

Reference ..PQ..... 7608c

M1

Priority

This non-oral question has been allocated to Minister(AF) for answer.

2. Would you please supply a draft reply and background note, together with any relevant Hansard extracts and Press cuttings, to reach this office at the time shown on the front cover.

3. Please submit a copy of the draft answer to PS/USofS(AF) when returning this, allowing sufficient time for USofS(AF) to comment.

Section 40

Office of Minister(AF)  
Room Section 40 Main Building  
Extension Section 40  
21.10.83

M2

APS/Minister(AF) (thro' DUS(Air))

Copy to:  
APS/US of S(AF)  
Ops(GE)2(RAF)

1. I have placed opposite a draft reply to PQ 7608C.
2. The same background note has been provided for PQ 7607C and PQ 7609C.

Section 40

21 October 1983

Head of DS 8

Section 40

FOR NON ORAL ANSWER

C82

PQ 7608C

SIR PATRICK WALL (CONSERVATIVE) (BEVERLEY)

Sir Patrick Wall

- To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether, in view of the fact that the United States' Air Force memo of 13 January 1981 on the incident at RAF Woodbridge has been released under the Freedom of Information Act, he will now release reports and documents concerning similar unexplained incidents in the United Kingdom.

SUGGESTED ANSWER (Mr Stanley)

This has been considered. It is the intention to publish reports.



E81

Background Note

These three questions follow from the News of the World article of 2 October 1983 (Annex A) describing an alleged UFO sighting by USAF personnel at RAF Woodbridge in Suffolk on 27 December 1980.

The report of 13 January 1981 (Annex B) examined by the Air Staff and DS 8. It was concluded that there was nothing of defence interest in the alleged sighting.

There was, of course, no question of any contact with "alien beings" nor was any unidentified object seen on any radar recordings, as alleged in the News of the World.

A BBC investigation into the incident following publication of the News of the World Article concluded that a possible explanation for the lights seen by the USAF personnel was the pulsating light of the Orfordness lighthouse some 6 - 7 miles away.

The sole interest of the MOD in UFO reports is to establish whether they reveal anything of defence interest (eg intruding aircraft). MOD investigations are not pursued beyond the point at which we are satisfied that a report has no defence implications. No attempts are made to identify and catalogue the likely explanation for individual reports.

Last year, Lord Long, during a debate initiated by the Earl Clancarty, said that he would look into the possibility of publishing such reports as are received by the Ministry of

/...

Defence. US of S(AF) has now decided to release compilations of reports. They will be published on a quarterly basis and will be available to members of the public, at a small charge to cover costs. US of S(AF) had planned to make an announcement shortly in the House of Lords through an arranged PQ. Pending arrangements for an announcement in the Lords, US of S(AF) has agreed that we should indicate the decision in the Commons.



Defence Secretariat Division 8  
**MINISTRY OF DEFENCE**  
Main Building Whitehall London SW1A 2HB  
Telephone **Section 40** (Direct Dialling)  
(Switchboard)

(P) (E75)

**Section 40**

Your reference

Our reference

D/DS8/10/209

Date

19 October 1983

Dear **Section 40**

Thank you for your letter of 9 October concerning the alleged UFO landing near RAF Woodbridge.

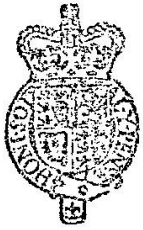
I should explain that it is not the policy of the Ministry of Defence to release its files to members of the public. All MOD files are subject to the provisions of the Public Records Act which lay down that in general official files are to remain closed until 30 years have elapsed after the last action taken on them. It would not, therefore, be possible to accede to your request.

I can, however, confirm that no unidentified object was seen on any radar recordings during the period in question and that the News of the World article was inaccurate on this point.

Yours sincerely

**Section 40**





Defence Secretariat Division 8a  
**MINISTRY OF DEFENCE**  
 Main Building Whitehall London SW1A 2HB  
 Telephone **Section 40** (Direct Dialling)  
 (Switchboard)

F  
 E73

**Section 40**

Your reference

Our reference

D/DS8/10/209

Date

19 October 1983

Dear

**Section 40**

Your letter of 2 October has been passed to me for reply.

I can confirm that the Ministry of Defence did receive a report from base personnel of a UFO sighting near RAF Woodbridge on 27 December 1980. (This was the report published by the News of the World on 2 October 1983). The report was dealt with in accordance with normal procedures ie it was passed to staff concerned with air defence matters who examine such reports to satisfy themselves that there are no defence implications. In this instance MOD was satisfied that there was nothing of defence interest in the alleged sightings. There was no question of any contact with "alien beings" nor was there any confirmation that an object had landed in the forest.

You may be interested to know that the BBC recently carried out its own investigations into the incident and concluded that the UFO was nothing more sinister than the pulsating light of the Orfordness Lighthouse some 6 or 7 miles away through the trees.

Yours sincerely

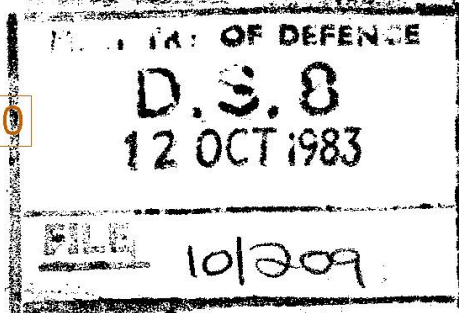
**Section 40**

**Section 40**



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Section 40



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RAF Press Office  
Ministry of Defence  
Whitehall  
London SW1A 2HB

Section 40

Section 40

1983 October 9

Dear Sirs,

As you may have seen on BBC TV's Breakfast Time programme on Friday October 7, I visited the site of the alleged UFO landing outside Woodbridge Air Force station in Suffolk and found that the pulsating bright light seen among the trees was apparently nothing more alien than the lighthouse at Orford Ness, which does indeed illuminate the forest near Woodbridge with a white light, as the letter from USAF Lt Col Charles Halt describes.

In view of the immense public interest in this case following the News of the World article (and, I believe, further coverage this week), and mindful of the fact that it would be important to establish the lighthouse theory if it is true, I wonder if you would now consider releasing the MoD investigation file on this case, as I understand that you have done with other cases before now? I would certainly be prepared to pay any reasonable administration charge that this might entail.

I should also welcome comments on the apparent radar sighting of a UFO at about the time of the Woodbridge incident.

Yours sincerely,

Section 40

10/209

Section 40

I suggest a minor amendment to the defensive line,  
otherwise fine. Pl. yr. attend.

Section 40

Section 40

6/co.

E66

News of the World Article on UFOs.

+ /

We spoke yesterday about the attached article. I have since instituted investigations and attach a press line and Q&A brief which I propose sending to the DPO. This will hopefully put them on the right track should there be further inquiries.

The News of the World story appears to be one fabrication after another. Mr. Col. Halt has not spoken to anyone from the News of the World nor has he been told his career would be in jeopardy if he talked about the incident. The report has not been classified top secret by the USAF - the only report prepared by the USAF is that contained on our files and which is unclassified!

The alleged interview with Sqn. Ldr. Moreland is also a fabrication. He stated that "to the best of my knowledge Mr. Col. Halt is a very genuine person" but gave no details of any conversation he had had with Halt nor did he say "whatever it was, it was able to perform feats in the air which no known aircraft is capable of doing."

As regards the information allegedly provided by the former security policeman this is completely untrue. The personnel who went into the forest to investigate the lights went on foot - not in a jeep. Only three patrolmen entered the forest, contrary to the report of more than 200 RAF and USAF personnel being present. There was never any question of alien beings. Nor is there any truth in the statement that "Art Wauque" and others were interviewed



by the CIA and told to keep quiet. The US authorities did not carry out any such investigations but left MOD to carry out its own investigations.

Ops (GR) has checked the question of radar traces with NATO who have informally stated that nothing was seen on any radar recordings although they did receive a report of a sighting from a civil aircraft.

The unfortunate point about the article is the fact that MOD refused to comment on the grounds that it was a matter for the USAF while USAF were saying it was a matter for MOD - an ideal support to the theory of a MOD cover up!

Section 40

3/10

LOOSE MINUTE

D/DS8/10/209-1386

6 Oct 83

DPO(RAF)

NEWS OF THE WORLD ARTICLE: UFO SIGHTING AT  
RAF WOODBRIDGE

1. Following the coverage given by the News of the World on 2 October 1983 to the alleged UFO Sighting at RAF Woodbridge on 27 December 1980 and the follow-up promised for 9 October we have drawn up a defensive press line and short Q & A brief for use by yourselves.

2. If you receive further enquiries from the press which you are unable to answer from the briefing provided please do not hesitate to contact me. The report in the News of the World that MOD and USAF both referred callers to the other will have done nothing but confirm suspicions widely held in UFO circles that we are engaged in a cover-up!

Section 40

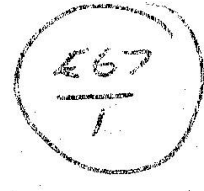
DS8a

Section 40





UFO INCIDENT AT RAF WOODBRIDGE 27 DECEMBER 1980



E67  
1

Defensive Press Line

I can confirm that the Ministry of Defence did receive a report from base personnel of a UFO sighting near RAF Woodbridge on 27 December 1980. (This was the report published by the News of the World on 2 October 1983). The report was dealt with in accordance with normal procedures ie. it was passed to staff concerned with <sup>our</sup> defence matters who examine such reports to satisfy themselves that there are no defence implications. In this instance MOD was satisfied that there was nothing of defence interest in the alleged sightings. There was no question of any contact with "alien beings".

Q1. Did the US authorities investigate the incident?

A1. No. Once the report had been sent to the Ministry of Defence the US authorities carried out no further investigations. [Investigations of UFO reports in the UK are carried out by the Ministry of Defence; the USAF has no responsibility in such matters].

Q2. Was Col Halt told to keep quiet?

A2. No. Lt Col Halt has not been told to keep quiet about the incident nor has he been informed that his career could be in jeopardy.

Q3. Was the object tracked on radar?

A3. No. No unidentified object was seen on any radar recordings during the period in question.



E63

THE TIMES MONDAY OCTOBER 3 1983



Earthly beings: Mr Vincent Thurkettle and his dog at the forest site of the Christmas UFO "landing".

## Down to earth approach to a UFO

From Alan Hamilton, Woodbridge

The mission was to seek a close encounter, preferably of the third kind, but any kind would do.

