

OUR SECRET ARMY AGAINST THE ALIENS

DEEP down the dark corridors of Whitehall lies an office which officially does not exist. Behind its closed doors, faceless men and women gather intelligence on a subject which also officially does not exist.

The department is known as Defence Intelligence 55 and its task is to investigate the possible threat to Britain from alien forces who regularly cross our skies in UFOs.

At DI55, nationwide reports from the armed services, police and the public are meticulously logged and carefully studied in preparation for the day when a UFO lands on Earth.

For the Ministry of Defence, in line with over half Britain's population, secretly accepts that there are probably other more advanced life forms in the universe which sooner or later will make contact.

The MOD will neither confirm, nor deny, the existence of the secret department. A spokesman said: "We do not discuss the work of intelligence departments at all."

But engineer Michael Hanson has no such reservations. As southern co-ordinator of the Yorkshire UFO Society he recalls how he telephoned the MOD with a routine sighting inquiry.

As usual he was put through to the RAF's Air Staff Two department which checks out sightings against aircraft operating in the area. But apparently by accident Michael was then passed on to another department — DI55.

Said Michael: "Air Staff Two said they had no information on the UFO. I think they thought I was something to do with the Ministry because they said they would transfer me to DI55."

"Someone answered the phone but as I explained who I was I was returned to the switchboard and after a long wait was told no one was available."

"The strange thing is when I rang back later and asked for DI55 I was told it did not exist. When I said I had already talked to them the operator said I shouldn't have been put through."

A colleague of Michael's, Mark Birdsall, who is the Yorkshire UFO Society's chief investigator, then tried the same telephone procedure but was met with a brick wall.

Whitehall denies that DI55 exists to watch UFOs

Mark said: "I have had my suspicions for a number of years that such a department exists. The British public deserves to know that there is a covert intelligence department which deals with UFO reports for what can only be one reason — in case of visitors from other planets."

Mark says 1988 is becoming the Year of the UFO with increased numbers of sightings throughout Britain.

He believes the MOD has recorded the sudden increase but adds: "We used to get a great deal of co-operation but now they have clamped down completely."

"I have watched military aircraft turn and follow UFOs but when I've asked the Ministry about such an incident it usually denies that there were even any aircraft in the area at the time."

"We are currently in the biggest wave of UFO sightings in the last six years and we feel something is going to happen soon because everyone is becoming very uneasy about it all."

"We have noticed the pattern of flights has changed with the craft hugging the terrain, possibly to avoid detection. But we have no idea what they represent or what their purpose is here on Earth."

"The craft have remarkable agility. Some appear to be almost remotely controlled while others seem to be piloted."

Serious UFO followers like Mark admit that at least 90 per cent of so-called UFO sightings have perfectly normal explanations. And they have no time for people who claim to have been beamed up into alien spaceships.

Such abduction stories began in 1957 when a Brazilian farmworker claimed four men seized him and took him on to their craft where he was forced to make love to a white woman with oriental eyes and red hair. Since then many people claim to have been space-napped with their minds and bodies probed by aliens.

But Mark and his colleagues say such ludicrous stories simply give the whole subject of UFOs a bad name when there is a small, but significant, proportion of sightings which even officialdom admits cannot be explained.

An RAF spokesman said: "We have one secretary who as part of her normal duties deals with UFOs. She passes on reports to Air Staff Two. Checks are made to see if we have any aircraft in the area at the time."

"We do not inform people of our findings because of a lack of facilities and personnel. But we do not deny there are peculiar things in the sky which we cannot explain. My personal view is that we would be very silly not to concede that there could be life elsewhere where technology could be light years ahead of us."

"Years ago as an RAF navigator 24 of us in 12 jets in formation over Cyprus saw a silver ball which we could not explain. It held station alongside us at about 400mph and then shot away at about 1500mph. We all put in UFO reports to our base."

"Today if a spaceship lands on Earth I can assure you we will be very interested but I can also assure you there is no cover-up."

