



Ministry of Defence

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Ref: FOI2017/10388/79568/13/04

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[Redacted]

27 October 2017

E-mail address:

[Redacted]

Dear [Redacted],

Thank you for your email/letter of 22 October in which you requested the following information:

"I am currently a Masters student at The University of Manchester doing a dissertation entitled, 'To what extent do the United Kingdom and United States' Armies Currently Pursue Gender Equality Policies with Regard to the Deployment of Women in Combat Roles? A Comparative Analysis.'

Could I request some current statistics please?

Could you tell me how many women are currently in combat roles in the U.K Army please?"

You clarified this in a further email of 23 October that you wanted the number of women in ground combat roles.

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

A search for the information has now been completed within the Ministry of Defence, and I can confirm that the information in scope of your request is held and is as follows:

Females in the Royal Armoured Corps

Table with 4 columns: Category, Total, Trained, Untrained. Rows: Total (40, 35, 10), Regular (10, 5*, 5), Reserve (30, 30, ~)

Source: Defence Statistics (Army)

Notes and caveats:

Figures have been rounded to limit disclosure

The figures are for Regular Army and the Future Reserve 20 personnel. These exclude Gurkha and Non-FR20 Reserve populations.

"~" shows a value that is less than 5 but greater than 0.

* Trade Trained

Under section 16 of the FOIA – advice and assistance – it might be helpful if I explained why the numbers of women in ground combat roles appears to be low. Women could not apply for ground combat roles until November 2016, when applications were allowed for the Royal Armoured Corps. The average time for an application being received to join the Army and an individual commencing initial training is around 300 days. Basic training then takes 14 weeks and Initial Trade Training for the Royal Armoured Corps is between 22 and 25 weeks. I should add, however, that women who were already serving in other parts of the Army could apply to transfer to the Royal Armoured Corps but would need to undergo Initial Trade Training before they could join a unit within the Corps.

With regard to the infantry, it is likely that such roles will be opened to women in late 2018 or early 2019.

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/>.

Yours sincerely,


Disclosure and Litigation Leader