



# Ministry of Defence

Air Command Secretariat  
Spitfire Block  
Headquarters Air Command  
Royal Air Force  
High Wycombe  
Buckinghamshire  
HP14 4UE

Our Ref: FOI2015/002897

[REDACTED]  
Email: [REDACTED]

25 March 2015

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your email of 11 March clarifying your request as being military flights in the Oldham Greater Manchester area. You have also clarified that your whole request for military flights relates to flights where aircraft lights were both on and off (where permitted), plus the term transportation relates to the transporting of goods, supplies, equipment and/or personnel. For ease of reference your original request was as follows:

- Are there any circumstances whereby UK military flights within UK airspace would be operating with the standard aviation lights switched off?
- Are there any circumstances whereby US military flights within UK airspace would be operating with the standard aviation lights switched off?
- Are there any circumstances whereby any allied nation of the United Kingdom have military flights within UK airspace would be operating with the standard aviation lights switched off?
- Were there any UK military flights in the Northwest of England on the evening of 23rd of August 2014, between the times of 2000hrs and 0000hrs?
- Were there any US military flights in the Northwest of England on the evening of 23rd of August 2014, between the times of 2000hrs and 0000hrs?
- Were there any allied nation of the United Kingdom have military flights in the Northwest of England on the evening of 23rd of August 2014, between the times of 2000hrs and 0000hrs?
- Would un-manned drones have standard aviation lighting, as required by other aircraft? Would these be switched on or off whilst in UK airspace?
- Were there any UK, US or any other Allied nation's un-manned drones in the Northwest of England on the evening of 23rd August 2014 between the times of 2000hrs and 0000hrs?
- Were there any training activities carried out on the evening of 23rd August 2014?
- Were there any transportation activities carried out on the evening of 23rd August 2014?
- Were there any breaches of UK airspace on the evening of 23rd August 2014?
- Were there any unknown or unidentified radar contacts within the Northwest of England on the evening of 23rd August 2014?
- Were there any anomalous or erroneous radar contacts on the evening of 23rd August 2014?
- Have you been made aware of any other reports, or received any other enquiries pertaining to the evening of 23rd August 2014?

I am treating your correspondence as a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

After an initial search of our records I can confirm some information is held

We have no record of UK, US, allied Nation, unmanned drone flights in the Oldham, Greater Manchester area on 23 August 2014 between 2000-0000 hours. Please note that this area lies

within the Manchester Area Control Centre (ACC) who are the Air Traffic Control Provider for that area. Any movements (including military and civilian), breaches of airspace, unknown or unidentified radar contacts, anomalous or erroneous radar contacts would be within the Manchester ACC responsibility and any records would be held by them. Therefore your enquiry would be best directed to the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA).

There were no low flying complaints recorded on the 23 August 2014 between the times specified.

There are no records held of any training or transportation activities on the 23 August 2014 between the times specified.

The Military Aviation Authority's (MAA) Regulatory Article (RA) 2307 Paragraph 59 sub paragraphs a-d detail the exact circumstances when aircraft may be operated without navigation lights at night. The MAA RA is readily available in the public domain and is therefore exempt under Section 21(1) and Section 21(2)a of the FOIA - "information available to the applicant by other means" or "information may be reasonably accessible to the applicant even though it is accessible only on payment". Section 16(1) of the FOIA requires the public authority to provide advice and assistance wherever possible. You can find the relevant information via the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/regulatory-article-ra-2307-rules-of-the-air>

If you are not satisfied with this response or you wish to complain about any aspect of the handling of your request, then you should contact me in the first instance. If informal resolution is not possible and you are still dissatisfied then you may apply for an independent internal review by contacting the Information Rights Compliance team, 1st Floor, MOD Main Building, Whitehall, SW1A 2HB (e-mail CIO-FOI-IR@mod.uk). Please note that any request for an internal review must be made within 40 working days of the date on which the attempt to reach informal resolution has come to an end.

If you remain dissatisfied following an internal review, you may take your complaint to the Information Commissioner under the provisions of Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act. Please note that the Information Commissioner will not investigate your case until the MOD internal review process has been completed. Further details of the role and powers of the Information Commissioner can be found on the Commissioner's website, <http://www.ico.gov.uk>.

Yours sincerely



Secretariat 3b  
Air Command