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of Defence

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Dear [REDACTED],

Your correspondence dated 1 May 2014 has been considered to be a request for information in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000. You requested the following information:

"Please could you supply the following information under the Freedom of Information Act

1. Between January 1st 2013 and December 31st 2013 how many UK armed forces personnel:

- a. Took their own lives while serving
- b. Took their own lives after discharge

Numbers to include suicide/open verdicts, narrative verdicts in which the facts made clear that death was by the deceased's own hand and cases in which no verdict has been reached but the mechanism of death suggests suicide. Numbers to be broken down by service.

2. Since January 1st 2001, how many armed forces personnel have:

- a. Served in the Iraq and Afghanistan conflicts, including, but not counting more than once, those who have served multiple tours
- b. Taken their own lives while serving
- c. Taken their own lives after discharge

Numbers to include suicide/open verdicts, narrative verdicts in which the facts made clear that death was by the deceased's own hand and cases in which no verdict has been reached but mechanism of death suggests suicide. Numbers to be broken down by service, whether person served Iraq or Afghanistan (or both) and by year.

3. How many individual members of the UK armed forces served in Afghanistan between January 1st 2006 and December 31st 2013, including, but not counting more than once, those who served multiple tours?

In that period how many armed forces personnel who have served in Afghanistan:

- a. Have been diagnosed with PTSD (either at a MOD Department of Community Mental Health facility or other military facility) either during the operation or subsequently
- b. Have been medically discharged with a principal or contributory cause of mental and

behavioural disorders

Numbers to be broken down by service, whether regular or reserves, and by year.

These three questions are broadly similar to FOI LEE 30-05-2013-150428-014, FOI LEE 30-05-2013-151246-015 and FOI LEE 30-05-2013-151934-016 all dated 29th May 2013 but in this instance request information during or up until the end of 2013 rather than 2012. The three FOI LEE requests were answered in a most helpful and comprehensive response supplied by Defence Statistics (Health) Head (B1) on 28th June 2013."

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

I am writing to advise you that following a search of our recorded information, I have established that information in scope of your request is held by the Ministry of Defence. 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. Defence Statistics suppress numbers less than five 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 2013/14 prior to the next statistical release, 10th July 2014. 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.

Part one of request:

Between 1 January 2013 and 31 December 2013, there were **five** coroner confirmed suicide or open verdict deaths to **servicing** UK Regular Armed Forces personnel. In addition, there were a further **two** deaths in 2013 for which an inquest has yet to be held (waiting verdicts) and the mechanism suggests the possibility of suicide. Therefore the number of suicides presented here may be subject to change when the results of the inquests are known. **Table 1** presents this information by Service.

Table 1: UK Armed Forces¹ suicide or open verdict, narrative verdict and awaiting verdict deaths² by Service, 1 January 2013 to 31 December 2013, Numbers

Service	All	Naval Service ³	Army	RAF
Suicide or open verdicts ⁴	5	2	3	0
Narrative verdicts	0	0	0	0
Waiting verdicts ⁵	2	1	1	0

1 Figures are for in-Service personnel only.

2 Figures are for regular personnel and only those reservists who have died whilst on operational deployment.

3 Royal Navy and Royal Marines.

4 As confirmed by a coroner or the procurator fiscal for Scotland.

5 Deaths where the mechanism of death suggests suicide but for which a verdict has not yet been received.

Following a search of our paper and electronic records, I have established that the information you requested on the number of suicide and open verdict deaths among all **ex-servicing** personnel is not held by the Ministry of Defence. Defence Statistics do however hold information on the cause of death (including suicide) among veterans of the 1982 Falkland campaign and the Gulf 1990/91 conflict.

Between 1 January 2013 and 31 December 2013, there were **fewer than five** suicide and open verdict deaths among Falkland Veterans.

Between 1 January 2013 and 31 December 2013, there were **six** suicide and open verdict deaths among Gulf 1 veterans and **five** in the Era comparison cohort.

Due to the small number of suicides that have occurred, and in line with Defence Statistics rounding policy (2009) the information you have requested on suicides by Service for the period 1 January 2013 to 31 December 2013 has not been provided. This is to prevent the inadvertent disclosure of individual identities which we believe could cause upset and distress to relatives, to whom the MOD has a residual duty of care.

Part two of request:

As at 31st December 2013, **141,640** personnel past and present members of the UK Armed Forces have been identified as having deployed to Iraq since 2003. **Table 2** presents this information by Service and year of first deployment. These figures include all personnel who were in theatre for over 24 hours and excludes personnel deployed to supporting operational posts in the Joint Operational Area. Each person has only been counted once in their first year of deployment.