The place was a vast clearing deep in the 10,000 acres of Aldewood Forest, Suffolk, where, according to yesterday's *News of the World*, an alien spacecraft landed at Christmas, 1980, flew among the trees, left imprints on the ground, and vanished only when the United States Air Force from Woodbridge base, half a mile away, came out to investigate.

Witnesses, according to the paper, have since greatly elaborated on the event, speaking of beings in silvery suits who practised levitation.

The first being encountered yesterday was clad in corduroy trousers and black wellingtons. He came, he said, not from outer space, but the Forestry Commission. His name was not the Mekon, but Vincent Thurkettle.

The second being closely resembled a collie dog, and was too busy chasing sticks to levitate.

"This is the site", said the first being, gesturing around a rough acreage of stumps and teigs. "When the UFO is supposed to have landed the whole area was covered by Corsican pines 75ft tall and only 10ft apart. It would have

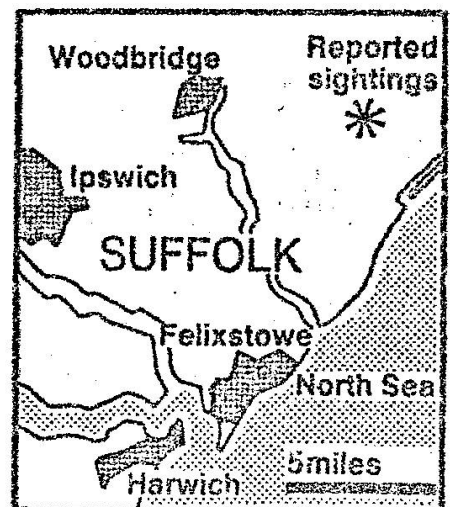
taken a fair feat of navigation to get among that lot."

He pointed to indentations in the ground that might have been made by the feet of a far-travelled craft. "Rabbits", he said. "They dig for roots."

But, surely, the searchers reported burn marks on the surrounding trees and radiation in the ground?

"The burns were the marks we put on the trees for felling. And as for radiation, a craft from outer space is going to use a far more sophisticated form of propulsion."

A third being, who said he was David Boast, and a gamekeeper, was quoted in the *News of the World* as saying



how cattle panicked near his house on the night in question. "There are no cattle anywhere near here", he told me. "This is a forest."

Neither the first nor the third being could recall anything untoward on the night in question, except that it was Christmas.

## Tory move on holiday vote law

By Our Political Reporter

The Government is expected to announce next week that it will legislate to give holiday-makers postal votes at the next general election.

Ministers and MPs were struck during the general election campaign by the dissatisfaction of those who were going to be on holiday on June 9 and were not allowed a vote. A flood of resolutions from Tory associations for the party conference in Blackpool next month...

## Thatcher third term aims may be restated

Conservative MPs believe that Mrs Margaret Thatcher may soon be stung into restating her determination to lead the party for a third term of office.

This follows several reports suggesting that some MPs are privately expressing the view that she may stand down, an opinion voiced for the first time publicly on Saturday by a leading backbencher, Mr Julian Critchley.

Mr Critchley, a "wet" and noted critic of the Prime

Margaret, those that loathe her and me."

Asked if he was thinking in terms of a successor Mr Critchley replied: "Increasingly so". He went on: "I think she will not run for a third full term in 1987-88."

Questioned later he speculated on possible successors, saying: "If the leadership were to change at this point in time it would be Sir Geoffrey Howe who would be the natural successor but if it is not for

## Hardliners in SNP keep power

The levers of power in the Scottish National Party remain firmly in the hands of the hardline "independence, nothing less" faction. Elections held at the end of the party's forty-ninth annual conference, on the island resort of Rothesay at the weekend, produced almost a clean sweep of the important party offices for the traditionalists.

Nearly all of the leading nationalists who arrived in

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CALL ON SUNDAY

E64

# Red war of words on our students

By GRAEME GOURLAY

**RUSSIA** is using British university radio stations in a major propaganda campaign.

For the past two years State-run Radio Moscow has been sending tapes of news and arts programmes to most of the 19 campus radio stations run by students.

Many of these stations, which are licensed by the Home Office have broadcast the propaganda tapes unedited. But others have refused to use the heavy-handed and biased reports.

Last week, while Mrs Thatcher was calling on the West to 'fight a battle of

## RUSSIA

ideas' against Communism, two-thirds of the campus radio stations were getting free tapes from Moscow.

Among those sent to Nottingham University were Soviet Viewpoint, Soviet Press Review and Life in the USSR.

Programme controller Jeff Owen said yesterday: 'We get about five tapes a week. We occasionally use them — mainly the arts and cultural programmes. Of course, some is just boring propaganda but other bits are quite interesting.'

Stirling University's manager Doug Morris said the tapes were 'pretty atrocious' but they were used now and then.

But at Kent University, a student spokesman said: 'We were asked by

Radio Moscow if we wanted the tapes and turned them down straight away.'

A typical example is this extract from Soviet Press Review: 'After the deliberate provocation with the South Korean plane it must seem that the Reagan administration has beaten all records of hypocrisy and distortion of facts. Yevgenity Ruschov says in Pravda.'

Moscow is pouring millions of roubles into its battle with Western broadcasting, spending more in four days jamming the BBC World Service transmissions to the Soviet Union than the BBC Russian service's annual budget.

• Anti-Western propaganda could be beamed on future satellite TV to British homes because of a loophole in international law on copyright.

## SUNDAY PEOPLE

# UFO DID NOT LAND IN SUFFOLK

**CLAIMS** that a UFO landed in an East Anglian pine forest were dismissed as "pie in the sky," last night.

The mysterious craft is said to have landed near an American Airforce base at Woodbridge, Suffolk, two years ago.

It lit up the whole of nearby Bangham Woods with a dazzling white light.

But when two American airmen on guard duty went to investigate,

and that's official

the "hovering object" suddenly sped away and vanished.

Later, there was talk of silvery beams emerging from a 30ft wide flying saucer, burn marks on trees and strange lines in the ground.

The strange affair is recounted in a new book written by a member of the British UFO Society.

But Forestry Commission officer Vince Thirkettle, who lives near the woods, said: "I carried out my own investigation and I am satis-

fied the so-called evidence was blown up out of all proportion.

"The burns were made by a forester to mark out trees for felling and depressions in the ground looked like rabbit scrapings."

"I have lived and worked in the forest for five years and I've never seen any spacemen. It's more pie in the sky than flying saucers."

A police spokesman said: "American flyers often drop parachute flares which people mistake for UFOs."



**MEDIASCAN LTD.**  
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DATE

02 OCT 1981

SUNDAY EXPRESS

## I saw UFO land / — American officer

A SENIOR American Air Force officer reported sighting a UFO landing in Suffolk during Christmas 1980. The Ministry of Defence confirmed last night.

Lieut-Colonel Charles L. Holt, deputy commander of the USAF 81st Tactical Wing at RAF Woodbridge, told of seeing a "red, sun-like light" near the air base in the early hours of December 27.

A Defence Ministry spokesman said: "There was a 'sighting' by an officer in the USAF. He was off-duty and off the base. He made a report and submitted it via the RAF commander at

Woodbridge to the Ministry of Defence."

Sir John Nott, who became Minister of Defence within a fortnight of the reported sighting, said last night: "I know nothing about it. Certainly I never saw any report about a UFO landing. I don't believe in UFO's, anyway."

Another former Minister of Defence, Sir Ian Gilmour, said: "I should think this is absolute rubbish."

SUNDAY MIRROR

## FLYING<sup>2</sup> SAUCER 'LANDS IN BRITAIN'

Sunday Mirror Reporter

A FLYING saucer landed on a top secret American air base in an English forest, says an amazing report just released by US air force chiefs.

They say the UFO "ringed with portholes and blue flashing lights" came down on the main runway of USAF Woodbridge, Suffolk.

It zoomed over Tangham Forest three nights in succession, and landed "at least once".

The huge metallic craft was spotted by guards who found deep impressions on the ground. Unexplained radiation was also reported nearby.

The incredible documents, drawn up by USAF Colonel Charles Holt, says the sightings were reported to the Pentagon three years ago.

They have come to light now after the release of classified documents.

Forestry workers yesterday told of "strange, unconfirmed reports" of a UFO in the area.

NEWS OF THE WORLD

## We must<sup>12</sup> be told

SOMETHING strange happened out there in the forest on that wintry night in December, 1980.

Our fully documented Page 1 report of a UFO landing in Suffolk cannot be shrugged away.

At every turn our investigators met an official wall of silence—yet nobody disputed the basic facts.

Someone in authority, particularly in the Ministry of Defence, has the answer.

It is time we were told.





DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE  
HEADQUARTERS THIRD AIR FORCE (USAF)  
RAF MILDENHALL, SUFFOLK IP28 8NF



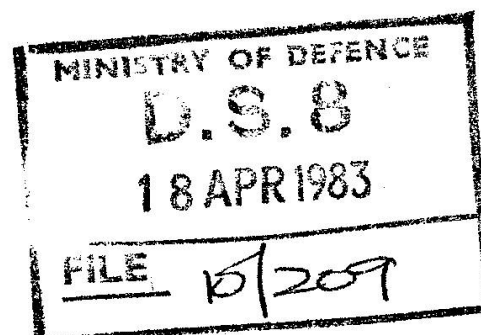
3AF/10/1/Org

Mildenhall

Section 40

MOD(DS8a)  
Main Building  
Whitehall  
London  
SW1A 2HB

15 Apr 83



UNIDENTIFIED FLYING OBJECT

Reference:

A. D/DS8/10/209 dated 11 April 1983.

1. Thank you for your letter at Reference and the Enclosure from Section 40

2. The radar at Upper Heyford did not track an unidentified flying object on 15 March 1983 as alleged. As reported to me the events were as follows:

Just after dusk, a local reporter for the Reading Evening Post telephoned the tower at Upper Heyford and asked if they could see "lights" at the opposite side of the airfield. The controllers assistant, after checking, told the reporter that the duty crew could indeed see the "lights" and that they did not know what they were-but they could have been some airfield lights, traffic within the airfield or traffic outside the airfield. The telephone conversation then terminated.

3. The US authorities at Upper Heyford reiterate that at no time did they track on the airfield radar any unidentified target. It is my belief that the reporter in question did not ask the right questions in the first place and has completely misinterpreted the answer he received.

