



Ministry  
of Defence

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FOI 2015/00089

[REDACTED]

Date: 03 February  
2015

Dear [REDACTED],

Thank you for your correspondence dated 7<sup>th</sup> January 2015 in which you requested the following:

*“Could you please provide me with details of the annual medical discharges in the UK regular armed forces covering the years 1996/97 - 2000/01?”*

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

A search for the information has now been completed within the Ministry of Defence, and I can confirm that information in scope of your request is held. Some of the information falls entirely within the scope of the absolute exemptions provided for at section 40 (Personal Data) of the FOIA and has been withheld.

Section 40(2) has been applied to some of the information in order to protect personal information as governed by the Data Protection Act 1998. This is also in line with Defence Statistics rounding policy, in which numbers fewer than five are suppressed in order to reduce the possible inadvertent disclosure of individual identities. Section 40 is an absolute exemption and there is therefore no requirement to consider the public interest in making a decision to withhold the information.

The information you have requested can be found below.

Medical discharges in the UK Armed Forces involve a series of processes, at times complex, which differ in each Service to meet their specific employment requirements. Due to these differences between the three Services, comparisons between the single Service statistics are judged to be invalid. Therefore, the figures in this answer are presented separately for each Service.

**Tables 1-3** provide the number of UK Regular Naval Service (Includes Royal Navy and Royal Marines), Army and RAF personnel medically discharged by demographic breakdown and financial year for the period 1996/97-2000/01.

**Table 1: UK Regular Naval Service<sup>1</sup> Personnel medically discharged by age group, gender, rank and training status, 1995/96 – 2000/01, Numbers**

	All Years	1996/97	1997/98	1998/99	1999/00	2000/01
<b>All</b>	<b>3,328</b>	<b>584</b>	<b>670</b>	<b>741</b>	<b>692</b>	<b>641</b>
Under 20	103	20	17	20	30	16
20-24	521	98	143	87	90	103
25-29	968	171	184	243	197	173
30-34	664	85	113	172	148	146
35-39	702	115	131	158	157	141
40-44	178	45	27	31	43	32
45-49	128	34	42	14	19	19
50+	64	16	13	16	8	11
<b>Male</b>	<b>370</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>84</b>
<b>Female</b>	<b>2,958</b>	<b>529</b>	<b>590</b>	<b>674</b>	<b>608</b>	<b>557</b>
<b>Officers<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>202</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>Other ranks<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>3,125</b>	<b>547</b>	<b>635</b>	<b>694</b>	<b>648</b>	<b>601</b>
<b>Trained<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>3,157</b>	<b>545</b>	<b>630</b>	<b>694</b>	<b>664</b>	<b>624</b>
<b>Untrained<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>170</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>17</b>

Source: FMED 23 and JPA

1 Includes Royal Navy and Royal Marines

2 There is one UK Regular Naval Service personnel for which rank and training status is unknown and has therefore been removed from these breakdowns.

**Table 2: UK Regular Army Personnel medically discharged by age group, gender, rank and training status, 1995/96 – 2000/01, Numbers**

	All Years	1996/97	1997/98	1998/99	1999/00	2000/01
<b>All</b>	<b>7,779</b>	<b>1,559</b>	<b>1,467</b>	<b>1,530</b>	<b>1,675</b>	<b>1,548</b>
Under 20	2,295	441	348	481	556	469
20-24	2,392	548	467	436	483	458
25-29	1,769	393	362	366	317	331
30-34	797	120	184	135	201	157
35-39	363	25	83	79	90	86
40-44	123	21	19	22	23	38
45-49	16	~	~	6	0	~
50+	24	~	~	5	5	~
<b>Male</b>	<b>1,414</b>	<b>269</b>	<b>203</b>	<b>306</b>	<b>368</b>	<b>268</b>
<b>Female</b>	<b>6,365</b>	<b>1,290</b>	<b>1,264</b>	<b>1,224</b>	<b>1,307</b>	<b>1,280</b>
<b>Officers</b>	<b>214</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>56</b>
<b>Other ranks</b>	<b>7,565</b>	<b>1,531</b>	<b>1,430</b>	<b>1,472</b>	<b>1,640</b>	<b>1,492</b>
<b>Trained</b>	<b>3,986</b>	<b>812</b>	<b>865</b>	<b>748</b>	<b>811</b>	<b>750</b>
<b>Untrained</b>	<b>3,793</b>	<b>747</b>	<b>602</b>	<b>782</b>	<b>864</b>	<b>798</b>