Table 2: UK Armed Forces personnel identified as having deployed to Iraq by year of first deployment and Service, 2003 to 2013, Numbers

	Before 1 Apr 2007	1 Apr 2007 - 31 Dec 2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
All	126,000	7,380	6,380	1,500	260	110	-	-
Naval Service¹		320	340	190	170	40	-	-
Army		6,080	4,810	910	60	30	-	-
RAF		980	1,240	400	30	30	-	-

Source: JPA

1 Royal Navy and Royal Marines.

2 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.

3 Data excludes all Special Forces personnel, personnel deployed aboard the Naval afloat and personnel who are deployed to supporting operation posts which are not geographically located within Afghanistan.

4 Personnel are only recorded for the year that they first deployed.

5 The above mentioned figures are rounded to the nearest 10, numbers ending in 5 have been rounded to nearest multiple of 20 to prevent systematic bias. "-" denotes zero or rounded to zero whilst '~' represents fewer than 5.

As at 31st December 2013, **139,290** personnel past and present members of the UK Armed Forces have been identified as having deployed to Afghanistan since 2001. **Table 3** presents this information by Service and year of first deployment. These figures do not include personnel who deployed to Afghanistan between the periods 1 January 2003 and 14 October 2005 for which data is not available. Data exclude all Special Forces personnel, personnel aboard the Naval afloat and personnel who are deployed to supporting operation posts which are not geographically located within Afghanistan. Each person has only been counted once in their first year of deployment.

Table 3: UK Armed Forces personnel identified as having deployed to Afghanistan by year of first deployment and Service, 2001 to 2013, Numbers

	Before 1 Apr 2007	1 Apr 2007 - 31 Dec 2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
All	28,550	15,660	16,610	19,400	18,870	16,950	13,440	9,810
Naval Service¹		1,180	2,330	840	1,060	1,840	900	390
Army		12,320	11,610	15,240	14,090	12,110	10,150	7,270
RAF		2,160	2,670	3,320	3,720	3,000	2,390	2,140

Source: JPA

1 Royal Navy and Royal Marines.

2 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.

3 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.

4 Personnel are only recorded for the year that they first deployed.

5 Data excludes all Special Forces personnel, personnel deployed aboard the Naval afloat and personnel who are deployed to supporting operation posts which are not geographically located within Afghanistan.

6 The above mentioned figures are rounded to the nearest 10, numbers ending in 5 have been rounded to nearest multiple of 20 to prevent systematic bias. "-" denotes zero or rounded to zero whilst '~' represents fewer than 5.

The total number of UK Armed Forces personnel deployed to Iraq or Afghanistan since the start of operations is **219,420**. **Table 4** presents this information by Service and year of first deployment. Each person has only been counted once based on their first deployment to Iraq or Afghanistan and the year it occurred. As such, Tables 1 and 2 are independent of Table 4 and the sums of each will not equal those figures provided in Table 4 due to personnel having served in both Iraq and Afghanistan.

Table 4: UK Armed Forces personnel identified as having deployed to Iraq or Afghanistan by year of first deployment and Service, 2001 to 2013, Numbers

	Before 1 Apr 2007	1 Apr 2007 - 31 Dec 2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
All	138,570	15,110	14,630	11,800	11,020	10,710	9,920	7,670
Naval Service ¹		1,020	1,810	660	880	1,480	720	300
Army		12,240	10,470	8,960	7,990	7,200	7,460	5,730
RAF		1,840	2,350	2,180	2,140	2,030	1,740	1,640

Source: JPA

- 1 Royal Navy and Royal Marines.
- 2 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.
- 3 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.
- 4 Data excludes all Special Forces personnel, personnel deployed aboard the Naval afloat and personnel who are deployed to supporting operation posts which are not geographically located within Afghanistan.
- 5 Personnel are only recorded for the year that they first deployed.
- 6 The above mentioned figures are rounded to the nearest 10, numbers ending in 5 have been rounded to nearest multiple of 20 to prevent systematic bias. "-" denotes zero or rounded to zero whilst "~" represents fewer than 5.

As at 31st December 2013, **139,290** personnel past and present members of the UK Armed Forces have been identified as having deployed to Afghanistan since 2001. **Table 5** presents this information by Service type and year of first deployment. For data prior to 2008 it is not possible to identify whether someone was a member of the Regular UK Armed Forces or a Reservist and thus data for this period has not been provided in the table.