Section 40

Wg Cdr  
SRAFLO



From Squadron Leader D H Moreland RAF



**RAF LIAISON OFFICE**

Royal Air Force Bentwaters Woodbridge Suffolk IP12 2RQ

Telephone Woodbridge **Section 40**

10/209  
E2

MOD(DS8c)

Your reference

(Attn: **Section 40**)

Our reference  
BENT/19/76/Air

Date

9 May 1983

**Section 40**

The UFO sighting in the Rendlesham Forest continues to excite attention. For your information I enclose copies of the latest newspaper articles on the subject.

**Section 40**



# Mystery of alleged UFO landing in forest

CLAIMS that an extra-terrestrial trio with a faulty flying saucer have visited Suffolk are being probed by UFO investigators.

Officialdom, they claim, has drawn a shroud of secrecy around the alleged incident . . . apart from a Defence Ministry letter which has given the probe fresh headway.

## WITNESS

Investigators Dot Street and Brenda Butler are trying to unravel what has become known in UFO enthusiasts' circles as the Rendlesham Forest Mystery.

They say their inquiries have included a graphic

description of the alleged night-time incident given to them by an eye-witness U.S. serviceman. The name of their key witness however is a closely guarded secret . . . they guaranteed him anonymity when he recounted his unearthly claims.

His amazing allegation is that three "entities" were seen with their spacecraft which had landed about two miles from Woodbridge Airbase in a remote part of Rendlesham Forest.

He claims they were about three feet tall, dressed in silver suits and were "levitating" in shafts of light.

The key witness, who has

since returned to the United States, claimed that an unarmed party of base personnel watched the visitors carry out repairs to their craft which later took off.

Dot and Brenda told the Woodbridge Reporter that their 2½ year probe was being hampered by a top level hush-hush policy.

"We have contacted the USAF and the Ministry of Defence time and time again but they just will not tell us anything," said Dot, who is area investigator for the British UFO Research Association.

"They will not deny that anything happened that night, but on the other hand

that will not say much at all about it," she said.

"If it was something to do with an aircraft or anything like that why don't they tell us as much and we would leave it alone . . . all I am is a UFO investigator."

## LIGHTS

Last month however the investigation made some headway. The Ministry of Defence conceded in a letter that "unusual lights" were seen near the base at the time of the alleged incident — late December 1980.

The letter said, "I can confirm that USAF personnel did see unusual lights outside the boundary fence in the early morning of December 27, 1980, but no explanation for the occurrence was ever forthcoming."

There was "no question" of there being a cover-up for a crashed aircraft or the testing of "secret devices" — which was suggested by Dot and Brenda.

The letter concluded, "Nor was there any contact with 'alien beings'."

## LETTER

Until the letter was received the Ministry had simply replied to inquiries with a blunt "We cannot help you in your quest" reply, said Dot and Brenda.

A Defence Ministry spokesman told the Woodbridge Reporter that reports of unexplained lights in the area at the time were investigated.

"We are certainly interested in sightings of anything unusual in so far as any security implications are

concerned. When we have satisfied ourselves through our sources and our own investigations that there was no security implications we are no longer interested.

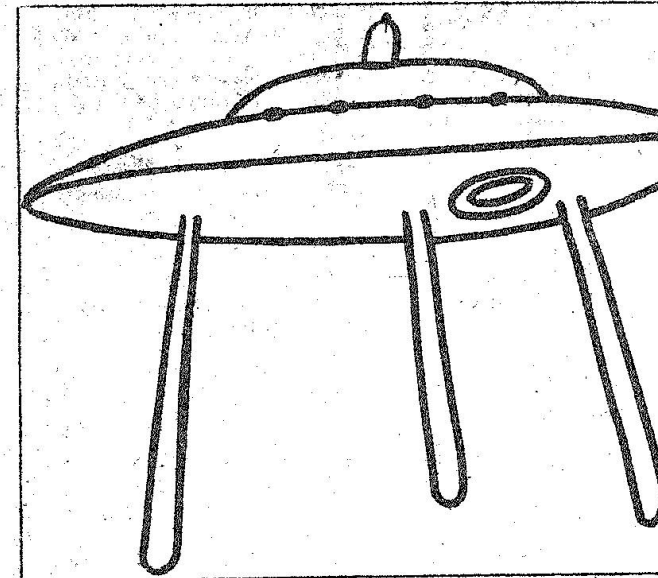
"In this particular case we were satisfied that that was the case."

A USAF spokesman said, "Everytime I hear about this it becomes more elaborated. All we know is that some people on duty that night saw some lights in the sky which I understand were seen in other parts of the country top."

"We know of nothing else but people always think we are hiding something when we say that, but we are not."

Whatever the answer Dot and Brenda plan to continue their probe and are preparing a book about it which they hope will be published next year. The appealed for information on the alleged incident and guaranteed that all calls would be treated in confidence.

Dot can be contacted on Lowestoft 84606 and Brenda can be contacted on Leiston 830757.



A copy of the eye witness's drawing of the he claimed to have seen in Rendlesham Forest estimated width was 30 feet.



Brenda Butler (left) and Dot Street on the site of the alleged landing of the space ship in Rendlesham Forest.

## Slow start by voters

Voting in the Woodbridge area got off to a slow start in yesterday's local government elections, and the area's tradition of a low turn-out at such polls looked set to be upheld.

All the results will be published in next week's issue of the Woodbridge Reporter.

WOODBIDGE REPORTER  
Froday, 6 May 83  
FRONT PG



# Duo still on trail of mysterious 'U.F.O. landing' in forest

CLAIMS that an extra-terrestrial trio with a faulty flying saucer have visited Suffolk are being probed by UFO investigators.

Officialdom they claim, has drawn a shroud of secrecy around the alleged incident near the RAF base at Woodbridge . . . but now a Defence Ministry letter has given the probe fresh headway.

The Ministry has conceded that "unusual lights" were

has become known in UFO enthusiasts' circles as the Rendlesham Forest Mystery.

They say their inquiries have included a graphic description of the alleged night-time incident given to them by an eye-witness U.S. serviceman. The name of their key witness however is a closely guarded secret . . . they guaranteed him anonymity when he recounted his unearthly claims.

His amazing allegation is that three "entities" were seen with their spacecraft which had landed about two miles

investigator for the British UFO Research Association.

"They will not deny that anything happened that night, but on the other hand they will not say much at all about it," she said.

"If it was something to do with an aircraft or anything like that why don't they tell us as much and we would leave it alone . . . all I am is an UFO investigator."

Until the letter was received the Ministry had simply replied to inquiries with a blunt "we cannot help you in your quest" reply, said Dot and Brenda.

A Defence Ministry spokesman told the Star that reports of unexplained lights in the area at the time were investigated.

"We are certainly in-

terested in sightings of anything unusual in so far as any security implications are concerned. When we have satisfied ourselves through our sources and our own investigations that there was no security implications we are no longer interested.

"In this particular case we were satisfied that that was the case."

A USAF spokesman said, "Everytime I hear about this it becomes more elaborated. All we know is that some people on duty that night saw some lights in the sky which I understand were seen in other parts of the country too.

"We know of nothing else but people always think we are hiding something when we say that, but we are not."

Whatever the answer Dot and Brenda plan to continue their probe and are preparing a book about it which they hope will be published next year. They appealed for information on the alleged incident and guaranteed that all calls would be treated in confidence. Dot can be contacted on Lowestoft 84606 and Brenda can be contacted on Leiston 830757.

Story by JOHN GRANT

seen near the base at the time — late December 1980.

The letter said, "I can confirm that USAF personnel did see unusual lights outside the boundary fence in the early morning of December 27, 1980, but no explanation for the occurrence was ever forthcoming."

## Mystery

There was "no question" of there being a cover-up for a crashed aircraft or the testing of "secret devices".

The letter concluded, "Nor was there any contact with 'alien beings'".

But Suffolk investigators Dot Street and Brenda Butler are still trying to unravel what

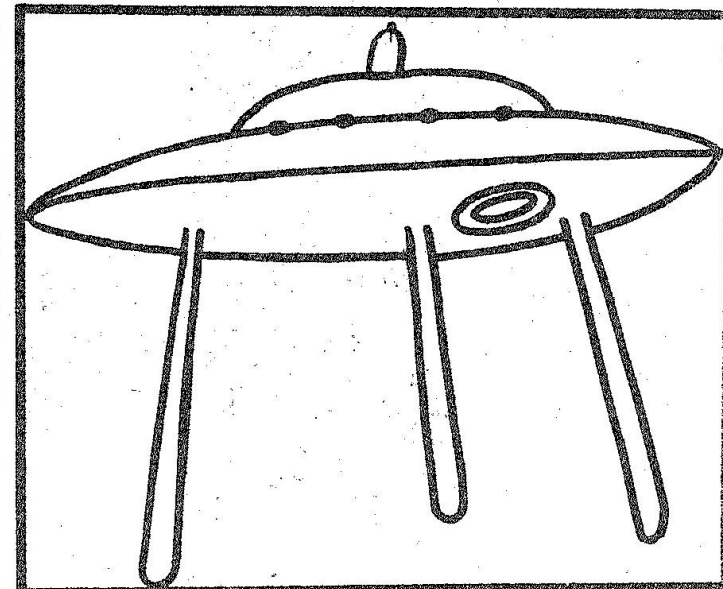
from the Woodbridge airbase in a remote part of Rendlesham Forest.

He claims they were about three feet tall, dressed in silver suits and were "levitating" in shafts of brilliant light.

The key witness, who has since returned to the U.S. claimed that an unarmed party of base personnel watched the visitors carry out repairs to their craft which later took off.

Dot and Brenda told the Star that their 2½ year probe was being hampered by a top level hush-hush policy.

"We have contacted the USAF and the Ministry of Defence time and time again but they just will not tell us anything," said Dot, who is area



• The witness's drawing of the craft he claimed to have seen in Rendlesham Forest. Its estimated width was 30 feet.

• Brenda Butler, left, and Dot Street on the site of the alleged landing of the spaceship in Rendlesham Forest.

