

Rage in 1950s, UFO 'sightings' just faded away

By JAMES RUSK
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OTTAWA — "Starting at his nose where a plane has a propeller, he had a green light. It worked up and down."

"Next came two guns painted a bright red. Their action was up and down like a human arm. ... Next he widened his tail slightly and out popped three fins."

In the early morning of Oct. 9, 1951, a First World War veteran thought he saw three space ships near Barrie, Ont., and he wrote the Department of National Defence to report his finding.

The 55-year-old army veteran's description of one of the space ships, quoted above, is the most vivid in the Defence Department's files on Unidentified Flying Objects, which are now declassified in the National Archives.

The files cover the period from 1947, when UFO fever started in North America with a widely publicized report about a sighting in Boise, Idaho, to 1964, when the annual number of

sightings in the file had tapered off.

They do not cover all the incidents reported to the Government during the period. Those which observers wished to be confidential are being kept under lock and key until the year 2000. Other reports are to be found in the records of meteor landings kept by the National Research Council.

But, even so, the Defence Department records make fascinating reading. While the names of those who reported UFOs are blacked out because of privacy provisions in the law, their occupations are recorded.

They range from scientifically unsophisticated observers such as Inuit in the North to housewives and to those with a great deal of experience with aerial phenomena, including a surprisingly large number of Royal Canadian Air Force personnel and the chief test pilot for Canadair, the Montreal aircraft manufacturer.

The papers are an equally

UFO — Page 4

Globe & Mail 2/1/88