature to fall into the hands of potential adversaries.) Your request for release of this information is therefore refused under Exemption 1a of the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information (Information whose disclosure would harm national security or defence).

CONFIDENTIAL

If you are unhappy with this decision and wish to appeal against it, you should write in the first instance to Ministry of Defence, DOMD, Room 619, Northumberland House, Northumberland Avenue, London WC2N 5BP. If, following the internal review you remain dissatisfied, you can ask your MP to take up the case with the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration (the Ombudsman) who can investigate on your behalf. The Ombudsman will not investigate until the internal review process has been completed.

Finally, you asked whether files previously available to Sec(AS)2a would still be available to DAS 4a(Sec). I can assure you that Secretariat(Air Staff)'s merger with Director of Air Staff has meant our files have simply been renumbered with our new title, for instance the file this letter has been placed on was previously D/Sec(AS)64/3/5.

LOOSE MINUTE

D/DAS (Sec) 64/3/5

28 December 2000

DAO ADGE 1

**REQUEST FOR INFORMATION ON AIR DEFENCE MATTERS – Section 40**

Reference: D/DAO/1/13 dated 15 December 2000

1. Thank you for your help with Section 40's letter. I would be grateful if you could clarify the following.
2. Paragraph 2 (a) and (b) – Do you know how many reports currently exist on incidents where aircraft have been scrambled (say on a year by year basis)? I appreciate that the reports themselves can not be released to the public, but if the figures are available, could they be released?
3. I am grateful for any advice you can provide.

Section 40

Section 40

DAS4A1(SEC)

MB8245 Section 40

D/DAO/1/13

15 Dec 00

**DAS 4A(SEC)**

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE DAS 4 (SEC) 18 DEC 2000 FILE _____
---

20

**REQUEST FOR INFORMATION ON AIR DEFENCE MATTERS – Section 40**

Reference:

A. D/DAS(Sec)/64/3/5 dated 12 Dec 00.

1. At Reference, you forwarded a copy of **Section 40**'s latest correspondence and asked me to comment on your draft response to his first question and provide some information to address his second question.

2. I have discussed the matter with **Section 40** and I would agree that the time has now come to try and bring this saga to a close as there is no additional information that we can provide, either factual or interpreted. Your draft response to **Section 40**'s first question is, therefore, suitably concise and to the point. I think it important to emphasise that, in our efforts to be helpful, you sought advice of current air defence staff who provided their interpretation based on the scant data available, namely the signal filed by RAF West Drayton. **Section 40** seems to have incorrectly misinterpreted this to be some form of previously recorded information that we had not disclosed.

ques 1.



3. As far as which department serves as the focal point for receiving reports, I thought they all came in the first instance direct to DAS 4 (please correct me if I am wrong). From there, they are passed to DAO (and presumably any other staffs if appropriate) to see if there is any air defence related significance. It may be worth making it clear that we do not investigate every report in depth and our enquiries are usually very cursory in nature. The outcome is then fed back to DAS 4 where, presumably, you keep all the correspondence. I do not know whether you would wish to point out that we only look at those reports coming from credible witnesses.

4. Turning to **Section 40**'s second question, I believe he may have misunderstood the context in which we use the term "unidentified airborne targets". For air defence purposes, we endeavour to identify all aircraft that are detected on radar operating within our area of responsibility. Those that cannot be immediately identified and which are considered a potential threat are intercepted in order that visual identification can be made. There are no instances on record of anything other than man made aircraft being intercepted. Aircrew submit reports on completion of their missions and these are handled in the same way as all other routine, operational mission reports. They are not for release to the public because they relate to the conduct of military operations and, I am sure that **Section 40** would agree, it would be irresponsible of us to allow information of that nature to fall into the hands of potential adversaries. Post mission reports are filed and those files are normally destroyed in accordance with normal procedures after a few years. This is an on-going activity which has its roots in the Battle of Britain. Clearly, during the Cold War when aircraft of the Warsaw Pact regularly probed our airspace, as was often and openly reported in the national press, frequent interceptions resulted. Since the end of the Cold War, such

a+b.  
 Nos.  
 Class ->  
 Code.  
 Sg info/  
 War  
 defence.

d

c

instances have become very infrequent. I must stress that all these activities relate to visual identification of aircraft and there have been no reports of anything more sinister, other than the odd weather balloon!

5. I hope this is of use and fully satisfies Section 40's lust for more information.

Section 40

Section 40

Wg Cdr

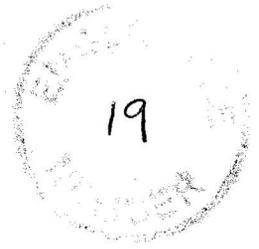
DAO ADGE 1

MB4227 Section 40

CHOTS: DAO ADGE1



From: **Section 40**  
Directorate of Air Staff  
4a1(Secretariat)  
**MINISTRY OF DEFENCE**  
Room 8245, Main Building, Whitehall, London, SW1A 2HB



Telephone (Direct dial) 020 7218 2140  
(Switchboard) 020 7218 9000  
(Fax) 020 7218 **Section 40**  
(GTN) #

**Section 40**

Your Reference

Our Reference  
D/DAS(Sec)64/3/5  
Date  
13 December 2000

Dear **Section 40**

I am writing to acknowledge receipt of your letter of 22 November requesting further information about the 'UFO' sighting report of 5 November 1990.

Your letter is receiving attention and we will send you a substantive reply as soon as possible.

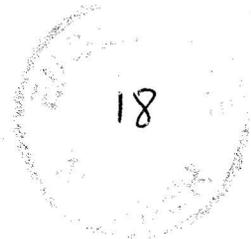
Yours sincerely,

**Section 40**

**LOOSE MINUTE**

D/DAS(Sec)/64/3/5

12 December 2000



**DAO ADGE 1**

copy to:  
DI 55

**REQUEST FOR INFORMATION ON AIR DEFENCE MATTERS - Section 40**

Reference: D/DAO/1/13 dtd 30 Oct 00

1. I attach the latest letter from **Section 40**, a persistent correspondent on the subject of a UAP sighting on 5 November 1990.
2. **Section 40** first wrote to this Secretariat concerning UAP in November 1996. Some months later (in 1997) he wrote to his MP on the subject of procedures for reporting UAP sightings and then resumed his correspondence with us in April 1998 asking about a specific event on 5 November 1990. His latest letter is the fourth on the subject of that sighting in 1990.
3. We are required to consider **Section 40**'s request in line with procedures laid down in DCI GEN 223/99 based on the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information while, hopefully, bringing the correspondence on this particular event to a close. I would certainly like to answer his first question (points a. to f. included) fairly briefly and attach a suggested form of wording. I should be grateful if you would cast an eye over the attachment and let me have comments and corrections by COP 19 December.
4. **Section 40**'s second question (points a. to d. inclusive) widens his area of interest somewhat. Perhaps you would let me have some information that I shall then work into a reply.

**Section 40**

DAS4A(SEC)

MB8243 **Section 40**

## ANNEX

In your letter of 5 September 2000 you asked a number of hypothetical questions, citing as an example the sighting on 5 November 1990. The answers given addressed a likely sequence of events but not necessarily those arising on the date in question, as I believe **Section 40**'s letter makes clear.

You mention the handling of the "additional information". Our letter of 17 November contained no "new" information but did interpret, in a little more detail and in an effort to be helpful, the events suggested by the original report. I am not able to say whether there was, or was not, an "investigation" into the incident of 5 November 1990 as departmental records for that period were destroyed some time ago, in accordance with standard administrative procedures. We have no idea if any report was ever made to the Dutch authorities. **(If "which department serves as the focal point for receiving investigation reports. . . regarding aerial sighting reports" DAO please advise.)**



Section 40

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE  
DAS 4 (Sec)  
23 NOV 2000

[Redacted]

Section 40

Sec. (A.S.)2a1,  
M.O.D.  
Whitehall,  
LONDON.

Your Reference: D/Sec(AS)/64/3/5

22/11/00.

Dear Section 40,

Thank you very much for your reply dated 17 November 2000, which was extremely helpful and informative.

There are a few points upon which I would appreciate your guidance.

1) An unidentified aircraft was seen exiting the UK Air Defence Region, and overtook three Royal Air Force low-level, supersonic capable ground attack aircraft on the evening of 5th November 1990.

Your correspondence dated 4 August 2000, stated that the reporting form forwarded to Sec (AS)2a by a pilot of the three-ship formation of Tornado GR1 aircraft, was the only information on file.

I am interested to learn:

- a) Why the additional information forwarded by DAS 4a1(Sec) to me in your previous reply, was not in the same file as the pilots' report, and therefore not readily available to DAS 4a1(Sec)?
- b) If the additional information was not in this file, where was the file containing the additional information located?
- c) Whether the additional information recently discovered will now be kept permanently with the file containing the pilots' report?
- d) Is a written copy of the MOD/RAF investigation into the incident available for public scrutiny?
- e) What supporting evidence does the MOD/RAF give to justify the statement that this incident was not a hostile act by an unknown authority, and also the reasons why it was not of defence interest?
- f) As DAS 4a1(Sec) serves as the focal point for correspondence relating to unidentified aerial occurrences, which department serves as the focal point for receiving investigation reports and their respective conclusions regarding aerial sighting reports received by UK Armed Forces personnel?