EVENING STAR



Section 40

E180



MINISTRY OF DEFENCE Defence Secretariat Division 8a  
Main Building Whitehall London SW1A 2HB

Telephone Section 40 (Direct Dialling)  
(Switchboard)

Wg Cdr Section 40  
SRAFLO  
RAF Mildenhall  
Suffolk  
IP28 8NF

Your reference

Our reference

D/DS8/10/209 -1401

Date

13 May 1983

Dear Section 40

# INCIDENT AT RAF WOODBRIDGE - DECEMBER 1980

1. Following our telephone conversation about the incident at RAF Woodbridge on 27 December 1980 I wrote to Miss Randles and I attach a copy of my letter.
2. You will see that she has now written again seeking further information about the incident and in particular has requested a copy of the report held on our files. The only report we have is that prepared by Lt Col Halt the Deputy Base Commander at RAF Woodbridge and I am therefore writing to ask you to seek the views of the USAF to disclosure of that report or a sanitised version of it. If the USAF would only be prepared to allow release of a sanitised version it would be helpful to know which parts they would wish me to delete. In addition, I would be grateful to know whether the USAF would be willing for me to say that they did investigate the incident.
3. Thank you for your assistance with the recent UFO correspondence.

Yours ever

Section 40

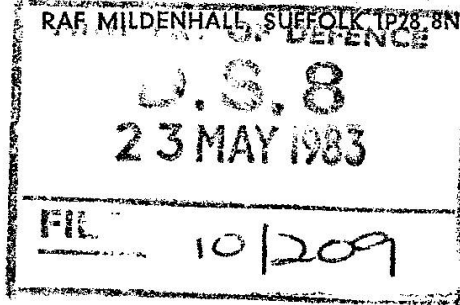
Section 40



DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE

HEADQUARTERS THIRD AIR FORCE (USAF)

RAF MILDENHALL, SUFFOLK, IP28 8NF



E6/1:  
E6

3AF/12/Org

Mildenhall **Section 40**

MOD(DS8)  
Main Building  
Whitehall  
London  
SW1A 2HB

18 May 83

INCIDENT AT RAF WOODBRIDGE - DECEMBER 1980

References:

- A. D/DS8/10/208 dated 13 May 1983.
- B. Telecon **Section 40** 17 May 1983.

1. Thank you for your letter at Reference A and Enclosures. I said in the telephone conversation at Reference B that it will be some little time before we can get a decision on the release of the report by Lt Col Holt. In fact, the decision to allow the release might have to come from Secretary of State for Defence's office particularly if any security or intelligence implications are read into the reported sighting.

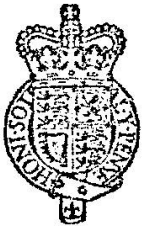
2. I will let you know of developments as they occur.

**Section 40**

Wg Cdr  
SRAFLO



X



Defence Secretariat Division 8

## MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

Main Building Whitehall London SW1A 2HB

Telephone **Section 40** (Direct Dialling)  
(Switchboard)

File.

**Section 40**

Your reference

Our reference  
D/DS8/10/209-1270  
Date

13 April 1983

Dear **Section 40**

Thank you for your recent correspondence on the subject of UFOs.

As regards your offer to summarise the reports held by this Department there really is very little to summarise. I attach a copy of a blank report form showing the type of information we require together with a couple of examples of completed reports (with the name and address of the informant deleted for reasons of confidentiality). I am sure you will agree that, although we hold a large number of reports, each one is indeed very brief.

Turning now to your interest in the sighting at RAF Woodbridge in December 1980, I can confirm that USAF personnel did see unusual lights outside the boundary fence early in the morning of 27 December 1980 but no explanation for the occurrence was ever forthcoming. There is however, no question of the account being a cover-up for a crashed aircraft or testing of secret devices as you suggest, nor was there any contact with "alien beings".

I understand that an article on the Woodbridge sighting has been published in the magazine "OMNI" (Vol 5 No.6) in which you may be interested.

Yours sincerely

**Section 40**



LOOSE MINUTE

D/DS8/10/209 -1178

Ops(GE)(RAF)

UFO SIGHTING - RAF WOODBRIDGE DECEMBER 1980

1. You may recall that in December 1980 two USAF security patrolmen saw unusual lights at the back gate of RAF Woodbridge and on investigation found a brightly lit triangular object either hovering or on legs.
2. You began investigations into the incident and suggested asking the USAF for tape recordings (your D/DD Ops(GE)/10/8 of 16 Feb 81 refers) but unfortunately our files do not appear to show the outcome of your investigations.
3. I attach a copy of a letter received from one of our more regular UFO correspondents in which she seeks advice as to the Ministry's position on this incident. I am inclined to say that we are aware of the incident, that we made investigations but that we could find no explanation for the lights. Is this a true reflection of the facts or did we, in fact, come up with anything more substantive?
4. Any help you could give in replying to Section 40 letter would be much appreciated.

← Mar 83

Section 40

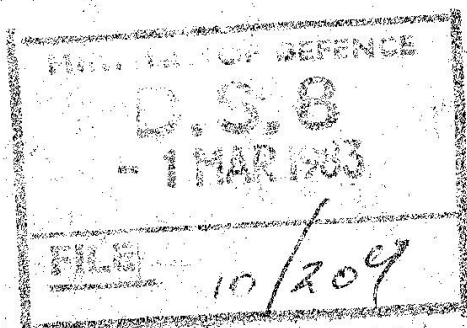
DS8

Section 40



Section 40

E06/1



February 28 1983

Dear Section 40

Further to your letter to me of 20 January 1983 (your ref: D/D38/10/209); the subject UFOs. I trust you have received my subsequent letter to this (addressed to Section 40) wherein I suggested that you might consider lodging the files you hold with a recognised scientific establishment. Here they could be accessible (an arrangement) to serious researchers, and their use could be adequately controlled. I really think this makes sense because the volume of data you must hold would make it very difficult to release other than summaries in printed form and often access to the full materials might be essential for scientific study.

A number of possible sources for locating these files, eg a university, come to mind. Indeed there have been a number of interested responses to the article on UFOs by myself and Section 40 (New Scientist, 10 Feb 1983) to which I refer you for illustration of my, hopefully, serious and non-sensationalist position on this topic.

I am well aware that to you UFO data is barely of interest and, as it does not seem to directly impinge on defence implications, of relatively low priority. However, I hope you also see that whilst 90% of these reports are unquestionably explicable there are reports that seem to offer probative data to scientists. Work that you, of course, have neither the facilities nor the resources to handle. It should be your concern that you hold this data, faithfully reported by individuals who would like something done. And I am delighted at your decision to make the material accessible for research.

Presumably it will be in your interests to cultivate a mood whereby UFO reports are not made to you, but to a scientific establishment (another advantage of lodging the files there). You could naturally rely upon the UFO community to transmit reports to you which might suggest defence implications. That is, if you are fair by serious investigators serious investigators will naturally be fair by you. And we too, of course, have the interests of Britain at heart and would not wish you to be unaware of any cases that might involve defence implications. Even though, as you have pointed out to me previously, none of your studies so far have produced such implications.

You have promised to advise me when you have taken a decision to release data, which is why I was somewhat surprised to learn that you have supplied to some colleagues of mine in Bristol data on cases in South Wales. I would, therefore, very much like an update on the current position please. For the last few years whilst writing to you I have stressed that I want to help put across your true position to the public (with which I have some inflexibility as a full-time writer of UFO books and articles). But for this purpose I do need your help in return, of course. I see from the current issue of FLYING SAUCER REVIEW, for example, that much is said about your alleged cover-up and it is towards correcting this view with the facts (if you will openly give them) that I am concerned. Hence my previous requests to be granted access to the data prior to release so that I might present a fair review in the UFO literature and defuse such commentary.

Finally, on the question of defence implications, I would wish to advise you of an accretion of data concerning an incident which appears to have taken place at the US Air Force base at Woodbridge, Suffolk, in December 1980. It is of some concern to me that you have not been able to offer any statement on this event, because on face value the evidence does suggest that somebody is hiding something.

Now I have published some of the material supplied to me (and gathered myself) in the UFO literature, primarily because in lieu of any other reason I believe the information should be told. But understand my position here. I have no wish to do anything injurious to British defence and if I was offered any reason (however roundabout) which suggested the case should simply be dropped then I would do so. For example, it is possible that the UFO story is covering either an accident or



test of some secret device (either by British or American sources). Therefore, to continually stress this in a UFO context (which is how it has been reported) and yet inevitably have to mention such non-UFO explanations as these possibilities might be against this nations interests. Yet what else can I do, since I have no such reason to argue in this way and feel myself duty bound to discuss the matter in case it genuinely has gone un-noticed and yet may be of potential importance?

Vesby briefly, on this case, we have first-class hard evidence (which we could of course give to the national press but have had no desire to so do) that something occurred (during the last three days of the month, possibly December 29, 1980). This includes evidence of radar tracking of the unexplained object, its 'landing' in Rendlesham Forest and a number of independant testimonies that relate to a quite fantastic account of what supposedly happened after that. It is impossible for me and the couple of other people in possession of these full facts not to accept that a genuine event did occur and naturally we are more than a little concerned that (a) it has not been admitted to and (b) you profess to know nothing about it.

As I said, the evidence is strong (almost, I might say, categorically probative) and could (if we chose to discuss the full facts in the right way outside the limited circulation we have done so far) lead to quite an outcry about cover-ups. Personally, I believe you must have very good reason for doing what you are doing about this incident, and that may have nothing to do with UFOs per se. However, please see my position and recognise my dilemma. I want to do the right thing.

I am not expecting a reply saying anything specific about this event, but you may be able to offer advice about the problem I face. I have this data that seems probative. You do not seem to want it and claim to know nothing about it. I cannot just sit on it because it appears to be too important. Yet if I make a big issue out of it national security may suffer.

I would add that the story behind these events indicates that there was contact between military sources and an other intelligence (which is not alien spaceships in the nuts and bolts sense) but which is an indigenous intelligence to planet earth which in fact is way beyond us in terms of most capacities and therefore represent the real rulers of our world.

This account does merge with data offered by other sources to me (in confidence) including government officials in this country and abroad. I have never published it and have actually played down the possibility in my books. I am not saying I believe it. But I am saying that I have heard it from so many sources that I do have to listen. And it does make a great deal of sense out of many things.