But Dr Richard Lawrence, director of the largest international UFO society with branches in every continent, is adamant: "There is a cover-up." As European Secretary of the Aetherius Society Dr Lawrence lectures throughout the world on unexplained phenomena. And he has a deep suspicion of the British Ministry of Defence.

He says: "The Ministry says it does not release details because of a lack of finance and personnel, and they tell us thousands of files were destroyed because of a shortage of space. They



were files which would now be available under the Public Records Act. Now we are waiting for 1992 when more files become available unless of course the MOD comes up with another excuse for destroying them."

"I know the Ministry is deliberately hiding things. People, particularly journalists, are amazed by the brick wall they are met with."

"But the public today are not so easily satisfied or fooled. After all far more people have seen flying saucers than have seen an African tribesman and they know the tribesmen exist, so why not UFOs?"

One of Britain's leading authors on UFOs, Timothy Good, says he has proof of the existence of department DI55 through a copy of an MOD document distribution list which has come into his hands.

He says: "It is nonsense to say UFO reports are just handled by a secretary. I know they are dealt with by Defence Intelligence, or to be more precise, by the RAF Provost and Counter Intelligence Branch."

"Top secret investigations into a possible UFO threat to Britain have been carried out since the late

1950s. It is the most sensitive intelligence matter of all time."

"There are many at the Ministry who can honestly say they know of no such investigations. But the details are only given to a few on a need-to-know basis with an appropriate security clearance level."

And Arnold West, chairman of the British UFO Research Association, says: "The Government knows of many more cases than we do. We receive a polite but guarded response to our inquiries, usually from a junior information officer. But certainly Whitehall has far more information than ever sees the light of day."

Throughout the world UFOs have now been sighted by millions of people and yet scientific research into the subject is almost nil.

A recent American Gallup poll found that one in 11 adults had seen a UFO and half the people polled believed in them.

Britain is an even stronger nation of UFO believers. A poll of 2,000 people in 11 cities revealed one in six had seen a UFO and 60 per cent believed in them.

Laurie Mansbridge



MYSTERY: 1988 is proving to be a record year for reports of strange glowing objects in the sky. **RIGHT:** Top UFO investigator Mark Birdsall



SPACESHIP TAILS CAB

THESE are just a few of the UFO sightings reported from various parts of Britain since the start of the year:

- A taxi driver in South Shields, Tyneside, described an 80ft saucer covered in bright lights which first hovered and then followed his cab. The driver said: "At one stage it was just 30ft above us. It was made of grey metal. But the weirdest thing was it made no noise. I got out of the car with my passenger to have a closer look and then it backed off and disappeared."
- At Barnsley, Yorkshire, a 38-year-old man saw "a huge, box-shaped object with green, white and red lights. It didn't make a sound. It followed me home and I called the wife who also saw it."
- Youth club warden John Rees was walking his dog at Aberdare, Glamorgan, when he saw a cylindrical luminous object with two downward parallel beams moving spirally without any noise. "I watched it for about 45 minutes and have never seen anything like it in my life. I had never believed in UFOs before."

- Frank Barnes, delivering morning newspapers at Winchester, Hants, said: "Two yellow saucers, each about the size of a house, flew over me at about 30mph. There was a hissing sound."
- Oxford art studio boss David White was followed for 40 minutes by a red glowing object as he drove home. "When I stopped it stopped" he said. "I thought I was going crazy. There was no real shape to it, just a red glow with a white centre and no noise."
- Husband and wife Eddie and Molly Owers were baffled by a dawn sighting of a glowing yellow shape hovering above them at Stevenage, Herts. Said Eddie: "We watched it for several minutes. It was a huge casserole-shaped object."
- Pensioner George Moore was going to bed at his home in Rotherham, Yorks, when his terrier Harry "went berserk, whimpering and leaping around in terror". George thought he had burglars but when he looked out of the window he saw a "luminous cone-shaped object" which he watched for five minutes.