

Defence chiefs kept UFO files secret

DEFENCE chiefs have repeatedly suppressed information they should have made public, a Westminster watchdog revealed last night.

The Ministry of Defence broke open government rules three times in recent months, Parliamentary Ombudsman Ann Abraham said.

Details of one of Britain's most famous UFO scares were among the information wrongly kept secret, she said.

Complaints about the MoD's refusal to list countries prioritised for arms sales or reveal details of an armed services survey were also upheld. The cases are detailed in a report on the Ombudsman's work between May and October.

They are symptomatic of a "culture of secrecy", former Defence minister Peter Kilfoyle said.

"It is one of those departments that have always opposed freedom of information and are not very attuned to what is required in a modern, open and accountable government," he said.

Details of the Rendlesham Forest UFO scare have been released since the Ombudsman ruled the MoD were wrongly suppressing them.

A restricted file on the alleged sighting at a Norfolk RAF base more than 20 years ago was made public under the Freedom of Information Act last week.

Until then, the document had only

been seen by about 20 people, who requested access to it through the US Freedom of Information Act.

Dozens of pages reading like an X-Files script describe the sighting of a glowing triangular "strange glowing object" near RAF Woodbridge in the early hours of December 27, 1980.

A number of US Air Force men witnessed the object hover in the darkness, transmitting blue pulsating lights and sending nearby farm animals into a "frenzy".

The Ombudsman also partially upheld complaints against the Cabinet Office, DVLA, Driving Standards Agency and the Department for Work and Pensions.

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