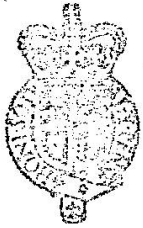
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Yours sincerely,

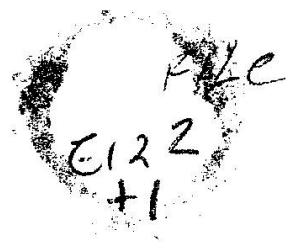
Section 40



Section 40



Defence Secretariat Division 8  
**MINISTRY OF DEFENCE**  
 Main Building Whitehall London SW1A 2HB  
 Telephone **Section 40** (Direct Dialling)  
 (Switchboard)



Wg Cdr **Section 40**  
 SRAFLO  
 RAF Mildenhall  
 Bury St Edmunds  
 Suffolk

Your reference

Our reference

D/DS8/10/209-1177

Date

15 March 1983

Dear

Section 40

UFO SIGHTING -- RAF WOODBRIDGE DECEMBER 1980

I attach a copy of a letter received from one of our more regular UFO correspondents regarding an incident at RAF Woodbridge in December 1980. I also attach a copy of the USAF report prepared after the incident.

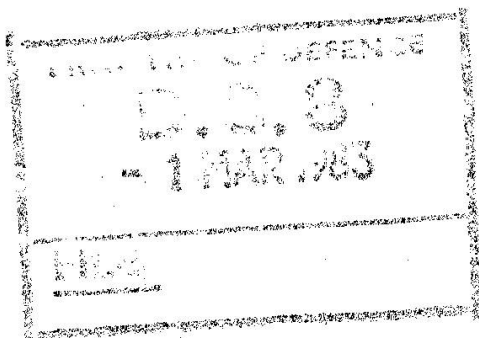
I would be grateful if you could ascertain how far the USAF investigated the incident and what were the outcome of these investigations. I would also be grateful if you could find out what has been the USAF's public line on the incident and whether they have denied knowledge of it as suggested by **Section 40**

Any help you can provide in replying to **Section 40** letter would be much appreciated.

Yours sincerely

Section 40





Section 40

February 28 1983

Dear Section 40

Further to your letter to me of 20 January 1983 (your ref: D/DS8/10/209); the subject UFOs. I trust you have received my subsequent letter to this (addressed to Section 40) wherein I suggested that you might consider lodging the files you hold with a recognised scientific establishment. Here they could be accessible (an arrangement) to serious researchers, and their use could be adequately controlled. I really think this makes sense because the volume of data you must hold would make it very difficult to release other than summaries in printed form and often access to the full materials might be essential for scientific study.

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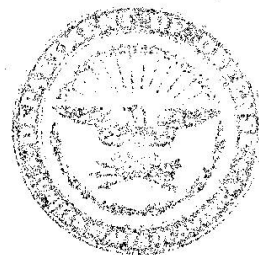
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Yours sincerely,

Section 40



DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE  
HEADQUARTERS 81ST COMBAT SUPPORT GROUP (USAF)  
APO NEW YORK 09755



REPLY TO  
ATTN OF: CD

13 Jan 81

SUBJECT: Unexplained Lights

TO: RAF/CC

1. Early in the morning of 27 Dec 80 (approximately 0300L), two USAF security police patrolmen saw unusual lights outside the back gate at RAF Woodbridge. Thinking an aircraft might have crashed or been forced down, they called for permission to go outside the gate to investigate. The on-duty flight chief responded and allowed three patrolmen to proceed on foot. The individuals reported seeing a strange glowing object in the forest. The object was described as being metallic in appearance and triangular in shape, approximately two to three meters across the base and approximately two meters high. It illuminated the entire forest with a white light. The object itself had a pulsing red light on top and a bank(s) of blue lights underneath. The object was hovering or on legs. As the patrolmen approached the object, it maneuvered through the trees and disappeared. At this time the animals on a nearby farm went into a frenzy. The object was briefly sighted approximately an hour later near the back gate.

2. The next day, three depressions 1 1/2" deep and 7" in diameter were found where the object had been sighted on the ground. The following night (29 Dec 80) the area was checked for radiation. Beta/gamma readings of 0.1 milliroentgens were recorded with peak readings in the three depressions and near the center of the triangle formed by the depressions. A nearby tree had moderate (.05-.07) readings on the side of the tree toward the depressions.

3. Later in the night a red sun-like light was seen through the trees. It moved about and pulsed. At one point it appeared to throw off glowing particles and then broke into five separate white objects and then disappeared. Immediately thereafter, three star-like objects were noticed in the sky, two objects to the north and one to the south, all of which were about 10° off the horizon. The objects moved rapidly in sharp angular movements and displayed red, green and blue lights. The objects to the north appeared to be elliptical through an 8-12 power lens. They then turned to full circles. The objects to the north remained in the sky for an hour or more. The object to the south was visible for two or three hours and beamed down a stream of light from time to time. Numerous individuals, including the undersigned, witnessed the activities in paragraphs 2 and 3.

CHARLES I. HALT, Lt Col, USAF  
Deputy Base Commander

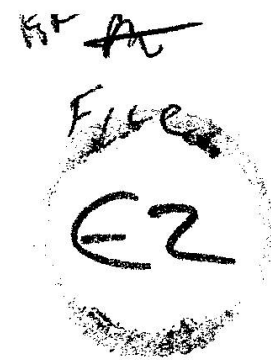
From: **Section 40** Defence Secretariat, Division 3



# MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

Main Building Whitehall London SW1A 2HB

Telephone **Section 40** (Direct Dialling)  
(Switchboard)



Squadron Leader D H Moreland  
RAF Commander  
RAF Bentwaters  
Woodbridge  
Suffolk IP12 2RQ

Your reference

Our reference

D/DS8/75/2-794

Date

9 November 1982

*Dear Squadron Leader Moreland*

1. Thank you for your letter (Bent/19/76/Air) of 25 October and the attached article from 'The Unexplained' (the author is in fact one of my regular correspondents).

2. MOD's line on UFO's is as follows:-

a. Our sole interest in the UFO sightings reported to us is to check whether they have any relevance to the air defence of the UK.

b. Reports are referred to staff concerned with the air defence of the UK who examine them as part of their normal duties. Once they are satisfied that the sighting has no defence implications, they do not attempt to make a positive identification of the object

c. While we recognise that there are many strange things to be seen in the sky, we believe that there are perfectly natural explanations for them - satellite debris, aircraft lights, etc. - and that there is no need to advance the hypothesis of alien spacecraft to account for them.

3. Concerning the Bentwaters UFO in particular, I suggest that you adopt the following line:

a. I understand that MOD did receive a report from base personnel of a UFO sighting near RAF Bentwaters on 27 December 1980. The report was dealt with in accordance with the normal procedures (see 2b above); it was not considered to indicate anything of defence interest.

b. There was no question of any contact with 'alien beings'.

4. As for the allegations in the article that the UFO story was simply a cover-up for a crash of an aircraft carrying a nuclear device, you may like to remind any questioners of the Written Answer given in Hansard for 28 January 1981 from Mr Pattie, then Under Secretary of State for the RAF: "No accidents have occurred involving ... damage to nuclear weapons containing fissile material on United Kingdom



territory.. If they mention the Lakenheath incident, which article drags in for good measure, again there is a Parliam. ary Statement on which you could draw, namely a Written Answer from Mr Pym, then Secretary of State for Defence, on 9 November 1979: ".... the United States authorities have already stated that no nuclear materials were involved either within the crashed aircraft or in any buildings affected by the resulting fire". I would not expect 'Ufologists' to pursue either of these angles any further; if they do I suggest you refer them to us. Incidentally, it is clear that the author did not look at a map if she supposes that Lakenheath is "a few miles north" of Bentwaters!

5. I hope this is helpful to you and that Bentwaters does not become East Anglia's answer to Warminster.

Yours sincerely,

Section 40



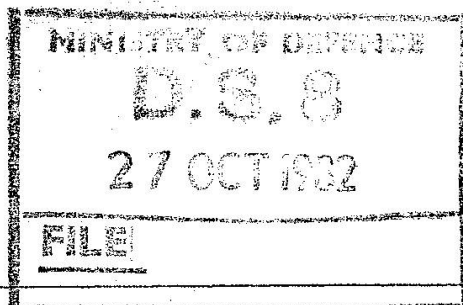
# RAF LIAISON OFFICE

Royal Air Force Bentwaters Woodbridge Suffolk IP12 2RQ

Telephone Woodbridge **Section 40**

Reply sent.  
E 132

MOD(DS8a)



Your reference

Our reference

BENT/19/76/Air

Date

25 October 1982

## UNIDENTIFIED FLYING OBJECTS (UFO's)

Reference:

A. BENT/19/76/Air dated 15 January 1981.

1. Under cover of reference A I forwarded you a copy of the Deputy Base Commander's report concerning some unexplained lights and sightings on 27/29 December 1980. Some time after the incident I was approached by two women who claimed to be UFO investigators, but I refused to confirm or deny their claims. A week ago I was telephoned from New York by a **Section 40** from Omnie Magazine. He asked me questions about an article in a British UFO Magazine. He claimed he was a serious UFO investigator and wanted to write an objective article about the incident. I told him that whoever wrote the article he described to me must have had a vivid imagination.

2. I have now managed to obtain a copy of the article and enclose a copy for your information. The magazine is called "The Unexplained" published weekly by:

ORBIS Publishing Ltd

**Section 40**

The article was in Volume 9 Issue No 106.

3. I now anticipate a flood of enquiries and would be grateful for some guidance on MOD Policy concerning UFO's.

**Section 40**

D H MORELAND  
Sqn Ldr  
RAF Cdr



U.C.

**high-ranking US Air Force officers talk to the crew of a UFO that crashed in East Anglia? Or was the story a smokescreen for a potentially deadly military accident? JENNY RANGLES reports on the rumours and the evidence**

THE STUDY OF ALLEGED CRASHES of alien craft does not enjoy a degree of respectability proportional to its importance. Many ufologists decry those who try to unravel the truth behind such mysteries, for there are major problems with all these stories. The crashes always seem to occur in remote desert regions. In nearly all of them many years elapse before they are investigated. And there are very few witnesses, all of whom demand strict confidentiality, 'for fear of reprisals'. They insist that the security lid on these events is so tight that if it were made public that they had spoken out they would live in fear of the consequences.

