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of Defence

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Reference: **FOI 2014/06298**

[REDACTED]

Date: **21 November 2014**

Dear [REDACTED],

Thank you for your email of 23 October 2014 requesting the following information:

"QUESTION 1

In the period from 1 January 2000 to current date:-

How many service personnel have been discharged from service on medical grounds?

If possible please show categories of cause for the discharge and numbers of people in each category.

QUESTION 2

How many military medical centres are there in the UK and Northern Ireland?

Where are these centres located?"

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) and section 44 (Prohibitions on Disclosure) 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.

Section 44(1)(a) has been applied as the disclosure of some of the information is prohibited by the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007. 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 and Official Statistics, as set out in the 2007 Act, we are unable to provide the data for 2014/15 prior to the next statistical release, 16 July 2015. Section 44 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.

Between 1 January 2000 and 31 March 2014 there were **5,073** Naval Service (Includes Royal Marines and Royal Navy), **15,857^p** Army and **2,752** RAF UK Regular personnel medically discharged.

Tables 1-3 show the number of UK Regular Naval Service (Includes Royal Navy and Royal Marines), Army and RAF personnel medically discharged by principal condition and year for between 1 January 2000 and 31 March 2014 (latest data available).

Table 1: UK Regular Naval Service¹ Personnel medically discharged by principal condition and by year, 1 January 2000 - 31 March 2014, Numbers²

Cause Code Group	All	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014 ³
All Causes of medical discharge	5,073	483	414	392	320	379	396	357	309	233	221	257	451	446	346	69
All cause coded	4,923	483	413	391	315	310	359	335	306	225	219	257	450	445	346	69
Infectious and parasitic diseases (A00 - B99)	~	~	~	~	0	0	0	~	0	~	~	0	6	~	~	0
Neoplasms (C00 - D48)	59	6	~	~	~	~	7	6	~	~	~	~	8	5	5	0
Blood disorders (D50 - D89)	21	~	~	0	~	~	0	~	0	0	~	~	~	~	~	0
Endocrine, nutritional and metabolic diseases (E00 - E90)	113	12	11	6	10	7	7	7	8	~	7	8	7	8	9	~
Mental and behavioural disorders (F00 - F99)	531	42	30	38	42	29	46	42	39	29	28	35	45	38	35	13
Nervous system disorders (G00 - G99)	211	10	19	15	13	20	23	24	13	12	13	12	13	14	~	~
Eye and adnexa diseases (H00 - H59)	66	8	~	~	7	6	~	6	7	0	~	~	6	9	~	~
Ear and mastoid process diseases (H60 - H95)	131	10	6	6	~	~	5	~	~	7	6	5	21	33	24	0
Circulatory system disorders (I00 - I99)	109	11	9	9	8	5	5	~	6	8	7	7	14	6	9	~
Respiratory system disorders (J00 - J99)	85	5	7	~	5	~	10	6	~	~	9	5	11	6	5	~
Digestive system disorders (K00 - K93)	118	18	9	6	6	6	7	8	9	~	~	6	13	15	7	~
Skin and subcutaneous tissue diseases (L00 - L99)	131	13	11	16	10	5	9	7	12	~	6	~	15	11	8	0
Musculoskeletal disorders (M00 - M99) and Injuries (S00 - T98)	3,113	333	290	276	202	211	224	206	186	145	124	148	254	267	203	44
Genitourinary system diseases (N00 - N99)	33	~	5	0	~	~	~	~	~	~	0	~	7	~	~	0
Pregnancy, Childbirth and the puerperium (O00 - O99)	~	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	~	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Congenital malformations (Q00 - Q99)	33	~	~	5	~	~	~	5	~	~	~	~	~	~	~	0
Clinical and laboratory findings (R00 - R99)	119	6	~	~	~	7	10	8	11	6	8	8	17	15	13	~
Factors influencing health status (Z00 - Z99)	29	0	0	0	~	0	0	~	0	~	0	~	8	5	7	0
Other Medical Discharges for which data are not available	148	1	1	1	5	69	37	21	3	8	2	0	1	0	0	0
Withheld consent	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0

Source: FMED 23 and JPA

1 - Includes Royal Navy and Royal Marines

2 - Data presented as "~" has been suppressed in accordance with Defence Statistics' rounding policy