2. With regard to your answer identified as Question 5 regarding records not for release of Air defence aircraft investigating unidentified or

**uncorrelated radar targets or returns:**

**a) How many records of this type exist?**

**b) Between what dates were these reports received?**

**c) Is there a date allocated for the release of these files, and if so, what is it?**

**d) What is the reason for withholding these files from public scrutiny?**

2. **With past records being misplaced due to restructuring within the MOD, what safeguards are in place to ensure that all records available to Sec (AS)2a will be accessible and readily available to DAS 4a1(Sec)?**

**Thank you for your efforts to deal my enquiries, they are appreciated.**

**Yours faithfully,**

Section 40



Section 40

DAS 4a1 (Sec)

Room 8245,

MAIN BUILDING,

WHITEHALL,

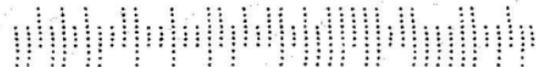
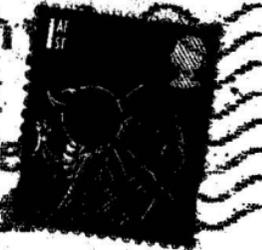
LONDON

SW1A 2HB



Royal Mail  
Chester N Wales  
Café 0447 0447  
10.07.01  
04:35 pm  
33301710

Defnyddiwch  
Cod Post  
Please Use  
the Postcode



Section 40

DAS 4a1 (Sec)

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE,

Room 8245

MAIN BUILDING,

WHITEHALL,

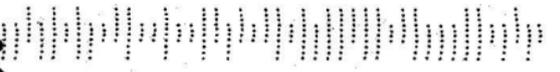
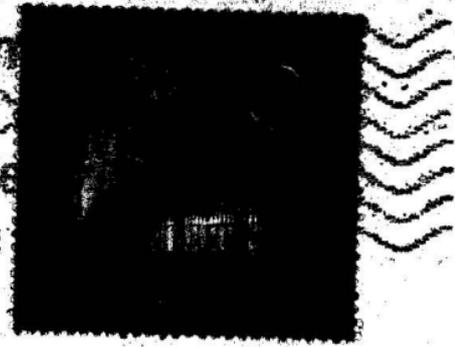
LONDON

SW1A 2HB



Royal Mail  
Chester N.Wales  
Caer Gog Oymru  
22.11.00  
04:05 pm  
33203080

Defence  
C  
Pla  
the





From: **Section 40** DAS 4a1(Sec)  
**MINISTRY OF DEFENCE**  
Room 8245, Main Building, Whitehall, London, SW1A 2HB

Telephone (Direct dial) 020 7218 2140  
(Switchboard) 020 7218 9000  
(Fax) 020 7218 **Section 40**  
(GTN) #

**Section 40**

Your Reference

Our Reference  
D/DAS (Sec)64/3/5  
Date  
17 November 2000

Dear **Section 40**

Further to my letter of 26 September regarding your request for additional information about an 'unidentified flying object' sighting on 5<sup>th</sup> November 1990, I am now in a position to provide a substantive reply.

In order to provide you with a reply we have made some enquiries. Given the fact that the event you mention occurred some 10 years ago these have taken a while to complete.

It appears that a Tornado aircraft, probably one of a formation of three, was conducting a routine eastbound journey from an airfield in the UK to Laarbruch in Germany during the evening of Monday 5 November 1990. The aircraft was leaving UK airspace when it was overtaken by an aircraft shaped object. Shortly before control of the aircraft was transferred by the London Military air traffic controller at RAF West Drayton to his counterpart at Dutch Military Radar in the Netherlands in accordance with standard procedure. We assume that the aircraft was still in contact with RAF West Drayton on its second radio and chose to report the incident to UK authorities. We do not know if it was also reported to Dutch authorities. Since the event involved aircraft departing UK airspace, it is unlikely that the situation generated any UK Air Defence interest.

I will now answer your questions in the same order as your letter.

Question 1(a-e)

When Air Defence aircraft are scrambled for a real air policing mission, they are deemed operational and the Ministry of Defence has no role in the chain of operational command. That chain of command involves an Air Defence Commander and an Air Defence Control and Reporting Centre. During an operational mission, orders to the aircraft and reports of findings are passed up and down this chain. An operational summary of the mission is written by the aircrew on landing and passed to the appropriate staff in the operational chain of command. The Station Commander is neither part of the operational command chain during the mission nor involved in subsequent analysis, however, he would probably be informed of events as matter of courtesy.

Sec(AS) (now called DAS 4a(Sec)) has no role in command or in the processing of any operational data. DAS 4a (Sec) is the focal point within MOD for correspondence relating to 'UFOs' and passes correspondence, as appears appropriate, to air defence experts.

Question 2

The Tornados involved in the report of 5 November 1990 were Tornado GR1. These are not air defence aircraft and they were merely in transit, not engaged on an operational mission.

Question 3

As the incident did not threaten UK airspace, it was judged to be of no defence significance.

Question 4

MOD's interest in unusual air activity is to ascertain whether any threat exists to the integrity of UK airspace. Any incident would be investigated from an operational perspective in which Provost and Security Services would have no role.

Question 5

Air Defence aircraft occasionally investigate unidentified airborne 'targets'. Records of this activity are not for release, however, there is no evidence of any air defence aircraft employed on any air defence mission ever having intercepted, identified or photographed an object of an extra-terrestrial nature.

Question 6

As I mentioned in my previous letter, occasionally members of the public do send us photographs of objects in the sky which they have been unable to identify. These are usually of lights at night for which there could be rational explanations, such as aircraft lights. It is not the function of the MOD to provide an aerial identification service and there is therefore no reason for us to keep a database of these photographs.

Question 7

All notifications of sightings and letters are kept and placed on file.

Question 8

The larger part of duties falling to DAS 4a(Sec) (formerly Sec(AS)2a) concerns military low flying training in the UK, advice on non-operational RAF activities overseas, RAF Exchange Officer deployments and management of Diplomatic flight clearance procedures.

I hope this is helpful.

Yours sincerely,

Section 40

Hidden Copy to: DAO ADGET

DAS4A1(SEC)

---

From: DAS4A1(SEC)  
Sent: 01 November 2000 14:32  
To: DAO ADGE1  
Subject: RE: Section 40 INPUT

15

Section 40

Thanks for all your work on the Section 40 letter. We have got a copy of the Nicholas Soames Hansard entry. Sec(AS) sent a copy of it to Section 40 in May 1998 as part of the answer to a previous letter from him. I will be very careful about what I say to Section 40 so as not to contradict anything said then.

Section 40

**DAS4A1(SEC)**

---

**From:** DAO ADGE1  
**Sent:** 31 October 2000 14:23  
**To:** DAS4A1(SEC)  
**Subject:** Section 40 INPUT

14



Rep to DAS 4a1 re

Section 40

Section 40

Here is my effort on the Section 40 saga I hope it helps. A hard copy is on the way with a map attached. Section 40 mentioned a Hansard entry about a statement made by Nicholas Soames - have you seen it? - we should have a look at it in case it contains any surprises which might affect your response.

Section 40

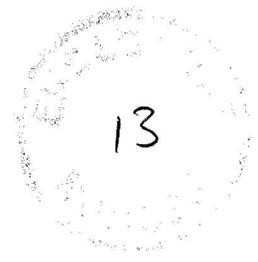
LOOSE MINUTE

D/DAO/1/13

30 Oct 00

DAS 4a1(Sec)

Report - Yes  
Investigation - No



**REQUEST FOR INFORMATION ON AIR DEFENCE MATTERS – Section 40**

References:

- A. D/Sec(AS)/64/3/5 dated 25 Sep 00.
- B. Z6F 061340Z Nov 90. Aerial Phenomena observed on 5 Nov at 1800Z.

1. At Reference, you asked for advice on how we might respond to a letter from **Section 40** asking for information on how we deal with UFO matters in general, and more details of the 5 Nov 90 UFO report in particular. I will attempt to address **Section 40's** point in turn and indicate what could be released to protect standard operating procedures rather than hide any information concerning reports of unusual air activity.

**Aerial Phenomenon Report – 5 Nov 90**

2. First of all, having examined only the Aerial Phenomena Report filed by RAF West Drayton at Reference B, I will set out what I assess to have been the circumstances surrounding the sighting. Our departmental records for this period were destroyed some time ago in accordance with standard administrative procedures.



*Records del Troop*

3. A Tornado aircraft, probably one of a formation of 3 GR1s<sup>1</sup>, was conducting a routine eastbound transit from an airfield in UK to Laarbruch in Germany during the evening of Monday 5 Nov 90. The aircraft was following a standard TACAN route to join TACAN BLUE 6 at the Flight Information Region (FIR) boundary at a military reporting point known as MC6. Shortly before reaching MC6 control of the aircraft was transferred by the London Military air traffic controller at RAF West Drayton to his counterpart at Dutch Mil Radar in the Netherlands in accordance with standard procedure. At 1800Z, the time the aerial phenomenon was observed, the aircraft was leaving UK airspace 'in the MC6 area' at Flight Level 270 (FL270), heading 100 degrees at speed Mach 0.8. The aircraft was overtaken on the right by an aircraft shaped object, displaying 5/6 steady white and one blue light, at the same altitude which then proceeded in to its 12 0' clock position at a range of 440yds. The probable route of the Tornado is shown on the map at Annex A. It is assumed that the aircraft was still in contact with West Drayton on this second radio and chose to report the incident to UK authorities rather than the Dutch.

4. The incident is unusual in that the aircraft chose to report the incident as an aerial phenomenon rather than as an Air Proximity Report (AirProx) to highlight the loss of standard separation between aircraft (at this altitude separation should be 1,000ft or 5 nautical miles). There is no record of an AirProx report being made on this date in the UK. It is not known,

<sup>1</sup> Air Defence Tornado F3s are unlikely to have been flying to Laarbruch.

however, whether Air Prox or Aerial Phenomena Reports were filed with Dutch authorities. At 1800Z on 5 Nov it is dark both on the ground and at FL270. This explains the reference to the lights and to 'one large aeroplane (shape)' rather than a more specific description which would be expected of a professional military observer. In these low light conditions, it is generally difficult to judge range and relative motion and it may well be that the aircraft captain had subsequently revised his appreciation of the incident and decided not to take the major step of reporting an air proximity hazard<sup>2</sup>. Significantly, had controllers at West Drayton or Dutch Mil witnessed a loss of standard separation on radar, they would have raised AirProx Reports in their own right; this was certainly not done at West Drayton.

