

Article devalued the UFO debate

AS A serious researcher and investigator of the UFO phenomenon over many years, I am constantly bemused by the way in which it is treated by the press.

Your article by Peter Terry (*The Weekend Australian*, 9-10/5) classically illustrates my point. It was written and published without reference to the facts!

Not only is it replete with inaccuracies; it is further devalued by such spurious comments as "... the Federal Government is spending large amounts of money trying to track down non-existent invaders from outer space." If it has not been proved to everybody's satisfaction that UFOs represent extra-terrestrial visitations, then nor has it been proved that they are not!

We are left, then, with the question — do UFOs exist?

By definition, a UFO is an Unidentified Flying Object. On a clear night we may see many unidentified flying objects; that is, objects which we cannot identify.

It is a matter of public record that about 85 per cent of UFO sightings can be explained in terms of either natural phenomena or human agency, while another 10 per cent can be dismissed as deliberate hoaxes.

We are left with 5 per cent of sightings that defy conventional rationalisation. In terms of the tens of thousands of reported sightings recorded since 1945, the figure of 5 per cent is too significant to ignore; the more so when it is considered that the number of sightings actually reported represents only about half of 1 per cent of the total number of sightings.

Mr Terry states that the U.S. Air Force ceased investigating the UFO phenomena 20 years ago. WRONG. It was 12 years ago, in 1969. And to quote from their official record of more than 13,000 sightings, 712 remain unidentified and a further 2000 are listed in the "insufficient knowledge" category.

Mr Terry goes on to report that UFO investigation began in the 1950s. WRONG. It began in 1947.

It is a pity that Mr Terry did not take the trouble to read the proceedings of the 1978 United Nations General Assembly debate on UFOs; or Hansard's account of the 1979 House of Lords debate on the same subject.

Perhaps he will excuse himself on the grounds that he did not know such documents existed, but if this is the case, he will also have to admit that he did not avail himself of the extensive data held by private UFO investigation groups. These groups may be contacted simply by checking the telephone directory in any capital city.

Their ranks, I might add, include many academic and technical staff from universities and colleges of advanced education.

Research, Mr Terry, is valuable, whatever conclusions it may lead to; poor and inaccurate research is worthless. In adding nothing to the debate, it subtracts a great deal.

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