



Ministry
of Defence

Defence Statistics (Health)
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Reference: **FOI 2014/04253**

[REDACTED]

Date: **9 September 2014**

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your email of 21 August 2014 requesting the following information:

" how many of those Medically Discharged from Service between Jan 2001 and March 2014 were discharged during Basic/ Initial training?"

Following further correspondence your request was clarified to be:

"I would be grateful if you could treat my question ...as ...anyone Medically Discharged between January 2001 and March 2014 at either Phase 1 or Phase 2 stage of Training prior to joining the trained strength."

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.

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 2001 and 31 March 2014:

- There were **348** untrained¹ UK Regular Naval Service² personnel medically discharged.
- There were **6,844** untrained¹ UK Regular Army personnel medically discharged.
- There were **276** untrained¹ UK Regular RAF personnel medically discharged.

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

¹ Includes all personnel in phase 1 or phase 2 training

² Includes Royal Navy and Royal Marines

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/Official Statistics we are unable to provide the data for 2014/15 prior to the next statistical release, due on 16 July 2015, as set out in the Statistics and Registration Service Act, 2007. The latest report can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ministry-of-defence/about/statistics>.

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 Defence Business Services (formerly SPVA).

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)