

DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL DEFENCE



MINISTÈRE DE LA DÉFENSE NATIONALE

Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0K2

8 March, 1976

Mr. A. Bray
1187 Agincourt Road
Ottawa, Ontario
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Dear Mr. Bray:

Your letter of 26 February 1976 to DG Info has been passed to this office for reply. Having discussed your letter with a colleague of high scientific repute who was himself at the Defence Research Establishment Suffield (DRES)* for some fifteen years, over the period covered by your enquiry, and was for most of that time the Scientific Coordinator for the large-scale trials at the station, we can give you a response based on his first-hand experience.

My colleague states, from his own knowledge, that there is no basis in fact for the press reports to which you refer. However, at that time DRES was the focus of much public attention. There were many letters and reports in the press, as well as some very amusing cartoons erroneously accusing DRES of many preposterous things, from stealing cats to modifying the climate. Mr. Hellyer, as the responsible Minister, cooperated freely with the press in attempting to inform the public. The original suggestion that Suffield was a UFO landing site undoubtedly came from one of these cartoons. In a question and answer session with the press Mr. Hellyer was provoked into a comment at that time to the effect that he would be "quite happy to see a UFO land at Suffield since we could then study the thing". It was a fair comment in the context.

Suffield, in common with other scientific establishments, is frequently queried about unexplained phenomena of all kinds, not merely UFO's. Two uncommon, but not rare, phenomena have occasionally caused a flood of enquiries. One was the appearance of sundogs, sometimes bright enough to be photographed. When these occurred much effort was spent in answering phone calls explaining that the phenomenon was well known, and neither a UFO nor an example of the religious effect termed "suns of Fatima". The second phenomenon arises from a fairly common atmospheric condition where the disc of Venus appears very large and gives a distinct impression of movement. This is again quite well known, but when first observed is sufficiently startling to confuse even trained observers.

* At that time DRES was still the Suffield Experimental Station (SES).