5. Finally, since the incident clearly involved one or more aircraft departing UK airspace, it is highly improbable that the situation generated any UK Air Defence interest.

### Responses to Section 40's Questions

6. Comment on Section 40's questions and observations are set out sequentially below.

7. Question 1 a-e. The point should be made that the Tornados of the 5 Nov 00 were merely in transit and not engaged on an operational mission. This is why the aircraft were in contact with Air Traffic Control agencies rather than operational air defence units. In addition, the Tornados were Ground attack variants and conduct only training in UK and Western Europe, never operations. When Air Defence aircraft are scrambled for a real air policing mission, such as for the investigation of an unidentified contact in the UK Air Defence Region (now the UK Air Policing Area), they are deemed operational and the MoD has no role in the chain of operational command. AD aircraft engaged on air policing missions are scrambled on the authority of an Air Defence Commander and controlled during their mission by an Air Defence Control and Reporting Centre, a unit also responsible for producing the Recognised Air Picture. During the mission, orders to the aircraft and reports of findings are passed up and down this chain. In addition, an operational summary of the mission is written by the aircrew on landing and passed to the appropriate commanders and intelligence staff in the operational chain of command. If the aircraft intercepted was operationally significant, the mission results and any photographs of intruding aircraft would be dispatched to MoD intelligence staff. The Station Commander is neither part of the operational command chain during the mission nor involved in subsequent analysis, however, he would probably be informed of events as matter of courtesy. Specifically, Sec(AS) has no role in command or in the processing any operational data. There is no record of any air defence aircraft employed on any air defence mission ever having intercepted, identified or photographed an object of an extra-terrestrial nature.

8. Question 2. The 3 Tornados on 5 Nov 00, were not air defence aircraft and were not on an operational mission. There is no evidence that the UK air defence radar network either did or did not detect the 'unknown'. Since the incident did not threaten UK airspace (it occurred at the very edge on an outbound heading) and was not intruding the UK air defence region, there was no reason for the UK Air Defence authorities to act. The GR1 aircraft's onboard radar has a very None

---

<sup>2</sup> Unlike Air Defence Tornados on operational scrambles, GR1s do not carry cameras and it is improbable that this 'object' was captured on film. In addition, the GR1 radar at the time, designed for terrain following, had a very limited air-to-air capability (even if they had bothered to have switched it on for a transit). The precise distance, position etc of the 'object' could not, therefore, have been determined.

limited air-to-air capability, and it is highly unlikely that this mode was active during a transit. Only air defence Tornado F3 aircraft carry cameras, and only on operational missions or for specific air defence training purposes.

9. Question 3. From the report at Reference B, there is no evidence that a threat to the UK air defence region existed; it is, therefore, hardly surprising that no record of an investigation can be found. It would be useful, however, to find out exactly what Nicholas Soames said in Hansard before you respond.

10. Question 4. MoD's interest in unusual air activity of this nature is to ascertain whether any threat existed to the integrity of UK airspace. Any incident would be investigated from an operational perspective in which Provost and Security Services would have no role.

11. Question 5. Air Defence aircraft occasionally investigate unidentified airborne 'targets'. Records of this activity are not releasable, however, there is no evidence of any air defence aircraft employed on any air defence mission ever having intercepted, identified or photographed an object of an extra-terrestrial nature.

12. Question 6. Analysis of aerial phenomena is for the scientific community to pursue. I doubt whether the public have forwarded many photographs to Sec(AS) for scrutiny. They would, I suspect, rather sell them to the tabloid press.

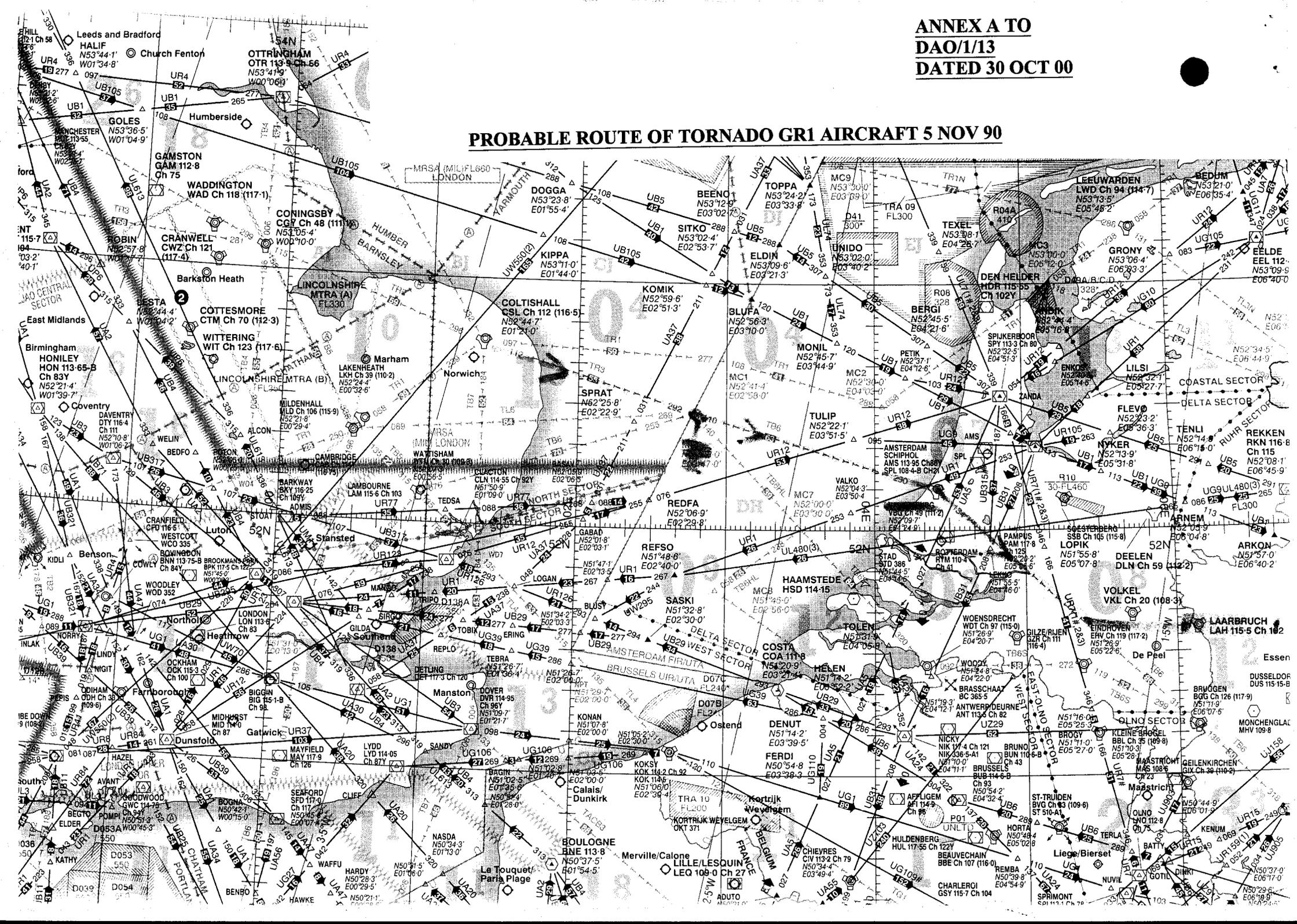
Section 40

Wg Cdr  
ADGE 1  
MB4227 Section 40  
CHOTS: DAO ADGE1

Annexes:

A. Probable Route of Tornado GR1 Aircraft 5 Nov 90

**PROBABLE ROUTE OF TORNADO GR1 AIRCRAFT 5 NOV 90**



LOOSE MINUTE

D/Sec(AS)64/3/5

25 September 2000

12

DAO-AD GE1

DAS 1e

**REQUEST FOR INFORMATION ABOUT AIR DEFENCE MATTERS**

1. Please see attached a copy of a letter we have received from a member of the public who is asking specific questions about how reports of 'unidentified flying objects' are handled. Section 40 is a regular correspondent with DAS 4a(Sec) on UFO matters and I would be grateful for your advice on how we might answer his questions. It may help if I explain the background to this letter.
2. In May Section 40 wrote to us asking if he could have a copy of a signal allegedly sent from RAF Tornado pilots who saw a UFO while conducting manoeuvres in the North Sea on 5 November 1990. He had heard about the signal from Nick Pope (who as you may be aware, is a former member of Sec(AS) who has written several books on UFOs). My colleague, Section 40, replied on the 15 June enclosing a copy of the signal which we sanitised to protect the confidentiality of those involved.
3. Section 40 wrote again on 11 July, asking if the details in the signal followed a standard list of questions, if the aircraft's onboard or ground radar detected the UFO, if the aircraft captured the UFO photographically or electronically and if an investigation was conducted into the incident. He also asked if we kept a database or library of photographs of UFO that pilots use to identify this phenomena. I replied to this letter on 4 August and I have attached a copy of my reply for your information.
4. As you can see I have already told Section 40 in my previous letter that we can not speculate on what might have happen in 1990, but in his latest letter he is asking about the general procedures followed when aircrew see something they can not identify and the chain of events that follow. I would appreciate it if you could explain to me what normally happens and any advice you can give as to what we can tell Section 40.
5. I have sent Section 40 holding letter and would appreciate your views by COP Friday 6 October 2000.

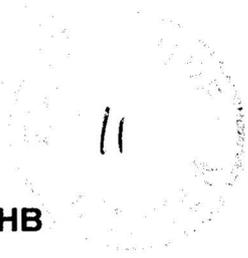
Section 40

DAS 4a1(Sec) (CHOTS address Sec(AS)2a1)

MB 8245 Section MB30



From: **Section 40** DAS 4a1(Sec)  
**MINISTRY OF DEFENCE**  
Room 8245, Main Building, Whitehall, London, SW1A 2HB



Telephone	(Direct dial)	020 7218 2140
	(Switchboard)	020 7218 9000
	(Fax)	020 7218 <b>Section 40</b>
	(GTN)	#

**Section 40**

Your Reference

Our Reference  
D/Sec(AS)64/3/5  
Date  
26 September 2000

Dear **Section 40**

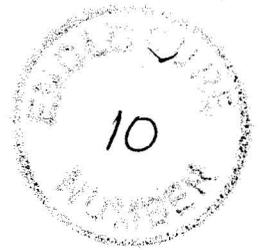
Thank you for your letter of 5 September in which you asked a number of questions about UFO reporting procedures.

