



# Ministry of Defence

Ministry of Defence  
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United Kingdom  
Telephone : +44 (0)20 721 89000

Our Reference: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

21 August 2014

Dear [REDACTED],

Thank you for your email dated 8 August in which you requested the following information:

- 1) a - The number of incidents of military personnel going AWOL in each of the past ten years.
- b - If possible please provide a breakdown of where incidents occurred: in the UK, overseas posting or while deployed on active duty abroad.
- 2) The number of military personnel who are currently regarded as being AWOL.
- 3) Any MoD or Armed Forces research or reports which have been compiled looking at the reasons military personnel go AWOL since 2009.

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

Please find below a table which provides you with the current figures and the figures for the past ten years:

### Service Personnel AWOL by Year

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
<b>Army</b>	445	460	474	941	641	675	796	478	428	302	100
<b>Navy</b>	18	21	~	27	20	21	12	10	8	~	~
<b>RAF</b>	52	32	~	6	~	~	~	~	~	7	~

In accordance with the Data Protection Act and our obligations in relation to the protection of confidentiality when handling personal data a figure of 5 or fewer is represented by ~.

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

The locations where individuals go AWOL in 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.

I can confirm that neither the Ministry of Defence nor the three Services has compiled any research or reports into the reasons why individuals go AWOL.

I hope the above information will be helpful to you.

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,

A black rectangular redaction box covering the signature of the sender.