



Ministry
of Defence

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Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your email of 24 January 2014 requesting the following information:

*"Could you please provide me with details of all female service personnel who have been sent back to the UK from operations in Afghanistan after discovering they were pregnant.
Could you break down numbers by year, since 2006 ,and whether they were members of the Army, Navy or RAF."*

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

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 provided below.

Defence Statistics have identified all the female Service personnel who were aeromedically evacuated to the UK from Afghanistan due to pregnancy, from 1 January 2006 - 31 December 2013 (the latest casualty data available).

If women become pregnant on operations, or discover they are pregnant on operations (or at sea), they are returned at the first convenient opportunity. This may be via an aeromed flight if there is space available, but emergency cases will be given priority. Alternatively they may be returned on a routine flight, in which case Defence Statistics will not have sight of the reason for their return. For normal pregnancy cases, it is more important to ensure a safe return than an immediate one. Thus the numbers presented will be the minimum number of females returned from operations as a result of pregnancy

From 1 January 2006 to 31 December 2013 (the latest casualty data available), **99** UK Armed Forces personnel have been aeromedically evacuated from operations in Afghanistan due to pregnancy. **Table 1** below presents this information by year and Service.

Table 1: Female UK Service personnel aeromedically evacuated to the UK from Operations in Afghanistan due to pregnancy, 1 January 2006 to 31 December 2013, Numbers^{1,2}

	All	Navy ³	Army	RAF
All	99	~	70	~
2006	5	0	~	~
2007	13	0	~	~
2008	12	0	~	~
2009	11	0	~	~
2010	11	0	~	~
2011	18	~	8	~
2012	13	0	~	~
2013	16	0	~	~

Source: Aeromedical Evacuation Control Centre (AECC) and Defence Patient Tracking System (DPTS)

1. Includes initial aeromedical evacuations only. Females may be counted more than once if they have had multiple initial aeromedical evacuations for pregnancy during the same time period.

2. Numbers smaller than five have been suppressed, in line with Office for National Statistics guidelines. Suppressed numbers are represented as ~; where there is only one number smaller than five in any row or column the next smallest number has also been suppressed.

3. Includes Royal Navy and Royal Marines

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

These figures have been compiled using data from Brize Norton Aeromedical Evacuation Control Centre (AECC) and the Defence Patient Tracking System (DPTS). It must be noted that it is possible that there will have been some individuals who returned to the UK without being recorded on the AECC or DPTS as pregnant, and their details will not have been recorded centrally.

Defence Statistics receive Aeromedical Evacuation records fortnightly from the Aeromedical Evacuation Control Centre (AECC) at RAF Brize Norton for Operations in Afghanistan.

Aeromedical Evacuation is the medically supervised movement of patients to and between medical facilities by air transportation. The RAF Aeromedical Evacuation Service provides the worldwide patient air movement capability for Defence 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Patients are risk assessed prior to flight, and when necessary, trained medical teams are provided to deliver care in the air.

The DPTS commenced on 8 October 2007 and was set up to enable the capture of tracking data for aeromedically evacuated patients at the place where healthcare is being delivered along the care pathway. It is a live system and is constantly being updated retrospectively as such the data are provisional and subject to change.

The DPTS is not a medical or welfare record system; medical records are held on the Defence Medical Information Capability Programme; welfare records are held in single Service welfare databases. The DPTS is not an authoritative record of personnel and demographic details, these details are held on Joint Personnel Administration system.

Defence Statistics have included female personnel aeromed to the UK with any of the following recorded diagnoses; 'Pregnancy - Normal', 'Pregnancy - Disorder' and 'Family Planning - TOP', or where pregnancy was identified in the injury/illness mechanism field or free-text commentary in the DPTS.

The tables in this report have been scrutinised to ensure individual identities have not been revealed inadvertently. In line with Defence Statistics rounding policy (May 2009), in keeping with the Office for National Statistics Guidelines, all numbers fewer than five have been suppressed and presented as '~'. Where there is only one number in a row or column that is fewer than five, the next smallest number (or

numbers where there are tied values) has also been suppressed so that numbers cannot simply be derived from totals.

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 Information Rights Compliance team, 1st Floor, MOD Main Building, Whitehall, SW1A 2HB (e-mail 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)