3 - Data only available up until 31 March 2014

Table 2: UK Regular Army Personnel medically discharged by principal condition and by Year, 1 January 2000 - 31 March 2014, Numbers¹

Cause Code Group	All	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014 ²
All Causes of medical discharge	15,857^p	1,062	1,033	1,022	998	1,083	1,047	1,009	978	840	680	829	954	1,446	2,086^p	596^p
All cause coded	15,654^p	1,062	1,033	1,022	998	1,083	1,047	1,009	977	840	674	828	954	1,446	2,085^p	596^p
Infectious and parasitic diseases (A00 - B99)	92 ^p	5	~	0	6	6	7	6	~	7	~	~	8	12	19 ^p	~ ^p
Neoplasms (C00 - D48)	124 ^p	7	10	15	7	12	~	12	~	9	~	~	10	12	10 ^p	6 ^p
Blood disorders (D50 - D89)	39 ^p	0	~	~	~	~	~	0	~	0	~	~	~	8	~ ^p	0 ^p
Endocrine, nutritional and metabolic diseases (E00 - E90)	129 ^p	9	5	~	9	9	~	7	8	~	~	~	14	27	23 ^p	~ ^p
Mental and behavioural disorders (F00 - F99)	1,824 ^p	64	103	112	90	121	119	111	137	103	136	124	166	267 ^p	60 ^p	~ ^p
Nervous system disorders (G00 - G99)	556 ^p	31	35	35	45	33	41	37	53	26	23	30	36	53	65 ^p	13 ^p
Eye and adnexa diseases (H00 - H59)	130 ^p	~	5	~	5	12	8	12	14	6	6	10	12	12	16 ^p	6 ^p
Ear and mastoid process diseases (H60 - H95)	528 ^p	5	13	14	10	15	17	37	23	13	21	31	67	87	140 ^p	35 ^p
Circulatory system disorders (I00 - I99)	250 ^p	15	5	15	14	9	12	8	19	13	16	19	27	32	40 ^p	6 ^p
Respiratory system disorders (J00 - J99)	293 ^p	28	33	18	34	29	20	25	17	~	15	~	21	12	16 ^p	~ ^p
Digestive system disorders (K00 - K93)	232 ^p	9	11	18	13	14	12	11	12	14	6	13	14	29	48 ^p	8 ^p
Skin and subcutaneous tissue diseases (L00 - L99)	224 ^p	8	9	14	11	19	21	26	10	12	9	15	19	14	31 ^p	6 ^p
Musculoskeletal disorders (M00 - M99) and Injuries (S00 - T98)	9,795 ^p	744	721	734	696	720	676	629	584	485	378	492	540	875	1,219 ^p	302 ^p
Genitourinary system diseases (N00 - N99)	100 ^p	9	5	6	12	8	6	12	~	5	~	~	8	6	11 ^p	~ ^p
Pregnancy, Childbirth and the puerperium (O00 - O99)	75 ^p	~	6	7	~	9	14	5	0	~	6	~	~	7	~ ^p	0 ^p
Congenital malformations (Q00 - Q99)	0 ^p	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0 ^p
Clinical and laboratory findings (R00 - R99)	492 ^p	9	19	19	33	25	37	56	47	37	37	32	39	41	45 ^p	16 ^p
Factors influencing health status (Z00 - Z99)	193 ^p	0	~	0	~	~	0	7	13	17	37	16	9	36	45 ^p	7 ^p
Other Medical Discharges for which data are not available	578 ^p	112	48	8	4	33	49	8	56	39	3	1	0	17	80 ^p	120 ^p
Withheld consent	9 ^p	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	6	1	0	0	1 ^p	0 ^p

Source: FMED 23 and JPA

1 - Data presented as "~" has been suppressed in accordance with Defence Statistics' rounding policy

2 - Data only available up until 31 March 2014

p - Provisional (see Advice and Assistance)

Table 3: UK Regular RAF Personnel medically discharged by principal condition and by Year, 1 January 2000 - 31 March 2014, Numbers¹