As you will be aware, we aim to reply to such letters within 20 working days of receipt. However, owing to administrative difficulties it may not be possible to reply to you within this timescale.

Nevertheless, you may be assured that you will receive a substantive reply as soon as is practicable.

Yours sincerely,

**Section 40**



Section 40

Section 40

Section 40

Sec. (AS.)2a1,  
M.O.D.  
Whitehall,  
LONDON.

Your Reference: D/Sec(AS)/64/3/5

05/09/00.

Dear Section 40

Thank you very much for your reply dated 4 August 2000, and the copy of my sighting report that I requested.

I only have a few points remaining to discuss arising from your correspondence, I'm sure you'll be glad to hear!

To hopefully remove some tedious typing from your day, I am aware that Sec(AS)2a has a small staff, and that your department has many areas of responsibility other than ufo's.

1) I would be grateful if you could explain to me the chain of events involved in how a report from operational airforce personnel ends up with your Department e.g. as in the Tornado aircraft incident of November 5th 1990, i.e.

- a) Would the aircrew have contacted a Military Air Traffic Controller while still airborne?
- b) Who would normally take any statements from the aircrew upon landing?
- c) If an RAF Intelligence officer were the person to interview the aircrew, would that officer pass on that report to an internal distribution list, or forward it directly and exclusively to Sec(AS)2a?
- d) Would the Station Commander be informed routinely as a Standard Operations Procedure?
- e) If an unauthorised intrusion of the U.K. air defence region were to happen in a real-time situation, and deemed to be of an aggressive nature, what would the chain of command be on deciding to intercept that craft, and what would Sec(AS)2a's rôle be within the command structure?

2) I must admit to being puzzled by the apparent lack of action taken by the MOD, judging from your comments regarding the Tornado

aircraft incident of November 5th 1990. I am, and always have been a firm believer in a coherent defence policy, and a strong supporter of the RAF. I find it hard to believe that a flight of three UK front-line defence aircraft encountered an unidentifiable aircraft intruding the UK air defence region, and yet Sec (AS) has no record of whether the defence radar network, let alone the aircrafts' onboard radar detected this intrusion. Likewise, surely in this day and age (even in 1990) a record should have been made of whether any visual or photographic images were recorded?

3) Despite the assurance of MOD that an investigation of this incident revealed no evidence of a threat to the UK air defence region, I am disappointed that Sec(AS) can offer no evidence of the investigation allegedly carried out, as outlined by the then Secretary of State, Nicholas Soames, in a written reply published in Hansard. In fact, it would appear that no files of an investigation, as opposed to the incident reporting form itself, exist.

4) Is it conceivable that an intelligence division (e.g. Provost and Security Services) did carry out further investigation of this incident, and details of that investigation are held with that branch or any other division within the MOD?

5) You mention that if appropriate, air defence aircraft might be scrambled or diverted to investigate/intercept any uncorrelated airborne targets. Do you have any records of incidents of this nature on file, and if so, are copies of the reports available?

6) I am equally surprised that no photographic database exists of unusual aerial phenomena. It surely makes sense that if members of the public, and pilots in particular, succeed in capturing photographs of so far unidentified aerial phenomena, and forward prints for further scrutiny, Sec (AS)2a, as the focal point for these items should have a database making retrieval and comparison for identification of phenomena type relatively easy.

7) Does Sec(AS)2a keep a record of geographical distribution of sighting reports?

8) What other responsibilities lie within Sec(AS)2a?

Thank you for outlining the appeals procedure to me. I can't think of anything else I need to ask ('Thank Goodness' I hear you say!).

● However, I do feel that Sec(AS)2a has had a bad press recently, and your replies, I feel, are important.

If any of my questions should be put to other departments regarding the defence issues I raise, I would appreciate your advice on who to contact.

Heartfelt thanks for the time, effort, and patience you have spent in answering my queries. Needless to say, the offer given to **Section 40** at the end of my previous letter is extended to yourself!

Best wishes,  
Yours sincerely,

**Section 40**



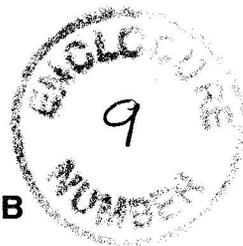
Section 40

SEC(AS)2A1,  
MINISTRY OF DEFENCE,  
ROOM 8245,  
MAIN BUILDING,  
WHITEHALL  
LONDON  
SW1A 2HB





From: Section 40 SEC(AS)2A1  
MINISTRY OF DEFENCE  
Room 8245, Main Building, Whitehall, London, SW1A 2HB



Telephone (Direct dial) 020 7218 2140  
(Switchboard) 020 7218 9000  
(Fax) 020 7218 Section 40  
(GTN) #

Section 40

Your Reference

Our Reference  
D/Sec(AS)64/3/5  
Date  
4 August 2000

Dear Section 40

Thank you for your letter of 11 July addressed to my colleague, Section 40 requesting further information concerning the 'UFO' sighting report, a copy of which was sent with our letter of 15 June. I will answer your questions in the same order as your letter.

Q1. a) 'UFO' sightings are reported to us in a variety of ways. Some of these reports follow a standard list of questions and some do not. However, having examined the copy of the report sent to you, I believe it follows the following format:

- A. Date and time of sighting
- B. Description of object
- C. Exact position of observer
- D. How object was observed
- E. Direction in which object was first seen
- F. Angle of Sight
- G. Distance
- H. Movement of Object
- J. Meteorological conditions during observation
- K. Nearby objects or buildings
- L. To whom reported
- M. Informant's details
- N. Any background of informant that may be revealed
- O. Other witnesses

Q1. b), c) and e). The report is the only information we have on file regarding the sighting and I am unable to speculate on what may or may not have taken place at the time.

Q1. d) The integrity of the UK's airspace in peacetime is maintained through continuous surveillance of the UK Air Defence Region by the Royal Air Force. This is achieved by using a combination of civil and military radar installations, which provide a continuous real-time "picture" of the UK airspace. Any threat to the UK Air Defence Region would be handled in the light of the particular circumstances at the time (it might if deemed appropriate, involve the scrambling or diversion of air defence aircraft). From that perspective, reports provided to us of 'UFO' sightings are examined, but consultation with air defence staff and others as necessary is considered only where there is sufficient evidence to suggest a breach of UK air space. The vast

majority of reports we receive are very sketchy and vague. Only a handful of reports in recent years have warranted further investigation and none revealed any evidence of a threat.

Q2. MOD files are generally released to the Public Record Office when they reach the 30 year point. A wide range of files for 1974 would, therefore, be considered for release in early 2005. As **Section 40** said, information about the incident may exist on archived files from other Branches. However, without knowing what information there might be and thereby, tracing it to a particular Branch, there is simply no way of identifying the files. It is also the case that although 'UFO' files are routinely preserved and made available at the 30 year point, other Departmental files may be destroyed when it is judged that their contents are of no specific interest or importance in terms of preservation. To carry out a search of MOD archived files to try and identify in the first instance those that might contain relevant information and subsequently check them to see if a particular incident was recorded would involve scrutiny of a considerable volume of paper records. For this reason, your request was refused under Exemption 9 of the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information (voluminous or vexatious request).

Q3. As you know, the MOD's only interest in 'UFO' sightings is whether they reveal any evidence that the United Kingdom's airspace might have been compromised by hostile or unauthorised foreign military activity. Unless there is evidence of a potential threat to the United Kingdom from an external military source, we do not attempt to identify the precise nature of each sighting reported to us. MOD does not therefore have a library of photographs of 'unusual aerial phenomena'. Any photographs sent to the Department by members of the public are either returned to them or placed on file with the associated correspondence.

Q4. I enclose a copy of your sighting report of 7 May 1996.

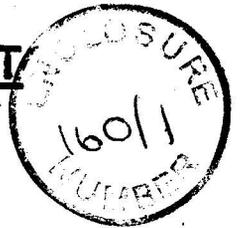
If you are unhappy with the decision to refuse your request for access to MOD files and wish to appeal, you should write in the first instance to the Ministry of Defence, DOMD, Room 619, Northumberland House, Northumberland Avenue, London WC2N 5BP requesting that the decision be reviewed. If following the internal review you remain dissatisfied, you can ask your MP to take up the case with the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration (the Ombudsman) who can investigate on your behalf. The Ombudsman will not, however, consider an investigation until the internal review process has been completed.

Yours sincerely,

**Section 40**



# REPORT OF AN UNIDENTIFIED FLYING OBJECT



A. Date, Time, Duration of Sighting. 04 2140 MAY 6 MINS

B. Description of Object.

Number, ONE  
Size, BIG LIKE HELICOPTER  
Shape,  
Colours, GREEN + BLUE WITH RED LIGHT AT BACK OF OBJECT  
Brightness,  
Sound, NONE  
Smell, NONE

C. Exact Position of Observer.

Geographical Location,  
Indoors, Outdoors,  
Stationary, Moving.

D. How Object was Observed.

Naked Eye, Binoculars, ~~Satellite Video Camera~~

E. Direction in which Object was first seen.

(A Landmark may be useful) EAST

F. Angle of Sight.

30°

G. Distance.

(By reference to a known Landmark if possible) 3 MILES

H. Movement of Object.

HOVERING

J. Met Conditions during Observation.

Moving Clouds,  
Haze, Mist, CLEAR

K. Nearby Objects or Buildings etc.

L. To Whom Reported.

Police, Press, Military Organization, Airport.  
RAF VALLEY

Section 40

M. Name and Address of Informant

Section 40

Section 40

N. Any Background of the informant that may be Volunteered.

O. Other Witnesses.

Section 40

P. Date & Time of Receipt of Report.

07 1330 2 MAY

Section 40

Section 40

Sec. (A.S.)2a,  
M.O.D.  
Whitehall,  
LONDON.