Table 5: UK Armed Forces personnel identified as having deployed to Afghanistan by year of first deployment and Service type, 2001 to 2013, Numbers

	Before 1 Apr 2007	1 Apr 2007 - 31 Dec 2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
All	28,550	15,660	16,610	19,400	18,870	16,950	13,440	9,810
Regulars		13,650	14,550	17,600	17,230	15,720	12,280	8,970
Non Regulars		2,010	2,060	1,790	1,630	1,230	1,170	840
Unknown		10	10	10	-	~	~	-

Source: JPA

- 1 Non Regulars include all service personnel who are not Regulars. These include but are not limited to Gurkha's, Mobilised Reservists, and FTRS.
- 2 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.
- 3 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.
- 4 Data excludes all Special Forces personnel, personnel deployed aboard the Naval afloat and personnel who are deployed to supporting operation posts which are not geographically located within Afghanistan.
- 5 Personnel are only recorded for the year that they first deployed.
- 6 The above mentioned figures are rounded to the nearest 10, numbers ending in 5 have been rounded to nearest multiple of 20 to prevent systematic bias. "-" denotes zero or rounded to zero whilst "~" represents fewer than 5.

Between 1 January 2001 and 31 December 2013, there were **73** coroner confirmed suicide or open verdict deaths to serving UK Armed Forces personnel who had previously deployed to Afghanistan or Iraq. In addition, there were a further **10** deaths in the period 1 January 2007 to 31 December 2013 for which an inquest has yet to be held (waiting verdicts) and the mechanism suggests the possibility of suicide. Therefore the number of suicides presented here may be subject to change when the results of the inquests are known. **Table 6** presents this information by year and theatre of deployment. Please note this table includes suicides or suspected suicides which have occurred in Iraq or Afghanistan.

Table 6: UK Armed Forces¹ suicide or open verdict, narrative verdict and awaiting verdict deaths² by year and previous deployment, 1 January 2001 to 31 December 2013, Numbers

Category	All	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Suicide or open verdicts³	73	0	2	5	9	6	6	4	5	11	2	7	11	5
Afghanistan	12	0	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	3	4	1
Iraq	44	0	0	5	9	5	4	2	3	9	1	1	4	1
Both	17	0	0	0	0	1	2	1	2	1	1	3	3	3
Narrative verdicts	4	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	0
Afghanistan	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Iraq	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Both	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Waiting verdicts⁴	10	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	4	2
Afghanistan	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	2
Iraq	5	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	0
Both	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

1 Figures are for in-Service personnel only.

2 Figures are for regular personnel and only those reservists who have died whilst on operational deployment.

3 As confirmed by a coroner or the procurator fiscal for Scotland.

4 Deaths where the mechanism of death suggests suicide but for which a verdict has not yet been received.

To help provide context between 1 January 2001 and 31 December 2013, there were 114 coroner confirmed suicide or open verdict deaths to serving UK Armed Forces personnel who had not previously deployed to Afghanistan or Iraq. In addition, there were a further five deaths in the period 1 January 2007 to 31 December 2013 for which an inquest has yet to be held (waiting verdicts) and the mechanism suggests the possibility of suicide. Therefore the number of suicides presented here may be subject to change when the results of the inquests are known.

Defence Statistics (Health) release annual updates on suicides in the UK Armed Forces as a National Statistic publication (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-armed-forces-suicide-and-open-verdict-deaths-2013>). In this publication comparisons have been made with the UK general population. The latest publication reports that overall, male suicide rates for the UK regular Armed Forces as a whole and for each Service were significantly lower than the UK general population.

Due to the small number of suicides that have occurred, and in line with Defence Statistics rounding policy (2009) the information you have requested on suicides by Service for the period 1 January 2001 to 31 December 2013 has not been provided. This is to prevent the inadvertent disclosure of individual identities which we believe could cause upset and distress to relatives, to whom the MOD has a residual duty of care.

Part three of request:

Between 1 January 2007 and 31 December 2013 there were **1,074** Armed Forces 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 who have been identified as having previously deployed to Afghanistan.

Please note, it is not possible to attribute an assessment of PTSD to a specific deployment.

Table 7 presents the 1,074 personnel with an initial assessment of PTSD at a MOD DCMH or In-patient facility who had previously deployed to Afghanistan by Service and year. Patients are presented in the year in which they had their first assessment for PTSD. It should be noted that an individual may have more than one episode of care at a DCMH or have an episode of care at a DCMH as well as be admitted to an in-patient facility.

Table 7: UK Armed Forces personnel with an initial assessment of PTSD at a MOD DCMH or In-patient facility who previously deployed to Afghanistan¹ by Service and year of first assessment, 1 January 2007 to 31 December 2013, numbers

Year	All UK Armed Forces PTSD previously deployed to Afghanistan	of which:		
		Naval Service ²	Army	RAF
2007	52	19	27	6
2008	59	14	34	11
2009	108	28	70	10
2010	180	10	157	13
2011	183	12	156	15
2012	231	18	201	12
2013	272	19	232	21

1 Data for Afghanistan between 1 January 2003 and 14 October 2005 were not available for person level deployment (see advice and assistance for further information).

