



Ministry  
of Defence

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Reference: [REDACTED] correspondence dated: 26 September 2013

[REDACTED]

Date: 22 October 2013

Dear [REDACTED],

Your correspondence dated 26 September 2013 has been considered to be a request for information in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000. You requested the following information:

*"A text and supplying the full monthly and annual breakdown by country of death, of the number of soldiers who died whilst on tour since 2000.*

*A text supplying the full breakdown of soldiers who reported suffering post-traumatic shock or any other form of mental illness whilst serving in the British Armed Forces"*

Following further communications on 30 September 2013 the request was clarified to be:

*"those who have died as a result of operations abroad. I wanted to know the breakdown of the countries in which they died."*

*"For the second part, I require PTSD statistics of all UK Armed Forces personnel who have reported suffering from PTSD once being deployed to operations."*

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. The information you requested is enclosed and a separate annex attached.

Between 1 January 2000 to 22 October 2013, **688** UK Armed Forces personnel have died as a result of operations abroad. **Table 1** below provides a breakdown of these deaths by operation.

**Table 1: UK Armed forces<sup>1</sup> deaths<sup>2</sup> by operation, 1 January 2000 to 22 October 2013, numbers**

Operation	Number of deaths
All	688
Northern Ireland	45
Balkans	14
Sierra Leone	5
Afghanistan	445
Iraq	178
Libya	1

Notes:

1. Figures are for tri-Service regular and reservist personnel.
2. Figures are for all causes of death; Hostile action, accidents, natural causes, assaults, coroner confirmed suicide or open verdicts and cause not yet known.

A further breakdown of the above information providing year, month and specific country of death as requested, has been supplied in a separate excel attachment. Please note the operations listed in **Table 1** represent the theatre of operation and not the specific country ie., operations in Iraq includes deployment to Iraq and other countries in the Gulf region such as Kuwait and Oman. In addition, personnel injured on operations may be aeromedically evacuated outside of the theatre of operation to receive medical care, usually in the UK or Germany, however, for operations in Afghanistan, one death occurred following aeromedical evacuation to Oman for specialist treatment. The Excel attachment provides for each operation, the number of deaths for those countries within the theatre of operation and deaths in the UK or Germany following aeromedical evacuation. For each operation, the countries where a death occurred within the theatre of operation were as follows :

**Northern Ireland** – Northern Ireland

**Balkans** – Bosnia, Macedonia, Yugoslavia

**Sierra Leone** – Sierra Leone

**Afghanistan** – Afghanistan, Cyprus

**Iraq** – Iraq, Kuwait, Germany

**Libya** – Italy

## **Mental Health**

DS (Heath) has access to electronic mental health records supplied by MOD Department for Community Mental Health (DCMH) and in-patient providers from January 2007 onwards. The information you have requested on the number of UK Service personnel who had an episode of care for a mental health disorder, including PTSD for the period 2000 to 2006, falls within the scope of the following absolute exemption(s) under the Act: Section 40: Personal Information; as the information on UK Service personnel who had an episode of care for a mental health disorder, including PTSD is held within the individual medical record and not held centrally.

Between 1 January 2007 and 30 June 2013 (latest date for which published mental health data is available), **13,550** UK Service personnel had at least one episode of care at a MOD DCMH or inpatient provider for a mental health disorder, who were identified as having previously deployed to Iraq and/or Afghanistan.

Of these, **1,237** UK Service personnel had an initial assessment of PTSD and **12,625** UK Service personnel had an initial assessment for other mental health disorder (excluding PTSD).

If Service personnel had a separate episode of care during the period for both PTSD and Other mental health disorder, both episodes have been counted.

Please note it is not possible to attribute an assessment of PTSD to a specific deployment.

The numbers presented in this response should be treated as a minimum:

- Type of Disorder was not recorded for all DCMH or in-patient records over this time period; there were 163 UK Armed Forces personnel with a DCMH record and 294 admittances to an in-patient facility with no diagnostic information recorded (see background notes).
- There were 148 personnel who withheld consent for their details to be held on the DS mental health database, thus it was not possible to identify whether they had previously deployed or not (see background notes). Of these, 11 were personnel who had an initial assessment for PTSD and 137 had an initial assessment for other mental health disorder.

