



# SECURITY AT HIGHDOWN

## Protecting the top secret site

The Highdown site was operating at the height of the Cold War. Security was paramount. Everyone working on site had to sign the Official Secrets Act.

The Needles headland was enclosed within a fence topped with barbed wire. This was patrolled by police and security guards with dogs.

The only road into the site was blocked by a police check point. Anyone entering or leaving had to show their identification and permits. The rule was no permit, no entry. It was strictly enforced, even for the most familiar faces.

## Spies on the horizon?

Were the Soviets spying on the site? It's difficult to say, as a good spy leaves no trace!

Reports suggest that the Soviets used a fishing trawler in the English Channel to eavesdrop on the site. Instead of the trawler being full of nets it was actually equipped with high tech listening equipment.

They probably wouldn't have discovered much useful information. The timings of test firings were kept secret. The firings themselves were often delayed for days and even weeks for technical reasons. It would also have been difficult for the spies to listen to internal communications as these were carefully disguised to make eavesdropping difficult.

It is believed that the trawler was eventually encouraged to leave the English Channel by a Royal Naval Destroyer despatched from Portsmouth.

If spying did happen, to this day it remains very hush hush!