These criticisms are true even of the cases studied by Leonard Stringfield, the pioneer in this field. He has collected information on a whole series of American retrievals (as they are known in ufologists' jargon), and one, at least – the Kingman, Arizona, case of May 1953 – has an appreciable degree of support. His very important research was published in the United States and appeared in a three-part series in the respected British journal *Flying Saucer Review*. The Roswell case (see page 2034) is one of Stringfield's – and

The expanse of Rendlesham Forest, in Suffolk, set in flat, lonely countryside. Local people saw lights descending into the forest and Forestry Commission workers found scorched trees. The reports coincided with sensational stories emanating from a local air base, telling of a UFO landing

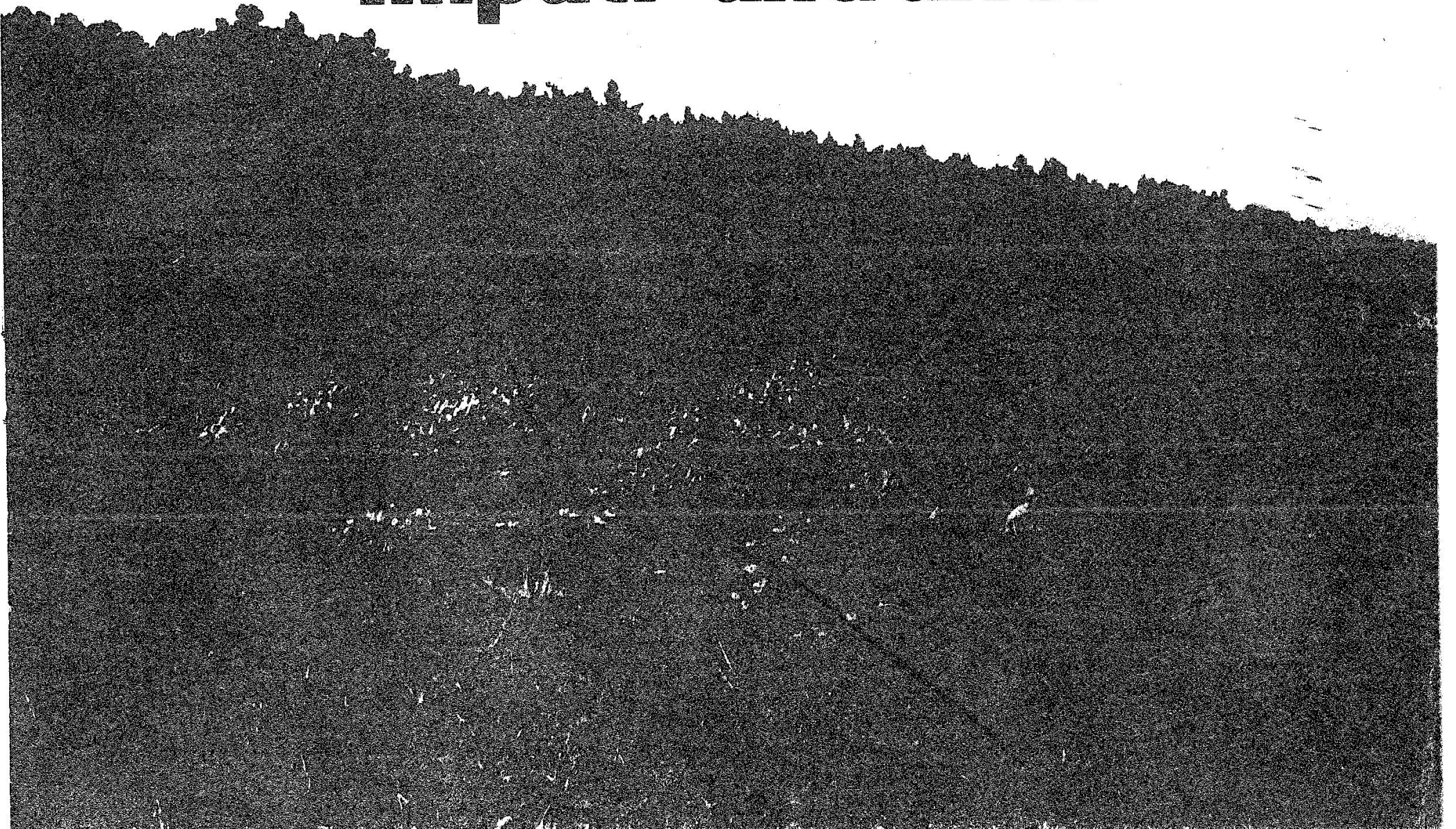
actually one of the most poorly supported.

But where, we might wonder, are the recent crashes? Or the ones *not* in a desert area? Or the witnesses who *will* speak out? Well, some of these conditions may have been fulfilled by the remarkable incident at Rendlesham Forest, Suffolk, in East Anglia in December 1980. ✓

Rendlesham Forest is a pretty woodland area about 12 miles (19 kilometres) east and north of Ipswich. It is surrounded by some of the most sparsely populated land in south-eastern England, fenland on which there are scattered farms. The only community of any real size is the village of Woodbridge to the west. North of the woods lie the US Air Force bases at Woodbridge and Bentwaters. These are important elements of the NATO defence system and would be of great strategic significance in the event of any future European war.

Between 27 and 30 December 1980 a number of reports of lights in the sky were made from this general area, especially around the coastal town of Leiston. A nuclear power station is nearby and some very interesting close encounters have been recorded in this vicinity. Brenda Butler and Dot Street, local investigators for the British UFO Research Association (BUFORA), followed up the sightings of the lights. They included one from a witness who said he observed a brilliant white light that hovered ✓

## Impact-and after





## UFO cover up



above Rendlesham Forest for 20 minutes or more. Being used to the activity around the air bases he assumed he was seeing one of their aircraft, though he was puzzled as to why it remained over the woods for so long.

Early in January 1981 one of Brenda Butler's trusted contacts at the Woodbridge base passed an astonishing piece of information to her. He said that a UFO had come down in the forest, about 2 miles (3 kilometres) from the base. It seems that this was probably on 30 December. The contact, a high-ranking officer, visited the scene along with the base commander and security personnel. They carried no weapons – these were expressly forbidden. The commander talked for some time with small 'aliens', 3 feet (1 metre) tall and wearing silver suits, who were suspended in 'shafts of light' beside the landed craft.

#### Classified conversations

Brenda Butler's contact refused to tell her specific details of the shape of the object, which was apparently damaged and being repaired. He also refused to comment on the subject matter of the detailed conversations that took place. Eventually, he claimed, the UFO departed – unsteadily at first – and strict security was imposed on all personnel who knew of the affair. Photographs that had been taken by some officers, without permission, were immediately confiscated. The officer mentioned, provocatively, that this was not the first time that a UFO had landed near – or perhaps even *on* – the base.

This officer was willing to talk to Butler only because of their past dealings and on the strict understanding that his confidentiality should be preserved. She was also required, at first, not to make use of the information he

Above: the ufologists who studied the wave of independent UFO reports centred on the Rendlesham Forest area: Dot Street (left) and Brenda Butler at the spot where they estimate that a brightly lit object, reported by a local farmer, must have descended. The Rendlesham case is more promising for research than the classic 'retrieval' cases compiled by the leading American ufologist Leonard Stringfield (above right), for the reports were nearly contemporary with the incidents described



had imparted about this incident.

Brenda Butler agreed to the officer's request. She kept the story to herself throughout January, not even relating it to her close colleague Dot Street. Even when she did tell her the story – about four weeks later, when rumours of the incident had begun to circulate from other sources – she continued to observe the officer's confidentiality. Consequently we are heavily reliant on her word. However, in discussions with the author she seemed both sincere and reliable.

A year later another investigator succeeded in confirming the existence of Brenda Butler's contact. Harry Harris, a lawyer and an investigator with the Manchester UFO Research Association, spoke to the officer who confirmed the basic details as Brenda had reported them. However, he avoided all subsequent attempts by Harris to communicate with him.

The rumour emerged during February 1981, through several channels. All were independent of each other, of Brenda Butler and of the media. Indeed, considering the number of people in the area who seem to have heard about the events, this lack of



attention from the local press, radio and television. It is a little enigmatic. It is the sort of story that they usually jump at. Butler and Street suggest that there are indications that this lack of interest was due to influence in high places.

The author Paul Begg heard one of the rumours from an acquaintance in his local pub, near Rendlesham. This man said he worked as a radar operator in a civilian establishment in the neighbouring county of Norfolk. A friend had been on duty on 30 December and had tracked an unknown target heading south (which was towards the Rendlesham Forest area). The radar return did not correspond to that of any known aircraft.

A couple of days later, there were surprise visitors to the radar centre. US Air Force officers arrived and took away the tapes of the radar tracking from the relevant night. They advised the civilian operators, in confidence, that the object they had tracked had landed near or on the Woodbridge airfield – and that aliens had emerged. Personnel from the base had approached in a jeep, the engine of which had failed as it came close to the craft. The air force personnel had then conversed with the aliens.

