



Ministry
of Defence

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
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THE RT HON MARK LANCASTER TD VR MP
MINISTER OF STATE FOR THE ARMED FORCES

MSU/4/7/6/is

17th November 2017

Dear Madeleine,

Thank you for your letter of 17 October in which you asked for the following information:

How many M3 amphibious bridging vehicles were utilised in Operation Iron Wolf and Saber Guardian and which units used these vehicles?

How many M3 amphibious bridging vehicles have been based in Germany in each of the last 10 years?

How many M3 amphibious bridging vehicles (a) have been purchased, (b) are in service and (c) are held in reserve?

How many M3 amphibious bridging vehicles were deployed during NATO exercises in each of the last 10 years: what the name of the (a) exercise and (b) unit was engaged in each of those exercises?

As you will be aware, on 16 October I provided answers to Parliamentary Questions you submitted asking for the same information as above. This information is, therefore, exempt under Section 21 of the FOIA as it is reasonably accessible to you by other means. For convenience the answer to these questions can be found at the following link:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-questions-answers/?page=1&max=20&questiontype=AllQuestions&house=commons%2clords&use-dates=True&answered-from=2017-10-10&uin=106987>

With regard to the remainder of the information you have requested. My earlier response to Parliament advised that the Department does not routinely comment on specific levels of readiness and specific locations for individual capabilities as to do so would compromise operational security, or would, or would be likely to, prejudice the

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capability, effectiveness or security of the Armed Forces. This relates to Section 26 (Defence) of the FOI Act. This is a qualified exemption that requires a public interest test to be conducted in order to consider the arguments both for and against the release of this information.

The Ministry of Defence has conducted that test. Arguments for the release of this information include the public interest in knowing how many vehicles are operational, how many are held in reserve and used in specific exercises, and the openness and transparency of releasing such information. Arguments against the release of such information include providing specific levels of readiness and numbers for individual capabilities would compromise operational security, as well as the effectiveness or security of the Armed Forces. Having considered the arguments both for and against release the Department has decided to withhold the number of vehicles that are in service, are held in reserve and involved in the exercises and operations as the information as it is likely to prejudice the security, capability and security of our Armed Forces. Release of this information would be likely to prejudice Defence matters.

The Public Interest Test determined that the Department could release information relating to the NATO exercises that M3 Amphibious Bridging Vehicles have deployed on in the last 10 years. I provide that information in the table below:

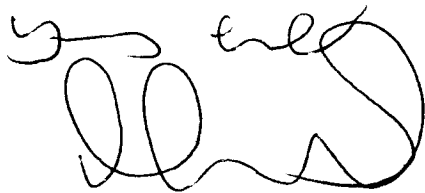
Ser	Year	Exercise name	Units
1	2017	Ex IRON WOLF	75 Engineer Regiment – 23 Amphibious Engineer Troop (Regular) and 412 Amphibious Engineer Troop (Reserves).
2	2017	Ex HEIDESTRURM	75 Engineer Regiment – 23 Amphibious Engineer Troop.
3	2016	Ex ANAKONDA	75 Engineer Regiment – 23 Amphibious Engineer Troop (Regular) and 412 Amphibious Engineer Troop (Reserves), augmented by additional Reservists from across 75 Engineer Regiment.
4	2015	Ex MINDEN SHOCK	75 Engineer Regiment – 23 Amphibious Engineer Troop (Regular) and 412 Amphibious Engineer Troop (Reserves), augmented by additional Reservists from across 75 Engineer Regiment.
5	2014	Nil	-
6	2013	Nil	-
7	2012	Nil	-
8	2011	Nil	-
9	2010	Nil	-
10	2009	Nil	-
11	2008	Ex NEPTUNE EAGLE	28 Engineer Regiment – 23 Amphibious Engineer Squadron.

I can also advise that there was no participation by UK amphibious bridging units for Exercise SABER GUARDIAN this year.

If you have any queries regarding the content of this letter, please contact this office in the first instance. Following this, if you wish to complain about the handling of your request, or the content of this response, you can request an independent internal review by contacting the Information Rights Compliance team, Ground Floor, MOD Main Building, Whitehall, SW1A 2HB (e-mail CIO-FOI-IR@mod.uk). Please note that any request for an internal review should be made within 40 working days of the date of this response.

If you remain dissatisfied following an internal review, you may raise your complaint directly to the Information Commissioner under the provisions of Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act. Please note that the Information Commissioner will not normally investigate your case until the MOD internal review process has been completed. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF. Further details of the role and powers of the Information Commissioner can be found on the Commissioner's website at <https://ico.org.uk/>.

I am placing a copy of this letter in the Library of the House.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark Lancaster', written in a cursive style.

THE RT HON MARK LANCASTER TD VR MP

PS We spoke!