



**Ministry
of Defence**

Ministry of Defence
Main Building (01/D/06)
Whitehall
London SW1A 2HB
United Kingdom

Ref: FOI2014/07988

Telephone [MOD]: [REDACTED]

E-mail: PersTrg-Sec-FOIMailbox@mod.uk

8 January 2015

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your email of 6 December 2014 requesting the following information

1. I would like to request information on the number of members of the Armed Forces who have gone Absent Without Leave (AWOL) between 2001 and 2014 on a year by year basis. Please could you break the figures down into:

The service from which they went AWOL

The rank of the absconder

The gender of the absconder

The barracks from which they absconded

The date of each incident (if this takes it over the cost limit or raises privacy issues I am prepared to have aggregate figures by month or year)

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 the MOD does hold some of the information within the scope of your request.

Service Personnel AWOL 2014

Royal Navy	195
Army	312
Royal Air Force	6

Please note that the above table represents instances of AWOL, rather than individual personnel going AWOL.

In regard to AWOL MOD statistical data for 2001-2013, the information is exempt under Section 21 of the FOIA, because it is reasonably accessible to you by other means. There is a significant quantity of data in the public domain primarily through the link below:

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications?keywords=AWOL&publication_filter_option=foi-releases&topics%5B%5D=all&departments%5B%5D=ministry-of-defence&official_document_status=all&world_locations%5B%5D=all&from_date=&to_date=&commit=Refresh+results

The Rank, Gender and locations where individuals go AWOL is not recorded centrally and would require a manual search of the personnel records to produce this information; such a search is likely to exceed the FOI cost limit. This limit is specified in FOI regulations and for central government is set at £600. This represents the estimated cost of one person spending three and a half working days in determining whether the Department holds the information, and locating, retrieving and extracting the information.

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>.

Yours sincerely,

Defence Personnel Secretariat