Your Reference: D/Sec(AS)/64/3/5

11/07/00.

Dear Section 40

1) Thank you very much for your reply dated 15 June 2000.

With regard to the copy of the sighting report of 5 November 1990, I would like to clarify a few points:

a) Would I be correct in assuming the Tornado sighting responses correspond to a standard reporting form, and would a copy of the said form be available (purely to ascertain the questions asked). While I assume most of the questions to be obvious from the answers given, others are not so.

b) Was the unidentified craft detected by the aircrafts' onboard, or ground based radar?

c) Did any of the aircraft involved succeed in capturing the unidentified aircraft photographically or electronically?

d) Under what criteria would an intrusion of UK airspace by unidentified aircraft be deemed of defence interest?

e) Was an investigation carried out to determine the nature of the unauthorised incursion of UK airspace, and if so, would it be possible to obtain a copy of the report detailing the investigation undertaken, including recommendations and conclusions?

2) Regarding the 23 January 1974 incident involving RAF Valley, would I be correct in assuming that any surviving records will be released into the public domain in 2004? As you may be aware, this incident has received widespread publicity (including claims that a downed craft was recovered along with extraterrestrial lifeforms(!) from an anonymous source. This person was a serving member of the army at the time - his records have apparently been inspected and he had a distinguished military career). While my research over the last few years, which includes interviews with eyewitnesses have uncovered much documentation from the police, a report written at the time by an astrophysicist who was dispatched from Keele University, and many newspaper cuttings which refer to RAF involvement, official documentation from the RAF is impossible to find, which encourages those who point towards a cover-up. As this incident first came to light as a 'ufo incident' in 1991, I believe that the large military presence reported has been confused over the years with the SAR mission and subsequent recovery of Harrier GR3, Ser.No. XZ973 of 233OCU which crashed at Llandrillo, Nr. Corwen (Bala), Berwyn Hills on 12/02/82 killing the pilot Lieutenant John M. Macbeth. Aircraft involved in search included:

Harriers from RAF Wittering  
Gazelle helicopters from RAF Shawbury  
2 No. Wessex SAR from RAF Valley  
1 No. Hercules (unidentified base)

If there is any other recourse available to me in recovering documentation from 1974 which would help in putting the myth to bed, I would appreciate your advice, and would be prepared to pay a reasonable cost towards recovery of documentation relating to RAF involvement in this incident. I have three newspaper cuttings which include interviews with **Section 40** of Valley Mountain Rescue team who conducted a three day search of the area.

3) Does Sec(AS)2a or any other department of the MOD have access to a database or library of photographs or other images of unusual aerial phenomena, and which are used to assist pilots, ground personnel or civilians in identifying said phenomena, and if so, are any of these available for inspection by the public?

4) Finally, would it be possible to obtain a copy of the report filed with Sec(AS)2a by myself via West Drayton by telephone on 7 May 1996?

Hopefully I will not be corresponding further with you following this letter, so may I thank you very much for taking the time to respond to all my enquiries. **Section 40**

**Section 40** not 'anti-establishment', and support the RAF both at RIAT and whenever the opportunity arises locally at RAF Valley. We all enjoy seeing the variety of military aircraft overhead (when the cloudbase is high enough!).

If you are ever in the vicinity I would be more than pleased to buy you a pint or three!

Thank you very much for your time and patience in answering my questions.

It is much appreciated.

Yours faithfully,

**Section 40**



From: Section 40, Secretariat(Air Staff)2a, Room 8245  
MINISTRY OF DEFENCE  
Main Building, Whitehall, London, SW1A 2HB

Telephone (Direct dial) 0171 218 2140  
(Switchboard) 0171 218 9000  
(Fax) 0171 218 Section 40

8  
MAY 2000

Section 40

Your Reference

Our Reference  
D/Sec(AS)/64/3/5 ←

Date  
15 June 2000

Dear Section 40

I wrote to you on 31 May to say that we would be looking into the questions you ask in your letter of 8 May. I am sorry for the delay in replying.

As requested in your letter, I enclose a copy of a sighting report of 5 November 1990 referred to by Mr Soames in reply to a written Parliamentary question (Official Report, 24 July 1996, col 424). As you will see, some details have been deleted to protect the confidentiality of the witness concerned. As Mr Soames said, the event was not judged to be of defence significance.

Your request for information about any RAF involvement in an alleged incident on 23 January 1974 is refused under Exemption 9 (voluminous or vexatious requests) of the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information.

To identify any documentation or information for that date would involve a manual search of MOD archived files for a number of Branches existing at that time and detailed scrutiny of a considerable volume of paper records to determine whether any might have some relevance.

You ask about an alleged incident on 23 May 1966. MOD files from that period that were preserved have been given to the Public Record Office and their contents are, therefore, a matter of public record. They are available for public viewing at the Public Record Office, Ruskin Avenue, Kew, Richmond, Surrey, TW9 4DU.

During 1998 and 1999, MOD received 193 and 229 alleged sighting reports respectively. I should emphasise however, that the figures relate to reported sightings in which the witness has been unable to identify the aerial activity concerned. The vast majority of these sightings would have had mundane explanations such as aircraft lights, weather balloons etc. However, MOD's interest in sighting reports is to establish whether there is anything that might be of defence concern such as, unauthorised or foreign military incursions of UK air space. We do not attempt to identify the precise nature of each sighting reported to us. We could not justify expenditure of public funds on investigations that go beyond our specific defence remit.

Finally, you will wish to know that Sec(AS)2a is the MOD focal point for receipt of all alleged sighting reports. MOD has, as I have said above, only a limited interest in what is reported and, anyone, military or civilian is able to pass on to us information about what they have seen. Separate records for the status of those making reports are not maintained.

Yours sincerely

Section 40

TOP

↑ FEED DIRECTION

UNCL No. 64/2

UNCLASSIFIED

[REDACTION ON ORIGINAL DOCUMENT]

[REDACTION ON ORIGINAL DOCUMENT]

[REDACTION ON ORIGINAL DOCUMENT]

FROM [REDACTION ON ORIGINAL DOCUMENT]  
TO MODUK AIR [REDACTION ON ORIGINAL DOCUMENT]

UNCLASSIFIED

[REDACTION ON ORIGINAL DOCUMENT]

SUBJECT: AERIAL PHENOMENA

A. 5 NOV 1800Z

B. ONE LARGE AEROPLANE (SHAPE). 5 TO 6 WHITE STEADY LIGHTS. 1 BLUE STEADY LIGHT. CONTRAILS FROM BLUE AREA

C. IN THE AIR [REDACTION ON ORIGINAL DOCUMENT]

D. NAKED EYE

E. HEADING 100 DEGREES. SAME ALT [REDACTION ON ORIGINAL DOCUMENT]

F. INTO OUR 12 OCLOCK

G. ONE QUARTER MILE AHEAD

H. STEADY

J. N/K

K. N/K

L. [REDACTION ON ORIGINAL DOCUMENT]

M. [REDACTION ON ORIGINAL DOCUMENT]

PAGE 2 [REDACTION ON ORIGINAL DOCUMENT] UNCLAS

N. NIL

O. [REDACTION ON ORIGINAL DOCUMENT]

P. OTHER INFO. [REDACTION ON ORIGINAL DOCUMENT] UFO APPERED IN OUR RH SIDE SAME LEVEL, WE WERE TRAVELLING AT MACH POINT 8. IT WENT INTO OUR 12 OCLOCK AND ACCLLERATED AWAY. ANOTHER 2 TORNADOS SEEN IT

[REDACTION ON ORIGINAL DOCUMENT]

BT

[REDACTION ON ORIGINAL DOCUMENT]

[REDACTION ON ORIGINAL DOCUMENT]

TOP

↑ FEED  
DIRECTION

CL No.  
64/2

U N C L A S S I F I E D

CWD197 06/1542 310C2587

FOR CAB

ROUTINE 061340Z NOV 90

FROM RAF WEST DRAYTON  
TO MODUK AIR

U N C L A S S I F I E D  
SIC Z6F

SUBJECT: AERIAL PHENOMENA

A. 5 NOV 1800Z

B. ONE LARGE AEROPLANE (SHAPE). 5 TO 6 WHITE STEADY LIGHTS. 1 BLUE STEADY LIGHT. CONTRAILS FROM BLUE AREA

C. IN THE AIR M.C.6 AREA. FL270 YPENBURG

D. NAKED EYE

E. HEADING 100 DEGREES. SAME ALT FL270

F. INTO OUR 12 OCLOCK

G. ONE QUARTER MILE AHEAD

H. STEADY

J. N/K

K. N/K

L. WORKING DUTCH MILL RADAR

M. Section 40

PAGE 2 RBD AID 0009 UNCLAS

N. NIL

O. 2 OTHERS FROM LAARBRUCH

P. OTHER INFO. AIRCRAFT WAS UNDER DUTCH MIL CONTROL UFO APPERRED IN OUR RH SIDE SAME LEVEL, WE WERE TRAVELLING AT MACH POINT 8. IT WENT INTO OUR 12 OCLOCK AND ACCLLERATED AWAY. ANOTHER 2 TORNADOS SEEN IT AND POSSIBLE IDENTED IT AS A STEALTH AIRCRAFT

BT

DISTRIBUTION Z6F

F

CAB 1 SEC (AS) ACTION ( CXJ 1 AFDD )  
CYD 1 DD GE/AEW  
CAV 1 DI 55  
CAV 2 DGSTI



From: **Section 40** Secretariat(Air Staff)2a, Room 8245  
**MINISTRY OF DEFENCE**  
Main Building, Whitehall, London, SW1A 2HB



Telephone (Direct dial) 0171 218 2140  
(Switchboard) 0171 218 9000  
(Fax) 0171 218 **Section 40**

**Section 40**

Your Reference  
Our Reference **D/Sec(AS)/64/3** ←  
Date  
**31** May 2000

Dear **Section 40**,

I am writing to acknowledge receipt of your letter of 8 May seeking information about the UFO phenomenon.