Cause Code Group	All	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014 ²
All Causes of medical discharge	2,752	187	185	137	251	202	207	241	226	187	191	162	171	212	161	32
All cause coded	2,700	187	158	128	217	196	124	222	214	170	152	145	163	200	154	32
Infectious and parasitic diseases (A00 - B99)	9	~	0	0	~	0	0	~	~	~	~	0	~	~	~	0
Neoplasms (C00 - D48)	59	6	7	5	~	6	0	~	~	6	5	~	5	~	6	0
Blood disorders (D50 - D89)	~	0	~	0	~	0	~	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	~	0
Endocrine, nutritional and metabolic diseases (E00 - E90)	33	~	~	~	~	~	~	~	~	~	~	~	~	~	~	~
Mental and behavioural disorders (F00 - F99)	504	21	20	13	28	65	38	78	49	40	32	29	26	33	27	5
Nervous system disorders (G00 - G99)	185	12	17	~	18	19	8	18	20	9	10	10	8	15	12	~
Eye and adnexa diseases (H00 - H59)	41	~	~	6	~	7	~	~	5	0	~	~	~	~	~	0
Ear and mastoid process diseases (H60 - H95)	68	5	6	6	7	~	~	6	~	~	~	~	~	13	7	~
Circulatory system disorders (I00 - I99)	97	~	14	~	16	8	6	9	10	~	~	~	~	8	~	~
Respiratory system disorders (J00 - J99)	33	0	~	~	6	~	~	~	~	~	~	~	~	0	~	0
Digestive system disorders (K00 - K93)	51	~	~	~	10	~	~	~	~	~	~	~	~	8	~	0
Skin and subcutaneous tissue diseases (L00 - L99)	34	~	~	0	~	~	~	~	~	~	~	~	~	5	~	0
Musculoskeletal disorders (M00 - M99) and Injuries (S00 - T98)	1,246	113	71	79	108	71	51	87	108	92	84	83	95	109	78	17
Genitourinary system diseases (N00 - N99)	16	~	~	0	~	~	~	~	~	~	~	~	~	~	~	0
Pregnancy, Childbirth and the puerperium (O00 - O99)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Congenital malformations (Q00 - Q99)	13	~	~	0	~	~	~	0	0	0	~	~	~	0	0	0
Clinical and laboratory findings (R00 - R99)	53	0	5	5	~	5	~	~	~	~	~	6	7	5	5	0
Factors influencing health status (Z00 - Z99)	~	0	0	0	0	0	0	~	~	~	0	~	0	0	0	0
Other Medical Discharges for which data are not available	247	9	27	9	34	6	83	19	12	17	31	0	0	0	0	0
Withheld consent	52	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	17	8	12	7	0

Source: FMED 23 and JPA

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

2 - Data only available up until 31 March 2014

Table 4 shows the number of Defence Primary Healthcare Units by Region. A Map showing the Defence Primary Health care Units by Region can be found in **Annex A**. Please note these do not include dental centres or rehabilitation facilities.

Table 4: Defence Primary Healthcare Units by Region, as at 11 November 2014, Numbers

Defence Primary Healthcare Region	Number of Medical Treatment Facilities
Total	132
North (RHQ Catterick)	18
East (RHQ split between Colchester and Cranwell)	19
Central (RHQ Brize Norton)	9
Wales and West Midlands (RHQ Donnington)	15
Wessex (RHQ Tidworth)	15
London and South East (RHQ - Woolwich)	15
South (RHQ Aldershot)	16
South West (RHQ Devonport)	12
Scotland & NI (Regional Head Quarters (RHQ) split between Lisburn & Edinburgh)	13

Source: Surgeon General's Department

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

The latest Medical Discharges in the UK Regular Armed Forces report can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ministry-of-defence/about/statistics>.

In 2013/14 Defence Statistics were unable to ascertain if 195 trained Regular Army personnel who appeared to have medically discharged according to their administration record did medically discharge. These personnel have been provisionally included in the medical discharge numbers whilst Defence Statistics investigate the records and therefore all Army figures for 2013/14 are provisional and have been annotated in the tables with a 'p'.

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-empts 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 the Service Personnel and Veterans' Agency.

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

Principal cause is the first principal coded cause on the medical discharge paperwork (F Med 23).

Figures have been compiled using the International Classification of Diseases & Related Health Problems version 10 (ICD 10) cause codes.

The latest NHS Commissioning Population Statistics can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ministry-of-defence/about/statistics>.

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

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). 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)

Annex A

Primary Healthcare Units by Region

