

RAAF PROBES

CLOSE CHECK ON NEW UFO 'SIGHTINGS'

By JACK PERCIVAL

Officers of the Department of Defence are investigating a new spate of reports of unidentified flying objects.

The reports have come from Sydney, Lithgow, Parkes, Orange and Bathurst.

A spokesman for the Department of Defence said yesterday that investigation of UFOs was vested in the department's Air Office, where a set procedure had been developed for the investigation of each sighting.

He said the procedure involved a considerable effort, including a preliminary investigation by the nearest RAAF base.

This was followed up by an investigating team from the Air Office.

Where necessary the investigating team sought the advice of specialist agencies such as universities, the CSIRO, the Defence Standards Laboratories and the Weapons Research Establishment.

Of 623 reports received between January, 1960, and December, 1962, it was assessed that 93 per cent were explainable by present knowledge.

Six per cent of the reports did not provide suffi-

cient information to permit proper analysis and evaluation.

Only 1 per cent of that series of reports was attributed to unknown causes.

The spokesman said the Australian investigations checked with inquiries by the British Air Ministry and the US Air Force.

The British Air Ministry has stated that, on an average, 90 per cent of sightings it has investigated are explainable by causes ranging from weather balloons and meteors to aircraft lights.

No evidence

The other 10 per cent probably remain unexplained because of a lack of reliable information.

Beginning in 1966, the University of Colorado, under contract to the US Air Force, spent two years processing and investigating all American reports.

The general conclusion was that "nothing has come from the study of

UFOs that has added to scientific knowledge."

The report also stated: "Further extensive study of UFOs cannot be justified in the expectation that science will be advanced thereby."

The spokesman said that another USAF examination of 7,641 UFO reports resulted in a finding that 80 per cent were caused by natural phenomena, hoaxes, birds or man-made objects.

Seventeen per cent of the sightings provided insufficient evidence and only 3 per cent were unidentified, the report concluded.

The Australian Department of Defence believed there would always be unusual aerial sightings, the spokesman said.

American and Soviet space exploration had found no evidence to support the theory of life on planets in the solar system. The Mariner series of space explorations appeared to have proved that Mars was a "dead" planet.

REPORTS OF UFOs 'SEEN' IN AUST

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By JACK PERCIVAL

RAAF Intelligence is probing reports of unidentified flying object (UFO) sightings in Australia.

All the reported sightings by commercial aircraft crews and people in Tasmania, West Australia and the Northern Territory, have been at night. They range from hovering round and oval to cigar-shaped objects, which have disappeared into the sky at high speed.

There have been other reports of noise like the sound of jet aircraft, but no sign of navigation lights, high in the sky over central and north Australia.

Puzzling

Inquiries have established that at the time there were no military exercises in progress from Amberley or Darwin.

A high-ranking RAAF officer admitted yesterday that some of the UFO reports were "puzzling in the extreme."

"But some people have vivid imaginations and the more you question them the more their stories sound like science fiction."

Reports received by the Air Transport Group of the new Federal Transport Department will be sent to the RAAF for sifting.

An Air Force operations officer said: "There are so many man-made satellites periodically speeding over Australia these days that people get confused. They can't sort out the nuts and bolts from other phenomena."

An Air Transport Group spokesman said: "We have received a remarkable number of reports so far this year — about three times the number filed in the same period last year."

Dr Don Herbison-Evans, lecturer in computer science at Sydney University, said: "Ninety-nine per cent of the reports are mistaken identification. There is no evidence that craft of the types described in the reports are being developed on earth. If they were they would be developed for military purposes."

"Scientists are more interested in facts than words. However, there is a possibility that there is life on other planets away from our constellation."

Ninety-three per cent of UFO reports received in Australia since last year have been explained.

Fragments

Some sightings have been burnt-out fragments of rockets fired by American and Soviet agencies.

Since 1957, 7,000 rockets and space vehicles have been launched and about 3,000 of them are still in orbit.

All will re-enter earth's atmosphere, glow with friction, trail fiery tails . . . and be reported as UFOs.