We aim to reply to such letters within four working weeks from date of receipt. However, owing to current administrative difficulties it may not be possible to reply to you within this timescale.

Nevertheless, you may be assured that you will receive a substantive reply as soon as is practicable.

*Yours sincerely*  
**Section 40**

Sec. (A.S.)2a,  
M.O.D.  
Whitehall,  
LONDON.

08/05/00.

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am currently researching various aspects of the UFO phenomenon and would appreciate your advice on the following:

1) It has been reported by a gentleman named Nick Pope that during his tour of duty with Sec (AS)2a, he received a signal from a patrol of RAF Tornado aircraft on November 5th 1990, while conducting manoeuvres over the North Sea. This signal apparently stated that the pilots were overtaken at high speed by a large unidentifiable aircraft of some sort.

I am in possession of the relevant Hansard containing questions to the minister and the given reply, but would like a copy of the signal sent to Sec (AS)2a by the aircrew. I am not concerned with details of the squadron or personnel involved.

2) Do you have any documentation or further information relating to the RAF involvement in a search for a downed aircraft/meteorite/Ufo which occurred on the night of January 23rd 1974 in the Berwyn Mountains region of North Wales?

I am in possession of various North Wales Police documentation recording the incident, as well as a photocopy of the Valley MRT diary covering their deployment to investigate "lights and noise on hillside". However, official documentation is proving difficult to track down, although the distribution lists of their report which are known to me include:

MOD (Ops (ESR) b (RAF))  
HQTC FT3c  
HQ 18 (M) Group  
HQ Normar (for RCC)  
OC Ops Wing  
Station F540.

3) Does Sec (AS)2a have or know of any reports filed regarding Folland Gnat XR570? This aircraft, of 4FTS Valley was struck by a "mystery object" on May 23rd, 1966 whilst flying over Tryweryn Reservoir.

4) How many reports of unidentified aircraft/phenomena have been received by the ministry since 1998 from:-

- a) military sources
- b) civilian sources

5) Of the many reports currently available for public scrutiny, there appears to be a distinct lack of reports from the Royal Navy and British Army sectors of the UK Armed Forces. Do you have reports of Unidentified aerial phenomena from these branches, and if not, to which departments would these reports be made before forwarding to Sec (AS)2a?

Thank you for taking time to read my correspondence, and I hope you can be of assistance to me.

Yours faithfully,

Section 40

A large black rectangular redaction box covers the signature area, obscuring the name and any handwritten notes.

SECRETARIAT (AIR STAFF)

Room 8245



Royal Mail  
Chester N. Wales  
Caeff. Gog. Cymru  
09:05.00  
05:30 pm  
22500462

Defnyddiwch y

Cod Post

Please Use

the Postcode

1st



MINISTRY OF DEFENCE,

MAIN BUILDING,

WHITEHALL

LONDON

SW1A

2HB



From: **Section 40**, Secretariat (Air Staff) 2a1  
**MINISTRY OF DEFENCE**  
Main Building, Whitehall, London SW1A 2HB



Telephone (Direct dial) 0171 218 2140  
(Switchboard) 0171 218 9000  
(Fax) 0171 218 **Section 40**

**Section 40**

Your reference

Our reference  
D/Sec(AS)/64/3  
Date  
12 May 1998

Dear **Section 40**,

1. Thank you for your letter of 7 April in which you asked a number of questions in respect of reports of 'unidentified flying objects'.
2. I will answer your questions as presented:
  - (1) In accordance with the Public Records Act of 1958 and 1967 Government files which are deemed worthy of preservation (for historical or public interest reasons) are transferred to the Public Record Office (PRO) at Kew thirty years after the last action has been taken on the file. It was generally the case that before 1967 all 'UFO' files were routinely destroyed after five years, on the grounds there was no long term interest in this subject. However, public interest has increased in recent years and, in 1967 a decision was taken that the Ministry of Defence's 'UFO' report files should be retained and transferred to the PRO at the thirty year point. A few files from the 50s and early 60s did survive and have been transferred to the PRO. I have consulted our records branch who advise that the MOD holds no papers relating to the 'UFO' phenomenon over thirty years old, ie. papers dating earlier than 1968. The absence of this report at the PRO leads me to conclude that it has regrettably not survived the passage of time.
  - (2) All surviving contemporary paperwork has been forwarded to the PRO in accordance with the provisions of the Public Records Act of 1958 and 1967.
  - (3) The Official Secrets Act reflects Government policy regarding the protection of nationally sensitive information; anyone contravening the Act makes themselves liable to prosecution and, if found guilty, liable to penalty as proscribed by law. This Act of

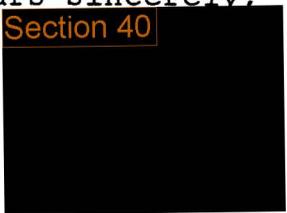
Parliament applies equally to all UK citizens; members of the public, as well as serving and ex-service personnel. In the hypothetical example you cite in your question former service personnel would be able to discuss any matter which was not "classified" but may be liable under the Official Secrets Act if they revealed information which today remains "classified".

- (4) The MOD's policy in respect of reports of 'unidentified flying objects' has not changed. The Department's interest in these matters relates solely to whether a sighting represents an incursion of the UK Air Defence Region by hostile or unauthorized foreign military activity.
- (5&6) As explained in Mr Spellar's letter to Dafydd Wigley MP of 21 January, the integrity of the UK's airspace in peacetime is maintained through continuous policing of the UK Air Defence Region by the Royal Air Force which remains vigilant for any potential external military threat. We are confident that our current air defence capabilities fully meet any perceived threat.
- (7) The number of reports of 'unexplained' aerial sightings made by members of the armed forces is very small in comparison to the overall number of reports the Department receives. Since 1967 all reports received by this Department, from whatever source, are transferred to the PRO at the thirty year point.
- (8) On 24 July 1996 the Minister of State for the Armed Forces, the Hon Nicholas Soames MP, answered a Parliamentary Question from the late Martin Redmond about this alleged incident. I enclose a copy of the Official report for your information.
- (9) Depending on the nature of events alleged to have been witnessed, further advice as necessary would be sought from Defence experts within the Department.
- (10) Since 1 January 1995 to date the MOD has received:
  - one 'UFO' report from a military source.
  - 1,470 'UFO' reports from civilian sources.
- (11) As explained in para 2 of the letter to Dafydd Wigley MP of 21 January, unless there are defence implications, and to date no 'UFO sighting' reported to us has revealed such evidence, we do not attempt to identify the precise nature of each report.

3. I am returning your sae as we have our own postal arrangements.

Yours sincerely,

Section 40



# WANSARD EXTRACT

Official Report - Written Answers

- Column 424 - 24 JULY 1996

## Unidentified Craft

**Mr. Redmond:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what is his Department's assessment of the incident that occurred on 5 November 1990 when a patrol of RAF Tornado aircraft flying over the North sea were overtaken at high speed by an unidentified craft; and if he will make a statement; [39245]

(2) if he will make a statement on the unidentified flying object sighting reported to his Department by the meteorological officer at RAF Shawbury in the early hours of 31 March 1993. [39246]

**Mr. Soames:** Reports of sightings on these dates are recorded on file and were examined by staff responsible for air defence matters. No firm conclusions were drawn about the nature of the phenomena reported but the events were not judged to be of defence significance.

Section 40

Section 40

Sec. (A.S.)2a,  
M.O.D.  
Whitehall,  
LONDON.

Your ref: D/Sec(AS) /64/3

07/04/98.

Dear Section 40

I wrote to Secretariat (Air Staff) 2a1a occasionally during the latter half of 1996, my final letter dated 02/02/97.

Having reported a sighting of an unidentified aircraft on the night of May 4th 1996 to the MOD, I received written confirmation from both your department that no military aircraft were responsible for my sighting, and also from Section 40 of NATS that no flight plans were logged for civilian aircraft; also, North Wales Police confirmed their helicopter was not airborne that night, and the civilian airport at Caernarfon was not operational as of 19.00hrs. that day. As I have therefore established that an unidentified aircraft was operational, and was somewhat surprised at the lack of interest shown by the MOD at a possible breach of UK airspace defences, I wrote to my Member of Parliament, Dafydd Wigley (Plaid Cymru) who in turn wrote to the Secretary of State for Defence on both 12/06/97 and again on 02/10/97 expressing my concern.

Following the reply received from John Spellar MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary Of State For Defence ref. D/US of S/JS 5075/97/M and dated 21 January 1998, I have investigated previous reports which are available for public inspection at the PRO at Kew, and would appreciate your guidance on the following, namely:-

1) Re: File No. PREM 11/855.

Why is the Intelligence study, referred to by the Air Ministry as having been carried out in 1951, not available for public inspection at the P.R.O.?

2) Re: File No.'s AIR 20/9321+AIR 20/9320.

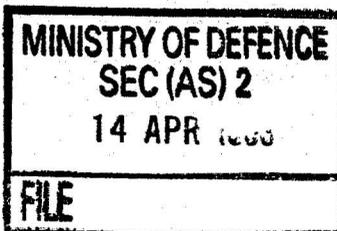
Is there a conclusive report available for public inspection identifying the five unknown objects tracked by Defence Establishment radar installations?

3) Re: File No.'s AIR 20/9994+DEFE 31/118.

Are former services personnel allowed to discuss declassified incidents of this nature, or are they still held to oath under the provisions of the Official Secrets Act?

4) Re: John Spellar's reply to Dafydd Wigley MP in context to 2)&3) above.