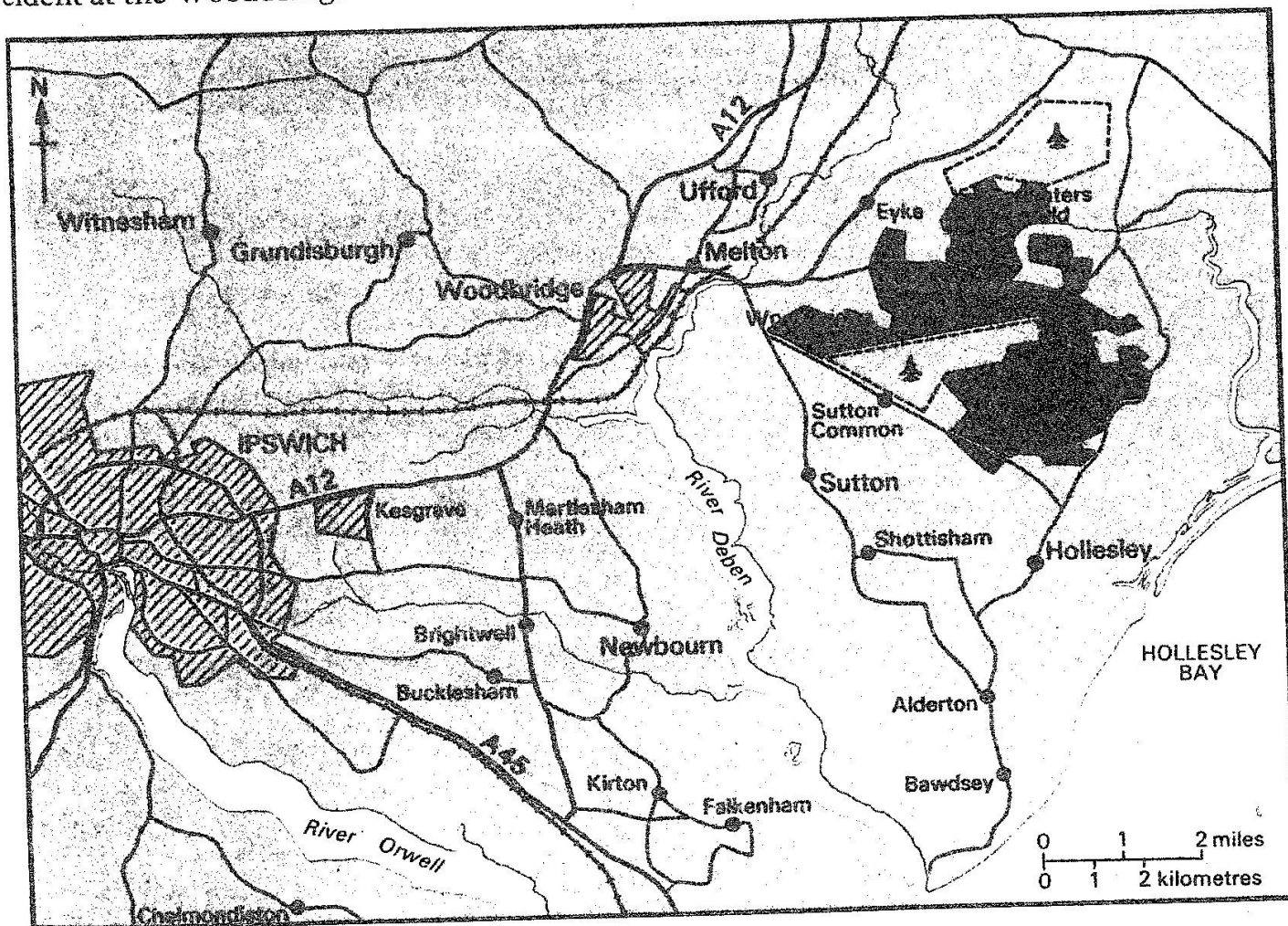
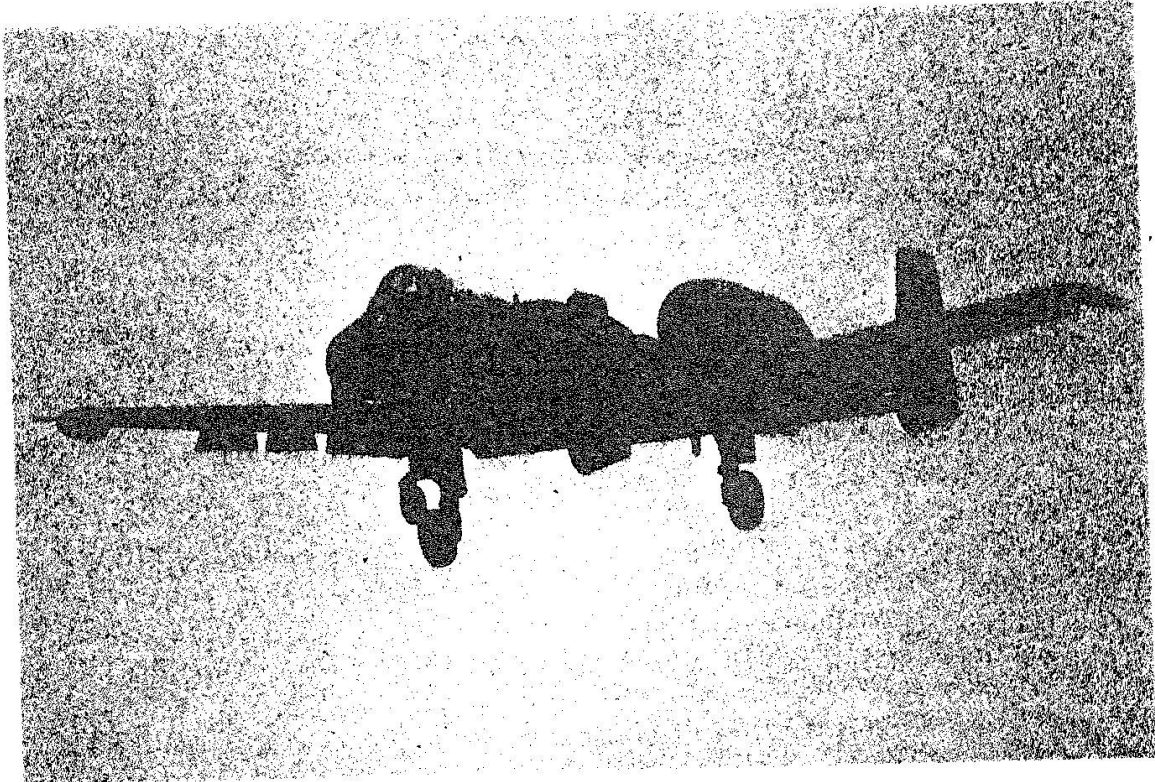
Paul Begg reported the story to the author, and she asked Peter Warrington, a specialist investigator of radar cases, to follow up the case. He talked to the radar operators and got the same details from them. All of this occurred before any of the participants knew of the information that Brenda Butler and Dot Street possessed.

The editor of BUFORA's *Journal*, Norman Oliver, also received an account of an incident at the Woodbridge base. It essentially

said that something 'big' had taken place there and, although lacking detail, was generally consistent with the information received by others. The story came from the United States, from a serviceman who had returned there after being stationed in England and therefore may have felt more free to talk.

Finally there was local gossip that 'something queer' had gone on at the air base. These stories involved an 'air crash' in the forest and did not seem to refer to a UFO. The belief that there had been a crash was strengthened by the report of a farmer who lived beside the wood and had seen a brightly lit object descend into the forest. He telephoned the base and suggested that one of their aircraft had come down. He was not

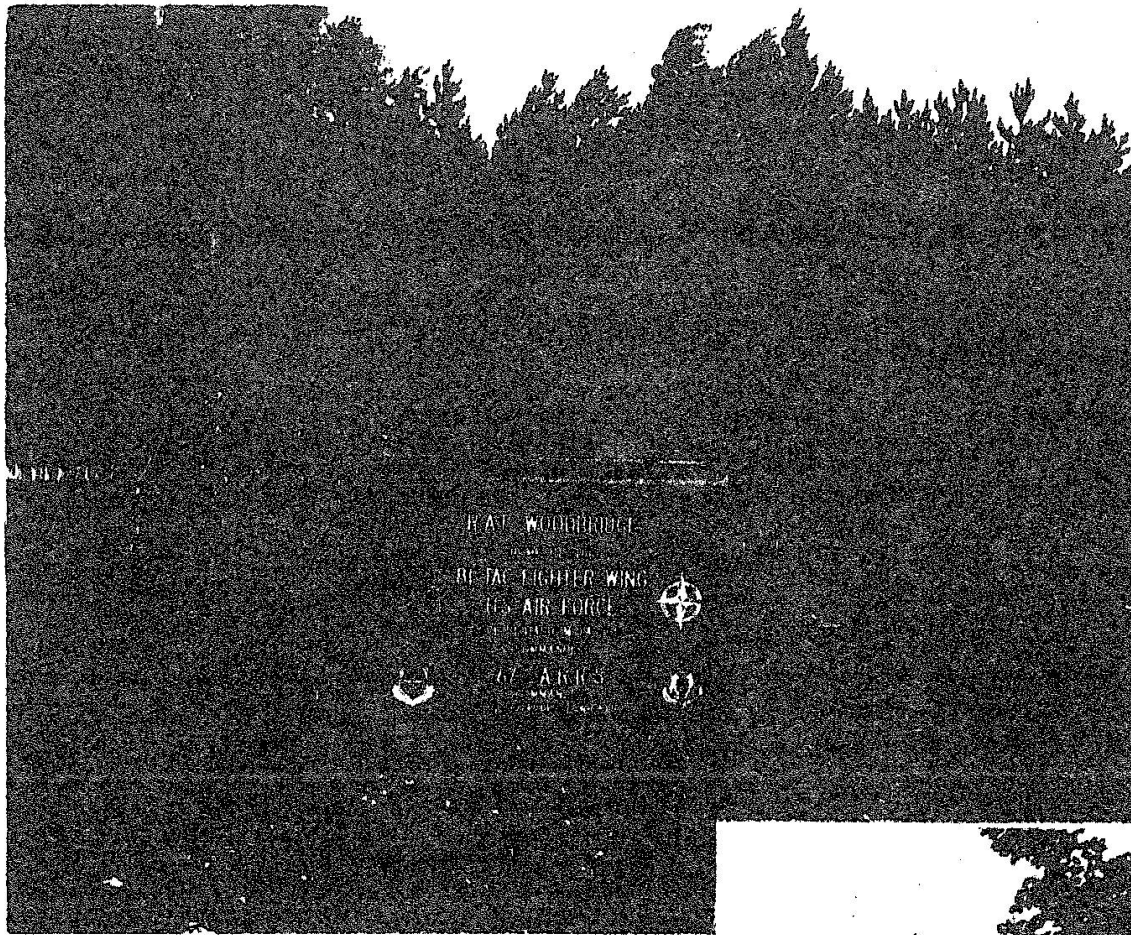
An A-10 ground attack aircraft of the US Air Force. According to an informant from the USAF base at Woodbridge, aircraft of this type were sent over the area of the alleged UFO encounter the day after it happened, supposedly to monitor radioactivity. The aircraft is designed to fly safely at very low speeds and low altitudes, making it valuable for ground surveys



Left: the area of Suffolk that includes Rendlesham Forest and the nearest large town, Ipswich. The country around the forest is some of the loneliest in Britain. Two versions of the UFO encounter story are current: according to one, the object landed in the forest, roughly in the area marked by the red star; according to the other, it landed on the Woodbridge air base itself



## UFO cover up



told otherwise when officers from the base came to interview him later. Local gossip subsequently had it that the base was keeping quiet about the affair.

Brenda Butler also discovered that in early January forestry workers found that some tree tops in the forest – in the area where the light was seen to descend – were scorched. They reported this to the air base and were politely informed that they should not talk about it.

In February the two women investigators arranged an appointment with the Woodbridge base commander. He declined, however, to answer any questions about the alleged crash, though he did ask them a number of questions about their UFO research. Finally he informed them that UFO data were referred to the Ministry of Defence, and that they should contact them. The Ministry replied to Butler's subsequent letter that they knew nothing of such an incident – and suggested that she should get in touch with the base commander.

