

Von Daniken: I was not wrong

BERNE, Mon. — "Star wars" is not just a future possibility — it happened thousands of years ago.

So says author Erich von Daniken. He says giant space stations, ships flying between stars and sky battles between aliens were described in detail in ancient Sumerian texts, newly translated for inclusion in his latest book, *Did I Get It Wrong?*

Fifteen years after his *Chariots of the Gods* stirred interest and controversy around the world, the former Swiss hotelier is back with what he says is some of the most convincing evidence ever to back his thesis that beings from other planets visited Earth in the remote past.

"The evidence in the new book is so safe, so sure, you cannot disprove it anymore," von Daniken told Reuters at his home in Solothurn, 35 km north of Berne.

Added to certain writings in the Old

an average of 100,000 km a year collecting evidence to answer the question: "Were we visited by extraterrestrials some time ago?"

The new book, just published in German, has been accompanied by a string of chat-show appearances by von Daniken and a poster-campaign advertising its serialisation in Swiss popular daily, *Blick*.

Translations into most major languages are expected to follow.

As its title suggests, von Daniken in it admits to minor errors in the past, due largely to naivete and lack of care.

A non-corroding column in a temple in New Delhi which he said had been brought by aliens has now started to rust. And a perfect 15th-Century world map turned out not so perfect.

"But generally I was not wrong," he said. "All these errors have not brought the house down — on the contrary."

The important thing about the new evidence is its graphic description of events, he said. The texts, written thousands of years ago and quoted in his book in a new translation, describe in detail "gigantic space satellites, made of shiny metal and turning about an axis", right down to their dimension and interiors, as well as smaller craft that fly between them and Earth.

To answer those who attribute the writings to the fertile imagination of their authors, he comes up with the so-called cargo cults — scientifically recorded accounts of 20th-century meetings between primitive and advanced cultures.

When natives in New Guinea met Australian gold prospectors in the 1920s or New Hebrideans were visited by American troops in 1943, they first worshipped the visitors as gods who gave them presents — labelled "cargo" — and even made sacrifices to their planes.