2 Includes Royal Navy and Royal Marines

Table 8 presents the 1,074 personnel with an initial assessment of PTSD at a MOD DCMH or In-patient facility who had previously deployed to Afghanistan by Regular/Reserve and year. Patients are presented in the year in which they had their first assessment for PTSD. It should be noted that an individual may have more than one episode of care at a DCMH or have an episode of care at a DCMH as well as be admitted to an in-patient facility.

Table 8: UK Armed Forces personnel with an initial assessment of PTSD at a MOD DCMH or In-patient facility who previously deployed to Afghanistan¹ by Regular/Reserve and year of first assessment, 1 January 2007 to 31 December 2013, numbers

Year	All UK Armed Forces PTSD previously deployed to Afghanistan	of which:			
		Regular	Reserve	Long Term Absentee	Unknown
2007	52	~	~	0	0
2008	59	~	~	0	0
2009	108	101	~	0	~
2010	180	165	7	0	8
2011	183	173	~	5	~
2012	231	222	~	~	~
2013	272	260	7	0	5

1 Data for Afghanistan between 1 January 2003 and 14 October 2005 were not available for person level deployment (see advice and assistance for further information).

The numbers presented in **Table 7 and 8** should be treated as a minimum, for the following reasons:

Type of Disorder was not recorded for all DCMH or in-patient records over this time period; there were 36 DCMH episodes and 160 admissions to an in-patient facility for UK Armed Forces personnel identified as previously deployed to Afghanistan with no diagnostic information recorded (see advice and assistance for further information): There were 11 personnel with an initial assessment of PTSD who withheld consent for their details to be held on the Defence Statistics mental health database, thus it was not possible to identify whether they had previously deployed to Afghanistan (see advice and assistance for further information).

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.

Although Medical Boards recommend medical discharges they do not attribute the principal disability leading to the board to Service (or to a specific deployment). 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.

Between 1 January 2006 and 31 March 2013 (the latest data available) there were **30** UK Regular Naval Service personnel, **229** UK Regular Army personnel and **32** UK Regular RAF personnel medically discharged with a principal condition of mental and behavioural disorders who had previously been deployed to Afghanistan. **Table 9** provides this information by year and Service.

Table 9: UK Regular Armed Forces personnel, previously deployed to Afghanistan, medically discharged with a principal condition of mental and behavioural disorders), by calendar year of discharge, 1 January 2006 - 31 March 2013, Numbers¹.

	All	2006 ²	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013 ³
Naval Service⁴	30	~	~	0	~	~	~	11	~
Army	229	0	5	17	18	30	42	89	28
RAF	32	0	~	5	~	~	7	12	0

Source: FMED 23 and JPA

- 1 Data presented as “~” has been suppressed in accordance with Defence Statistic’s rounding policy (May 2009) (See advice and assistance).
- 2 Defence Statistics are unable to determine whether the personnel discharged in 2006 were deployed to Afghanistan before or subsequent to their medical discharge (see advice and assistance)
- 3 Medical discharge data is only available up to 31 March 2013. Please see advice and assistance for further information .
- 4 Includes Royal Navy and Royal Marines.

Between 1 January 2006 and 31 March 2013 (the latest data available) there were **18** UK Regular Naval Service personnel, **87** UK Regular Army personnel and **15** UK Regular RAF personnel medically discharged with a contributory (but not principal) condition of mental and behavioural disorders that had previously been deployed to Afghanistan. **Table 10** provides this information by year and service.

Table 10: UK Regular Armed Forces personnel, previously deployed to Afghanistan, medically discharged with a contributory (but not principal) condition of mental and behavioural disorders by calendar year of discharge, 1 January 2006 - 31 March 2013, Numbers¹.

	All	2006 ²	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013 ³
Naval Service⁴	18	~	0	~	~	~	6	5	~
Army	87	0	~	6	7	~	19	34	15
RAF	15	0	0	0	~	~	~	5	~

Source: FMED 23 and JPA

- 1 Data presented as “~” has been suppressed in accordance with Defence Statistic’s rounding policy (May 2009) (See medical discharge background notes).
- 2 Defence Statistics are unable to determine whether the personnel discharged in 2006 were deployed to Afghanistan before or subsequent to their medical discharge (see advice and assistance)
- 3 Medical discharge data is only available up to 31 March 2013. For details of the latest publication release containing data for 2013/4 please medical discharge background notes.
- 4 Includes Royal Navy and Royal Marines.