## **Background Notes**

Would you like to be added to our contact list, so that we can inform you about updates to our statistical publications covering deaths and/or mental health in the UK 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

## **Deaths**

Defence Statistics (Health) compiles the Department's authoritative deaths database for all **UK Armed Forces personnel who died whilst in Service** going back to 1984. Information is compiled from several internal and external sources from which we release a number of internal analyses and external National Statistics Notices.

## **Mental health data**

DCMHs are specialised psychiatric services based on community mental health teams closely located with primary care services at sites in the UK and abroad.

DCMH staff record the initial mental health assessment during a patient's first appointment, based on presenting complaints. The information is provisional and final diagnoses may differ as some patients do not present the full range of symptoms, signs or clinical history during their first appointment. The mental health assessment of condition data were categorised according to the World Health Organisation's International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Health-Related Disorders 10th edition (ICD-10).

'UK Armed Forces Personnel' includes UK Regular Forces, Gurkhas, Full Time Reserve Service (FTRS) personnel and mobilised reservists.

During 2007 DCMH staffs were not required to complete ICD-10 information in their monthly returns. DASA received 163 Armed Forces personnel records that did not have information regarding a specific mental disorder during 2007 but were identified as having previously deployed to either Iraq and/or Afghanistan. In addition, between 1 January 2007 and 30 June 2013, 294 Armed Forces personnel who were admitted an MOD in-patient facility had no diagnosis recorded but were identified as having previously deployed to Iraq and/or Afghanistan. Therefore the numbers presented for UK Armed Forces personnel with PTSD or other mental health disorder should be regarded as a minimum.

Up to 2009 if Service personnel withheld consent, their data was supplied in fully anonymised format. DASA received 11 records for Armed Forces personnel assessed with PTSD and 137 records for those assessed with other mental health disorder for the period January 2007 - June 2009, but with no demographic information provided, so deployment information was unknown. In 2009/10 DCMH staff agreed to collect basic demographic information (Service, gender, rank, age and deployment) for Service personnel who withheld consent thus enabling DASA to include these cases within demographic breakdowns.

Defence Statistics maintains a database of individual deployment records from November 2001. Data prior to April 2007 was derived from the single services Operation Location tracking (OPLOC) systems and data since April 2007 is obtained from the Joint Personnel Administration (JPA) 'Move and Track' system. The data covers deployments on Operation TELIC (Iraq) (2003-2011) and Operation HERRICK (Afghanistan) (2001-present). All figures provided are provisional and subject to change.

The deployment data presented in this response represent deployments to the theatre of operation and not deployment to a specific country i.e. deployment to Op TELIC includes deployment to Iraq and other countries in the Gulf region such as Kuwait and Oman. Therefore, this data cannot be compared to data on personnel deployed to a specific country such as Iraq.

Deployment markers were assigned using the criteria that an individual was recorded as being deployed to the Iraq and/or Afghanistan theatres of operation if they had deployed to these theatres prior to their appointment date. Person level deployment data for Afghanistan was not available between 1 January 2003 and 14 October 2005. Therefore, it is possible that some UK Armed Forces personnel who were deployed to Afghanistan during this period and subsequently attended a DCMH have not been identified as having deployed to Afghanistan in this response **but** have been captured in the overall figures for patients treated at a DCMH or in-patient provider.

Operation TELIC is the name for UK operations in Iraq which started in March 2003 and finished on 21 May 2011. UK Forces were deployed to Iraq to support the Government's objective to remove the threat that Saddam posed to his neighbours and his people and, based on the evidence available at the time, disarm him of his weapons of mass destruction. The Government also undertook to support the Iraqi people in their desire for peace, prosperity, freedom and good government.

Operation HERRICK is the name for UK operations in Afghanistan which started in April 2006. UK Forces are deployed to Afghanistan in support of the UN authorised, NATO led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) mission and as part of the US-led Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF).

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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 this is helpful.

Yours sincerely,

Defence Statistics (Health) Head (B1)