What has changed the MOD's stance that no evidence exists to substantiate the breach of UK Air Defence Region by unidentified aircraft, when the above records prove otherwise?



5) Can I be reassured that the UK Air Defence Region is adequately covered for the detection of foreign 'stealth' technology, eg. of Russian, Chinese, or Iraqi origin?

6) When, as in my case, a structured unidentifiable aircraft is reported, rather than 'lights in the sky' or 'flying saucers' and no explanation for the origin of said aircraft is forthcoming, is it not the case that an apparent lack of interest/indifference could be an error of judgement in maintaining the integrity of UK airspace?

7) Due to the lack of records of 'sightings' by service personnel available for inspection at the P.R.O. from 1958 onwards, would it be true to say that no observations have been reported from this date by RAF/civilian pilots and radar operators?

8) Are the reports logged with Sec (AS)2a by a patrol of RAF Tornado Aircraft on November 5th 1990, while conducting manoeuvres over the North Sea available for public inspection? The brief mention of this incident by Nick Pope (formerly of your department) in his book, and in numerous magazine articles authored by himself state that the pilots were overtaken at high speed by a large unidentifiable aircraft of some sort.

9) Without your specifying individual departments, do specific categories of unidentified aircraft sightings get passed routinely to an intelligence interpretation agency?

10) How many reports of unidentified aircraft/phenomena have been received by the ministry since 1995 from:-

- a) military sources
- b) civilian sources

11) Of these reports received, how many remain unidentified?

Thank you very much for the time your department spent on replying to my previous correspondence during 1996/7. To save a little ink from your printer cartridge, I am fully aware of your Departments' policy statement!

Best wishes for a Happy Easter, I also enclose a SAE for your reply.

Yours faithfully

Section 40

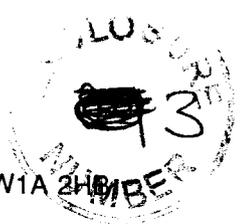


21 JAN 1998



PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DEFENCE

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE  
MAIN BUILDING WHITEHALL LONDON SW1A 2HMB  
Telephone 0171-21.....(Direct Dialling)  
0171-21 89000 (Switchboard)



D/US of S/JS 5075/97/M

21 January 1998

*Dear Dafydd,*

Thank you for your letters of 12 June and 2 October to George Robertson concerning reports of 'unidentified flying objects'. I am replying as this matter falls within my area of responsibility. I am sorry for the delay in responding, however, your earlier letter was not received by my Department.

By way of background I should explain that my Department examines any reports of 'unidentified flying object' sightings sent to us solely to establish whether what was seen might have some defence significance, namely, whether there is any evidence that the UK Air Defence Region might have been breached by hostile or unauthorized foreign military activity. Unless there are defence implications, and to date no 'UFO sighting' reported to us has revealed such evidence, we do not attempt to identify the precise nature of each report. We believe that down to earth explanations could be found for these reports, such as aircraft lights or natural phenomena, if resources were diverted for this purpose but it would be an inappropriate use of defence resources to provide this kind of aerial identification service.

Members of the public who are concerned that they have seen something that might represent a military threat to the United Kingdom can report the details of the incident to the nearest RAF station, police station, air traffic control centre or similar. The information is then passed on to my officials in Secretariat (Air Staff)2 who will examine the details, consulting Air Defence experts and others as necessary, to the extent of our specific interests only. Where there is no evidence to suggest a potential military threat, no further action is taken. Members of the public can also leave details of 'UFO' sightings on the Secretariat (Air Staff) public enquiry line (0171 218 2140) and

Dafydd Wigley Esq MP

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE  
SEC (AS) 2  
22 JAN 1998  
FILE





these are handled in a similar way. My Department does not routinely provide acknowledgements or contact witnesses who submit reports of 'UFO' sightings and will only take further action if there is corroborating evidence of a matter of defence significance.

It is sometimes the case that my Department's specific interest in a particular issue does not correspond with the wider-ranging interests of some members of the public. This is particularly the case with regard to 'UFO' matters. My Department has no interest or role with respect to 'UFO/flying saucer' matters or to the question of the existence or otherwise of extraterrestrial lifeforms about which we remain open-minded. To date my Department knows of nothing which substantiates the existence of these alleged phenomena.

I should wish to assure you that the integrity of the United Kingdom's airspace in peacetime is maintained through continuous policing of the UK Air Defence Region by the Royal Air Force which remains vigilant for any potential military threat.

With regard to any concerns held by your constituents, my Department would, of course, be happy to examine any evidence they might have. The address to which this should be forwarded is:

Ministry of Defence  
Secretariat(Air Staff)2  
Room 8245  
Main Building  
Whitehall  
London SW1A 2HB

I hope this clarifies the position.

Section 40

JOHN SPELLAR MP



SE MINUTE

ec(AS)/6

Jan 98

Unit

thro Section

Section 40

3/1



LETTER FROM DAFYDD WIGLEY MP - US 5075/97

1. I attach a draft reply for USofS to send to Dafydd Wigley MP who seeks clarification on the MOD's 'UFO' reporting procedures and asserts that the MOD's current 'UFO' reporting procedures do not work. Mr Wigley's original letter of 12 June was not received by the Department and, following his hastening letter of 2 October, we have only now had sight of it.

2. As USofS will know, it is sometimes the case that the Department's limited interest in these matters does not correspond with the much wider-ranging interests of some members of the public. Occasionally this leads to comments that the system does not work.

3. It is not the Department's policy to write to each witness to acknowledge receipt of all 'UFO' reports made to the MOD (several hundred are received by the Department annually). Follow-up action would only be taken if it was considered that a sighting might represent something of defence concern and required further investigation. The draft reply makes this clear. Furthermore, we are not aware of any phenomena in the North Wales area which warrants further investigation.

4. I am satisfied that the draft is in accordance with the Government's policy on answering Parliamentary Enquiries and the Open Government Code (DCI Gen 48/97).

Section 40

Section 40

Sec(AS)2a1

MB8245 Section 40

CHOTS: SEC(AS)2A (2)

Enc.

697.

Rt Hon George Robertson MP  
Secretary of State for Defence,  
Ministry of Defence,  
Main Building,  
Whitehall,  
LONDON SW1A 2HB

A/871

1361 245

Dear George,

I write to you to ask for some clarification on the reporting procedures which exist within the Ministry of Defence for following up reports of unidentified flying objects around Britain. I am aware that Nick Pope (a former employee in the Air Staff Secretariat) in his book "Open Skies Closed Minds" states: "In theory any member of the public can simply pick up the phone and report an UFO sighting to the UFO Desk Officer in Whitehall. In practice what happens is that instead, those people will invariably contact their local Police Station, civil airport or nearest RAF base. Each of these institutions has written procedure. There is a pro-forma document on which date and time of the particular sighting is recorded as well as a description of what is seen. The papers are then bundled up and sent to the Secretariat (Air Staff) at the MOD."

There is considerable evidence that the system does not in fact work properly. I have had constituents who have reported UFO type incidents, and have been unable to get any sensible response from the local RAF station at RAF Valley on Anglesey; and that the local Police have, until recently at least, been equipped with the wrong number for transferring telephone calls through to RAF West Drayton in Middlesex where I believe the information is monitored.

I would be glad to know what are the reporting procedures that should be followed up by the public who see UFOs and wish to bring them to the attention of the authorities? There has been a spate of such incidents in my constituency over recent months and I have little doubt that there has been some phenomenon there, although I realise that this may be experimental and on a restricted list with regard to publicity.

I shall be glad to have details from you so that I can advise my constituent who raised these issues with me.

S

Many thanks.

Yours sincerely,

Dafydd Wigley MP  
(Caernarfon)



From: Section 40 Secretariat(Air Staff)2a1a, Room 8245,  
MINISTRY OF DEFENCE,  
Main Building, Whitehall, London. SW1A 2HB

4

ENCLOSURE  
79  
NUMBER

Telephone (Direct dial) 0171 218 2140  
(Switchboard) 0171 218 9000  
(Fax) 0171 218 Section 40

Section 40

Your reference

Our reference  
D/Sec(AS)/64/3

Date  
26 February 1997

Dear

Section 40

1. Thank you for your letter dated 2 February 1997.
2. With regard to the aircraft you observed, I have made further enquiries and can confirm that on Friday 6 September 1996 at 2:45pm (the time and date specified in your letter to me of 7 January 1997) there were two Hawks from RAF Valley in your area conducting routine low level flying training. There were two F-15s from RAF Lakenheath in the same area earlier on in the day which were also carrying out routine low level training but these were flying between 1:20pm and 2:20pm.
3. I am sorry that you experienced difficulties with reporting your sighting. However, in future if you wish to bring an "unexplained" aerial sighting to the Department's attention you may do so by writing to this office or telephoning 0171 218 2140. If you wish to complain about military low flying activities you may do so by contacting Secretariat(Air Staff)2b on 0171 218 6020.
4. I hope this is helpful.

Yours sincerely,

Section 40

Section 40

Section 40

Sec. (A.S.)2a,  
M.O.D.  
Whitehall,  
LONDON.

02/02/97.

Dear Section 40

Thank you very much for your letter dated 27th January 1996.

The aircraft I described as F15's were certainly not Hawks. I have trawled through my Air Forces monthly magazines, and the only other aircraft which might fit the bill are:

F-18 Hornet  
F-14 Tomcat  
MiG 29  
SU-27

The aircraft observed were no higher than 200 feet, and at a distance of no more than 150 yards. The pilots of both craft were visible to the naked eye.

Both craft appeared identical, with a Delta wing formation, and twin tailplanes, thus discounting them as Hawks.

No identification markings or RAF roundels were visible to the naked eye.

Also, I would appreciate your comments on the difficulties I encountered in trying to report my sighting in may of 1996 (as outlined in my letter dated January 7th 1997.

