



Ministry
of Defence

Defence Statistics (Health)
Ministry of Defence
Oak 0 West (#6028)
Abbey Wood North
Bristol BS34 8JH
United Kingdom

Telephone [MOD]: +44 (0)30679 84423
Facsimile [MOD]: +44 (0)1179 319634
E-mail: DefStrat-Stat-Health-PQ-FOI@mod.uk

Reference: FOI [REDACTED] [REDACTED] correspondence dated: 27 May 2014

Date: 24 June 2014

Dear [REDACTED],

Thank you for your email of 27 May 2014 requesting the following information:

- *“How many serving soldiers committed suicide in 2013, 2012 and 2011? (Individual figures for each year please).”*
- *How many veterans committed suicide in 2013, 2012 and 2011? (Individual figures for each year please).*
- *How many British soldiers died in Afghanistan in 2013, 2012 and 2011? (Individual figures for each year please).*
- *How many soldiers developed Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder in 2013, 2012 and 2011 - while in active service or once they've been discharged? (Individual figures for each year please).*
- *How many soldiers served in Afghanistan in 2013, 2012 and 2011? (Individual figures for each year please).*
- *What's the total number of soldiers deployed to Afghanistan since 2011?*
- *How many soldiers have been deployed to Afghanistan since 2007?”*

On 29th May, you also requested the following information in relation to your initial request :

“To avoid any confusion it would helpful if you could send me the names and regiments of the soldiers who died or committed suicide as well.”

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

You provided further clarification on 30th May that your request is related to both Army officers and other ranks.

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

A copy of the information which is held and can be released is enclosed. Of the information in scope of your request which is held, some information falls entirely within the scope of qualified exemptions provided for at section 21 (information that is already reasonably accessible to the applicant by other means) and section 38 (Health and Safety) of the FOIA and has been withheld.

Section 21 (1) has been applied to the request for name and regiment of UK Army personnel who died as a result of operations in Afghanistan in 2011, 2012 and 2013 as this information is already publically available. Section 21 is an absolute exemption and there is therefore no requirement to consider the public interest in making a decision to withhold the information. The names and regiments and brief details of each UK Armed Forces death in Afghanistan is published by the MOD and can be found at : <https://www.gov.uk/government/fields-of-operation/afghanistan>.

Section 38 (1)(a) is a qualified exemption and is subject to public interest testing which means that the information requested can only be withheld if the public interest in doing so outweighs the public interest in disclosure.

Section 38 has been applied to providing the names and regiments of UK Army suicide and open verdict deaths in 2011, 2012 and 2013 because the disclosure of individual identities would endanger the physical or mental health of any individual. Whilst the MOD recognises that there is continuing interest in deaths among personnel serving in the UK Armed Forces and that in releasing information the MOD would be promoting accountability and transparency, it is likely that the disclosure of identities would adversely affect the psychological and emotional well being of next of kin and the MOD has a residual duty of care for the next of kin of those Service personnel who die whilst in-Service and for these reasons I have set the level of prejudice against release of the exempted information at the higher level of "would" rather than "would be likely to". The balance of public interest was found to be in favour of withholding the information. Therefore, to prevent disclosure of identities, the names and regiments of those who died as a result of suicide or open verdict deaths have been withheld.

The number of in-Service suicide and open verdict deaths among UK Army personnel in 2011, 2012 and 2013 were :

- **10** in 2011
- **Nine** in 2012
- **Three** in 2013

I can confirm that MOD does not hold information on the number of veterans who have committed suicide.

The number of UK Army personnel who died as a result of operations in Afghanistan in 2011, 2012 and 2013 were :

- **37** in 2011, of which **none** were suicide and open verdict deaths
- **40** in 2012, of which **two** were suicide and open verdict deaths
- **Nine** in 2013, of which **none** were suicide and open verdict deaths

The names and regiments of all personnel who died as a result of operations in Afghanistan can be found at : <https://www.gov.uk/government/fields-of-operation/afghanistan>

The number of UK Army personnel with at least one episode of care at a MOD Department of Community Mental Health (DCMH) or MOD in-patient facility for an initial assessment of PTSD were :

- **217** initial assessments for PTSD in 2011
- **258** initial assessments for PTSD in 2012
- **323** initial assessments for PTSD in 2013

Please note, personnel may have more than one episode of care at a MOD DCMH or in-patient provider during the period specified, therefore personnel have been counted once in each year. In the three- year period 2011 to 2013, a total of **754** UK Army personnel had at least one episode of care at a MOD Department of Community Mental Health (DCMH) or MOD in-patient facility for an initial assessment of PTSD.

I can confirm that MOD does not hold information on the number of veterans who have PTSD following discharge from Service.

The number of UK Army personnel deployed to Afghanistan in each year between 2011 and 2013 were :

- **28,880** in 2011
- **29,560** in 2012
- **22,770** in 2013

Between 01 April 2011 and 01 April 2014, **58,940** UK Army personnel deployed to Afghanistan.

Between 01 April 2007 and 01 April 2014, **91,320** UK Army personnel deployed to Afghanistan.