### Terror ride

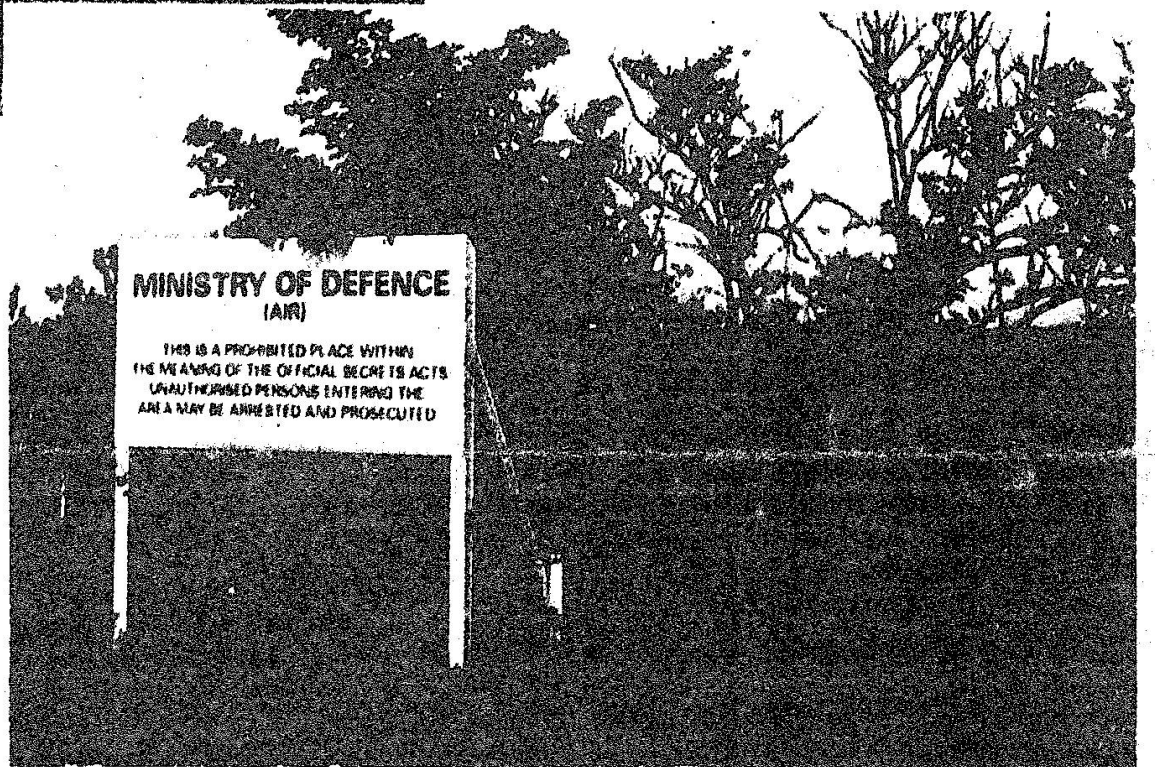
Butler and Street drove directly to the forest from their meeting with the commander. When they were approaching the area where they believed the light had been seen to come down, they had a curious experience. The car began to vibrate and then accelerated to between 60 and 70 miles per hour (96 and 113 km/h), while completely out of the control of the driver, Brenda Butler. After about half a mile (800 metres) the car stopped. Both women were frightened by the occurrence. On their return journey the car also vibrated at one point and skidded.

These incidents strongly impressed the investigators. However, it must be said that

the car was old and rickety, and was being driven on a rough forest road. Their interpretations of the events may owe something to an excited imagination.

On this visit and later ones, Butler and Street found local inhabitants who claimed that there had been much military activity in the forest during January. There were also stories of house lights and television sets flickering on and off.

Furthermore, several personnel from the base admitted that they knew about the supposed landing. However, it is not at all clear to what extent they were reporting what they had heard rather than what they had experienced at first hand. It seems likely that rumours were now sweeping the community on the base, gathering new elements as they did so. Certainly a number of new assertions were brought into the account at this stage: for example, that radioactivity remained in the forest, that local cattle had 'played up'



Like all US Air Force bases in Britain, Woodbridge (top) is a top security area. The signs that warn off intruders (above) are backed up by guard dogs, sentries and high-security fences. If something out of the ordinary interrupted the normal functioning of the base in December 1980, it would be virtually impossible for an outsider to find out anything about it. But an insider had plenty to tell Brenda Butler about an alleged conversation between top air force officers and tiny silver-suited aliens

and that the UFO stood on three legs, spaced 30 feet (9 metres) apart. According to one rumour, the UFO did not take off. It was 'retrieved', possibly to be shipped to the United States.

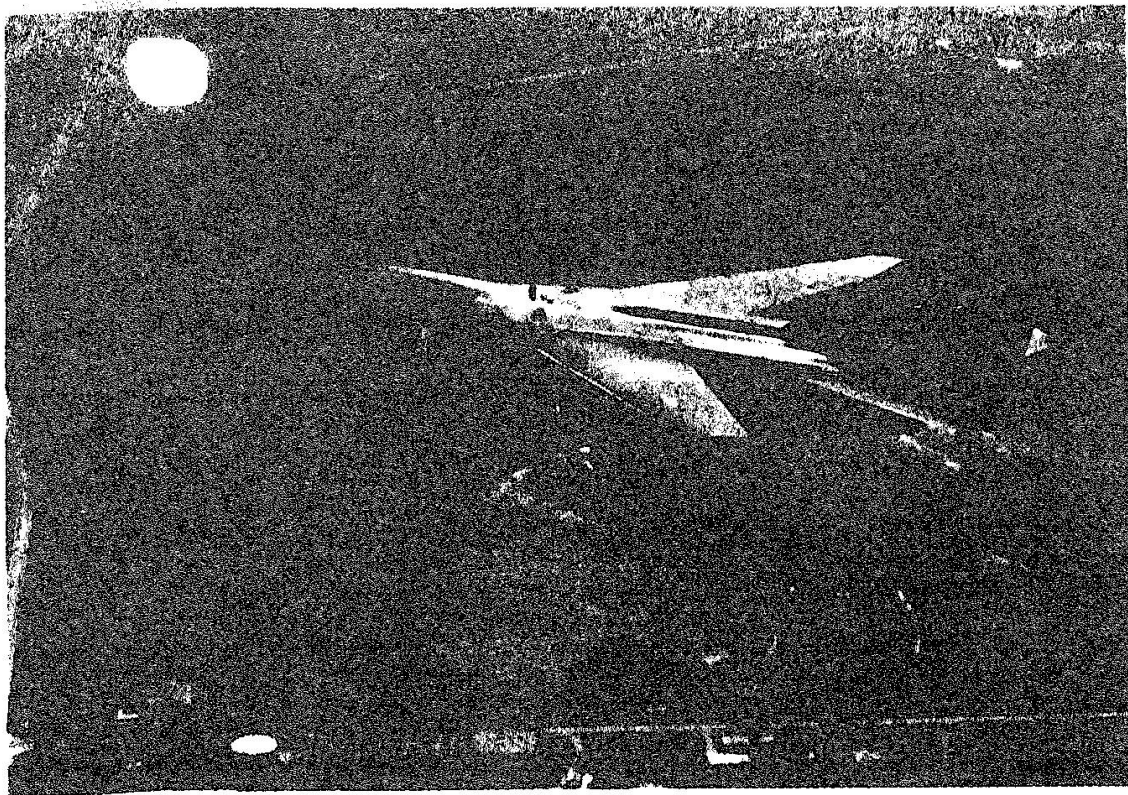
The Forestry Commission was also contacted. At first some workers there admitted to having knowledge of part of the story. Then they denied any knowledge of it whatsoever. It was later discovered by Brenda Butler that in the period between these conflicting statements the part of the forest where the event supposedly occurred was burnt down by the Forestry Commission!

The farmer who made the original report to the base was traced by the investigators. He refused to talk and seemed, to them, to be frightened. But another farmer and his wife told of being visited a couple of days after the 'crash' by two 'officials' – men in black, in the classic tradition! (See page 510.)

The situation was complicated, according to Brenda Butler, by her visit with Dot Street



## UFO cover up



Above: US Air Force F-111 fighter-bombers are based in Britain, and certain variants have the ability to carry nuclear weapons. Could the UFO rumours associated with Rendlesham Forest be a 'disinformation' exercise – designed to disguise some accident involving an aircraft with a nuclear bomb load from a nearby airfield?

to see the base commander. Afterwards, she was told, he called an internal enquiry, and one man who was suspected of leaking information was sent back to the United States before he had been scheduled to go.

It is very difficult to evaluate this complex and infuriating affair. Aside from Harry Harris and Dot Street, no one except Brenda Butler has talked to the personnel from the base who have released this information. All other investigators have come up against a wall of denials.

However, we do have the independently recorded testimony of the civilian radar operator and the serviceman who had returned to the USA. And there do appear to be a striking number of local rumours about an air crash and also about several odd experiences that occurred around the same time in the vicinity of the forest. And if the relevant part of the forest really was burned

when it is said to have been, this would seem to tie in too closely with the change in attitude of the Forestry Commission to be coincidental. All of this would indicate some strange happening, regardless of how we view the evidence given by understandably anonymous sources to Brenda Butler.

There seem to be two possibilities that could explain what happened. Either a conventional aircraft was forced to land in Rendlesham Forest – or an unconventional one did so.

It is interesting to recall that Bentwaters was one of the bases involved, with Lakenheath (a few miles north), in a classic radar-visual encounter in August 1956 (see page 198). Within days of that famous case, so it has been alleged, a nuclear cataclysm was only narrowly averted when a crash and subsequent fire at the Lakenheath base almost caused live nuclear weapons to detonate.

If such a disaster was threatened, it was efficiently concealed from the public for over 20 years. And this makes it *conceivable* that in December 1980 an American aircraft *did* crash into Rendlesham Forest and the fact was covered up – possibly because the aircraft was carrying a nuclear device. In which case the UFO landing story might have been used deliberately as a convenient distraction from the disturbing truth.

This leaves a couple of questions unanswered, however. Could an aircraft crash really be hidden? The area is sparsely inhabited, to be sure, so it is not surprising that the impact was not witnessed. But to remove all the remnants of the crash would be a long and difficult operation. More significantly, perhaps, it was the aircraft crash rumour that was circulated among local people by hints dropped by various members of the air base personnel. Could it be that *this* was a cover-up story – intended to conceal a UFO landing?



Open areas are dotted throughout Rendlesham Forest. If UFO landings really do occur, such spots, located in a thinly populated area, would be ideal sites