Yours faithfully

Section 40

Section 40

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE  
SEC (AS) 2  
- 5 FEB 1997

FILE

From: Section 40 Secretariat(Air Staff)2a1a, Room 8245,  
MINISTRY OF DEFENCE,  
Main Building, Whitehall, London. SW1A 2HB

Telephone (Direct dial) 0171 218 Section 40  
(Switchboard) 0171 218 9000  
(Fax) 0171 218 Section 40



Section 40

Your reference

Our reference  
D/Sec(AS)/64/3

Date  
27 January 1997

Dear Section 40

1. Thank you for your letter dated 7 January 1997.
2. I have made enquiries and have established that the aircraft you observed in September were not F-15s but two Hawks from RAF Valley and were conducting routine low level flying training.
3. I hope this is helpful.

Yours sincerely,

Section 40

Section 40

Section 40

Sec. (A.S.)2a,  
M.O.D.  
Whitehall,  
LONDON.

07/01/97.

Dear Section 40

Thank you very much for your letter dated 16th December 1996.

The exact date of the F-15 overflight was Friday, September 6th, and the time 2.45 p.m.

The previous overflight was on Tuesday May 7th at approximately 4.00 p.m.

Having finally received a reply from Section 40 at the CAA, he cannot account for any aircraft in the area at that time either.

I enclose a copy of the drawing I supplied to him back in August, hoping it might be of use to you in future, also a photocopy of the newspaper report I referred to in my previous letter dated 29th November 1996.

It has been suggested to me that we witnessed a H.A.L.O. test flight, but having done some research, apparently this craft does not exist.

One final comment, if I may.

Having read Nick Pope's book, Open Skies, Closed Minds, one is led to believe that effective lines of communication are established for the reporting of Unidentified Aerial Objects, i.e. any MOD establishment etc.

As I mentioned in previous correspondence to you, RAF Valley were extremely unhelpful to say the least, by interrupting my request to file a report, telling me to report it to the local authority! (this was from the person on the desk).

On trying to file a report with North Wales Police at Caernarfon (who, I might add were extremely helpful and sympathetic) I was passed through five different departments before someone found a telephone number for West Drayton, which when dialled was not recognised. As this was obviously the only number at Caernarfon Police Station, I telephoned RAF Valley again to ask the correct number. The same male officer answered the phone, his attitude was quite hostile when he learnt it was me again, however he grudgingly gave me the correct number.

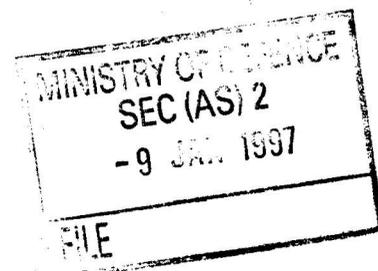
I was surprised therefore at the cheerful and matter-of-fact approach by the officer at West Drayton, expecting hostility down the line. Why could the officer at Valley not have politely given the telephone number in the first instance? Also, why were the Police not aware of the new telephone number?

Thank you very much for taking the time and trouble to answer my queries, hopefully the MOD will receive adequate funding in the near future to conduct a full public investigation into the phenomenon. With best wishes for 1997,

Yours faithfully,

Section 40

Section 40





From: Section 40  
MINISTRY OF  
Main Building, 1

Air Staff)2a1a, Room 8245

SW1A 2HB

Telephone (Direct dial) 0171 218 Section 40  
(Switchboard) 0171 218 9000  
(Fax) 0171 218 Section 40

2  
ENCLOSURE  
31  
NUMBER

Section 40

Your reference

Our reference  
D/Sec(AS)/64/3

Date  
30 July 1996

Dear

Section 40

Report on 64/2 pt B  
enc. 160/1.

1. I am writing with reference to our telephone conversation on Friday 26 July in which we discussed your sighting report of 4 May 1996. Your report was passed to this office as we are the focal point within the Ministry of Defence for all matters relating to "unexplained" aerial sightings.

2. First perhaps it would be useful if I were to explain the role that the Ministry of Defence has with respect to this subject. The MOD and HM Forces have responsibility for the defence of the United Kingdom. In order to discharge that responsibility we remain vigilant for any potential threat, from whatever source. And it is in this context alone that we look at reports of "unexplained" aerial activity in order to establish whether what was seen might be of defence significance. If no threat is discerned, and in connection with "unexplained" aerial sightings this has been the case in all instances to date, we make no further attempt to investigate and establish exactly what may have been seen.

3. From the reports which we receive it is quite clear that there are many sights in the sky which are not immediately identifiable. However, we believe explanations could be found for most of them such as aircraft seen from unusual angles or natural phenomena. We accept that there will always be some sightings that appear to defy explanation, and we are open-minded on these as essentially it is outside our remit to look into a sighting if there is no defence interest.

4. I have made some enquiries and have found that there were no military exercises on the night in question, the MOD received no similar sighting reports for 4 May anywhere in Wales and there were no military aircraft booked into the low flying training system. However, in this particular instance we are not aware of any evidence which would indicate that a breach of the UK's air defences has occurred. I am sorry I cannot be more helpful.

Yours sincerely,

Section 40

# REPORT OF AN UNIDENTIFIED FLYING OBJECT



**Date, Time, Duration of Sighting.** 04 2140 MAY 6 MINS

**Description of Object.**

Number, ONE  
Size, BIG LIKE HELICOPTER  
Shape,  
Colours, GREEN + BLUE WITH RED LIGHT AT BACK OF OBJECT  
Brightness,  
Sound, NONE  
Smell, NONE

**Exact Position of Observer.**

Geographical Location,  
Indoors, Outdoors,  
Stationary, Moving.

Section 40 telephoned  
on 26/7/96 +  
requested a reply.  
copy of the reply  
sent is held on  
6413 pt E. enc. 31

**How Object was Observed.**

Naked Eye, Binoculars, ~~Satellite Video Camera~~

**Direction in which Object was first seen.**

(A Landmark may be useful) EAST

**Angle of Sight.**

30°

**Distance.**

(By reference to a known Landmark if possible) 3 MILES

**Movement of Object.**

HOVERING

**Met Conditions during Observation.**

Moving Clouds,  
Haze, Mist, CLEAR

**Nearby Objects or Buildings etc.**

**To Whom Reported.**

Police, Press, Military Organisation, Airport,  
RAF VALLEY

Section 40

**Name and Address of Informant.**

Section 40  
Section 40

**Any Background of the informant that may be volunteered.**

**Other Witnesses.**

Section 40

**Date & Time of Receipt of Report.**

07 1330 2 MAY



From: **Section 40** Secretariat(Air Staff)2a1a, Room 8245,  
**MINISTRY OF DEFENCE,**  
Main Building, Whitehall, London. SW1A 2HB



Telephone (Direct dial) 0171 218 **Section 40**  
(Switchboard) 0171 218 9000  
(Fax) 0171 218 **Section 40**

**Section 40**

Your reference

Our reference  
D/Sec(AS)/64/3  
Date  
16 December 1996

*Dear* **Section 40**

1. Thank you for your letter dated 29 November 1996.
2. You inquired about the activities of two aircraft (which you thought were American F-15s) which you observed in early September. I am afraid that without an exact date I am unable to determine precisely what activity the aircraft you observed were undertaking. However, the most likely explanation is that they were conducting routine low level flying training in the area.
3. With regard to the sighting reported in the North Wales Chronicle, I have looked back through our sighting report files and have found that the MOD did not receive any reports for 14 November 1996 in the North Wales area.
4. I hope this is helpful.

*Yours sincerely,*

**Section 40**



Section 40

Section 40

Sec. (A.S.)2a,  
M.O.D.  
Whitehall,  
LONDON.

29/11/96.

Dear Section 40

Thank you for your letter dated July 30th 1996, following our telephone conversation on Friday July 30th. I appreciate the effort you have put into dealing with my enquiry. Please accept my apologies in taking so long to reply, but I have been awaiting a reply to a letter from a Section 40 at the CAA since August.

However, despite my writing a brief letter to him exactly one month ago, I have yet to receive an acknowledgement from him that he received the original letter in August. It may be of interest to the MOD to note that some two and a half hours after my telephone call to West Drayton all those months ago, a pair of American F-15's approached from a South-Easterly direction, overflew the obelisk once, (cruising rather than screaming), one directly over it while the other passed in a wide arc. I recall this as there were no Hawks or helicopters flying in our area until the Thursday of that week. However, besides the fact that they directly overflew the obelisk, I thought nothing more of it.

In early September, while out gardening, I happened to notice a grey, disc shaped object hovering around Snowdon and the surrounding mountains.

Observing the object through binoculars, it was apparent that someone was enjoying a paraponting session in the summer sun with a grey parapont. This was on a Friday, at about 2p.m. the parapont varying in altitude from around 2-4000 feet. At 3.45, as I was fetching my youngest son from infants school, a pair of F-15's arrived on the scene from the same direction as previously, and approached our village via a wide arc (initially I thought they were headed for RAF Valley).

One of the F-15's turned in a tighter arc, therefore leading the second F-15 by approximately half a mile along the Nantlle Valley, both planes approximately at an altitude of 200 feet.

On spotting the paraglider, the leading aircraft headed toward it, climbed above it and executed a roll manouver. The following F-15 then applied power, accelerating and climbing sharply to rejoin the lead plane before both planes returned the way they came. Everyone at the school commented on the noise emitted by the plane. Would I be Correct in assuming that an unexplained blip appeared on a radar screen somewhere, and a flight was launched to investigate?

If so, why American planes, and not an aircraft from Valley, which was operational that day?

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE  
SEC (AS) 2  
- 5 DEC 1996

FILE



Just one more thing (I hope I'm not boring you...), a brief report appeared in the North Wales Chronicle dated 14/11/96 about a triangular shaped object spotted the previous Thursday at 6.25 p.m. displaying the same colour lights that I reported to you. The object was apparently hovering at about 100 feet above the road, and completely silent. I can supply a photocopy of the article if you so wish.  
Many thanks once again,

Yours faithfully,

Section 40