Source: FMED 23 and JPA

1 Data presented as “~” has been suppressed in accordance with Defence Statistics’ rounding policy

**Table 3: UK Regular RAF Personnel medically discharged by age group, gender, rank and training status, 1995/96 – 2000/01, Numbers**

	All Years	1996/97	1997/98	1998/99	1999/00	2000/01
<b>All</b>	<b>1,506</b>	<b>297</b>	<b>379</b>	<b>260</b>	<b>268</b>	<b>302</b>
<b>Under 20</b>	<b>104</b>	12	21	24	21	26
<b>20-24</b>	<b>163</b>	48	38	17	33	27
<b>25-29</b>	<b>350</b>	72	110	67	55	46
<b>30-34</b>	<b>286</b>	72	57	40	58	59
<b>35-39</b>	<b>204</b>	31	49	42	33	49
<b>40-44</b>	<b>172</b>	27	40	36	23	46
<b>45-49</b>	<b>96</b>	14	22	11	20	29
<b>50+</b>	<b>131</b>	21	42	23	25	20
<b>Male</b>	<b>258</b>	54	56	47	52	49
<b>Female</b>	<b>1,248</b>	243	323	213	216	253
<b>Officers</b>	<b>144</b>	17	33	29	29	36
<b>Other ranks</b>	<b>1,362</b>	280	346	231	239	266
<b>Trained</b>	<b>1,308</b>	270	335	220	227	256
<b>Untrained</b>	<b>198</b>	27	44	40	41	46

Source: FMED 23 and JPA

Under section 16 of the Act (Advice and Assistance), you may find it useful to note the following:

Defence Statistics release annual updates on medical discharges in the UK Armed Forces as an Official Statistic publication. In accordance with the Code of Practice for the release of National/Official Statistics we are unable to provide the data for 2014/15 prior to the next statistical release, due in July 2015, as set out in the Statistics and Registration Service Act, 2007. The latest report can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ministry-of-defence/about/statistics>

Medical discharges are the result of a number of specialists (medical, occupational, psychological, personnel, etc) coming to the conclusion that an individual is suffering from a medical condition that pre-empt their continued service in the Armed Forces. Statistics based on these discharges do not represent measures of true morbidity or pathology. At best they indicate a minimum burden of ill-health in the Armed Forces. Furthermore, the number and diversity of processes involved with administering a medical discharge introduce a series of time lags, as well as impact on the quality of data recorded.

The information on cases was sourced from electronic personnel records and manually entered paper documents from medical boards. The primary purpose of these medical documents is to ensure the appropriate administration of each individual patient's discharge. Statistical analysis and reporting is a secondary function.

Although Medical Boards recommend medical discharges they do not attribute the principal disability leading to the board to Service. A Medical Board could take place many months or even years after an event or injury and it is not clinically possible in some cases to link an earlier injury to a later problem which may lead to a discharge. Decisions on attributability to Service are made by Defence Business Services (formerly SPVA).

Would you like to be added to our contact list, so that we can inform you about updates to our statistical publications covering Medical Discharges in the UK Regular Armed Forces and consult you if we are thinking of making changes? You can subscribe to updates by emailing [DefStrat-Stat-Health-PQ-FOI@mod.uk](mailto:DefStrat-Stat-Health-PQ-FOI@mod.uk)

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 Deputy Chief Information Officer, 2nd Floor, MOD Main Building, Whitehall, SW1A 2HB (e-mail [CIO-FOI-IR@mod.uk](mailto: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>.

I hope you find this information useful

Yours sincerely,  
Defence Statistics (Health) Head (B1)