The MOD does not hold information on the number of suicide and open verdict deaths among **all** ex-serving personnel. MOD do, however, hold information on the cause of death (including suicide) among veterans of the 1982 Falkland campaign and the Gulf 1990/91 conflict. Under section 16 of the Act (Advice and Assistance) I can advise that MOD hold raw data from which we could consider providing the following information if requested.

- The number of suicide and open verdicts deaths among Falkland Army veterans, as at 31 December 2013.
- The number of suicide and open verdicts deaths among Army veterans of the 1990/91 Gulf conflict and Era Army comparison group, as at 31 December 2013.
- Statistics on the Falklands deaths and 1990/91 Gulf and Era deaths are published on the Gov.uk website:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/causes-of-deaths-among-the-uk-armed-forces-veterans-of-the-1982-falklands-campaign>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/causes-of-deaths-that-occurred-among-the-uk-veterans-of-the-199091-gulf-conflict>

The MOD does not hold information on mental health for all veterans after they leave the Armed Forces as this data is held by the NHS. Under section 16 of the Act (Advice and Assistance) I can advise that Defence Statistics hold raw data from which we could consider providing the following information if requested.

- Information on 1990/91 Gulf and Falklands Army veteran's who had an initial assessment of PTSD at a MOD DCMH or in-patient provider whilst serving between 01 April 2007 and 31 December 2013.
- The number of ex-Service personnel in receipt of an ongoing war pension under the War Pension Scheme (WPS) for a mental health condition, of which the number relating to PTSD, as at 31 March 2013.
- The number of ex-Service personnel who have been awarded compensation under the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme (AFCS) for an injury/illness attributable to Service awarded for a mental health condition, of which the number relating to PTSD, as at 30 September 2013.
- Statistics on the War Pensions Scheme and the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme are published on the Gov.uk website:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/war-pension-recipients-index>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/armed-forces-compensation-scheme-statistics-index>

Under section 16 of the Act (Advice and Assistance) you might like to note:

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.

Figures are for regular personnel and only those reservists who have died whilst on operational deployment as Defence Statistics (Health) do not receive routine notifications of all deaths among reserve forces.

Every suicide is a tragedy and our thoughts remain with the families of all those who have sadly taken their own lives. Suicide amongst members of the Armed Forces remains extremely rare and is lower than comparative rates in the civilian population. There has also been a very clear downward trend in suicide and underdetermined death rates in the Armed Forces over the last 30 years. Mental health of our personnel and veterans is a top priority for the Government that is why we have committed £7.4 million to ensure there is extensive mental health support in place for everyone who needs it.

We also have a wide range of support including tailored NHS mental health services, priority treatment for veterans, the Big White Wall online mental health wellbeing service and a 24-hour helpline with Combat Stress so Service Personnel and Veterans can seek help at any time.

PTSD

DCMH are specialised psychiatric services based on community mental health teams closely located with primary care services at sites in the UK and abroad. Centralised data collection for DCMH commenced in January 2007.

All UK based and aero-medically evacuated Service personnel based overseas (excluding Germany based Service personnel) requiring in-patient admission have been treated by the South Staffordshire and Shropshire NHS Foundation trust (SSSFT) since January 2009. Prior to this UK in-patients were treated by the Priory. UK Service personnel from British Forces Germany (BFG) are treated at Guys and St Thomas' Hospital in the UK. Defence Statistics holds in-patient data from January 2007 onwards.

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). PTSD mental disorders have been identified using ICD-10 Code F43.1.

The numbers presented in this response should be treated as a minimum for the following reasons:

Between 1 January 2011 and 31 December 2013 Defence Statistics received **145** UK Army personnel records who were admitted to an MOD in-patient facility and had no diagnosis recorded. Therefore the numbers presented for UK Armed Forces personnel with PTSD should be regarded as a minimum.

The number of Service personnel referred to MOD DCMH for outpatient care, and new admissions to the MOD inpatient care contractor are released on a quarterly and annual basis and can be found on the Government website (www.GOV.UK) under 'Statistics'. The next quarterly report, covering the period January - March 2014, is scheduled for release on 3 July 2014. The next annual report, covering the period April 2013 - March 2014, is scheduled for release on 31 July 2014.

Deployment

Data Sources

Deployment data is derived from the Joint Personnel Administration (JPA) `Move and Track` system using the `deployed country code` and `deployed unit location` fields. All reported personnel have a current deployment record within the JPA Move & Track database.

Prior to 2007 we do not hold personal information on individuals.

Data Definitions

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

Data only includes personnel who are deployed to an overseas location with an assigned country code.

All personnel on overseas training exercises are excluded from the total figures published.

Data excludes all Special Forces personnel and personnel who are deployed to supporting operation

posts which are not geographically located within Afghanistan.

Totals do not include repeat tours and each individual is only recorded once per time period.

Figures for Afghanistan do not include personnel who deployed to Afghanistan between the periods 1 January 2003 and 14 October 2005 for which data is not available.

Numbers have been rounded to the nearest 10, with numbers ending in "5" rounded to the nearest multiple of 20 to prevent systematic bias.

Would you like to be added to our contact list, so that we can inform you about updates to our statistical publications covering deaths 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

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)