Please note the numbers presented in Tables 9 and 10 differ from that presented in the response *FOI LEE 30-05-2013-151934-016 dated 29th May 2013*. This is due to updated information and a change in methodology for the category of contributory cause.

As personnel may re-enter the services after a medical discharge, Defence Statistics are unable to identify if deployment to Afghanistan occurred before or after the medical discharge if the deployment occurred prior to 1 April 2007.

Please note it is not possible to attribute a medical discharge to a specific deployment.

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

Defence Statistics has access to anonymised mental health data from January 2007 onwards. To provide the number of Service personnel diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) during 2006 who had previously deployed to Afghanistan would require recalling and reviewing individual patient medical records which would result in a Section 12 (cost exemption) of the FOIA.

The number of reservist personnel medically discharged from the UK Armed Forces is not held centrally by the Ministry of Defence. In order to provide you with this information, Defence Statistics would be required recall and review individual patient medical records which would result in a Section 12 (cost exemption) of the FOIA. Defence Statistics hold some reservist personnel medical discharge information and would consider providing if requested.

Suicide and open verdicts

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 tri-Service regular personnel and only those reservists who have died whilst on operational deployment.

When providing statistics on suicides, Defence Statistics (Health) rely exclusively on the information provided by coroners in England and Wales and in Northern Ireland, and the Procurator Fiscal in Scotland. This ensures the Department's objectivity, as all accidental deaths and those resulting from violent action have to be referred to these officials for investigation. For sake of brevity these sources of information have been labelled collectively as "coroner's verdicts".

The statistics provided include both coroner-confirmed suicides and open verdict deaths, in line with the definition used by the Office for National Statistics (ONS), since research has shown that these deaths share many similarities with suicides except that in the case of open verdict deaths, the intention of the deceased to take their life has not been sufficiently proven to the satisfaction of the coroner.

In order to identify deaths that may result in a coroner returning a suicide or open verdict (awaiting verdicts), Defence Statistics (Health) use the Joint Casualty and Compassionate Centre (JCCC) reporting category (violent and unnatural causes (VUC) as an indicator for suspected suicides. Defence Statistics (Health) exclude from this number any death that has been identified as an assault on the Notification of Casualty form (NOTICAS).

The earliest death still awaiting a coroner's inquest occurred in 2007. Thus the waiting verdicts identified in Table 6 cover the period 2007-2012, these records will be updated once the result of the coroner inquests are made available.

Defence Statistics (Health) release annual updates on suicides in the UK Armed Forces as a National Statistic publication. In accordance with the Code of Practice for the release of National Statistics we are unable to provide the data for 2013 prior to the next statistical release, due at the end of March 2014, as set out in the Statistics and Registration Service Act, 2007.

More detailed analysis on deaths and suicides in the UK Armed Forces can be found in the following National Statistic publications produced by Defence Statistics at the end of March each year.

Suicide and Open Verdict Deaths in the UK Regular Armed Forces 1984 - 2013

Deaths in the UK Regular Armed Forces

Suicides among ex-Service personnel

The Gulf 1 veterans mortality National Statistic provides summary statistics on the causes of deaths that occurred among the UK veterans of the 1990/91 Gulf Conflict between 1 April 1991 and 31 December 2013. The purpose of the study was to compare the mortality rates of 53,409 UK Armed Forces personnel that deployed to the 1990/91 Gulf Conflict to those of a comparison group, the Era cohort. The Era cohort consists of 53,143 UK Armed Forces personnel of similar age, gender, Service, regular/reservist status and rank who were in Service on 1 January 1991 but did not deploy to the Gulf. The findings include deaths that occurred to personnel whilst in service and deaths that occurred after

personnel had left the UK Armed Forces. The report is available on the Government website (www.GOV.UK) under 'Statistics'.

The Falkland veteran mortality Official Statistic provides summary statistics on the causes of deaths that occurred among the UK Armed Forces veterans of the 1982 Falklands Campaign between 14 June 1982 (end of hostilities) and 31 December 2013. The purpose of the study was to compare the deaths records of the 25,713 UK Service personnel who survived the Falklands campaign over the last 30 years with the UK civilian population and the cohort of veterans who deployed to the Gulf 1 campaign in 1991. The report is available on the Government website (www.GOV.UK) under 'Statistics'.

Please note that suicide and open verdict deaths correspond to the cause of death category of 'intentional self harm and events of undetermined intent' in the Gulf 1 and Falklands veterans mortality publications.

The statistics provided include both coroner-confirmed suicides and open verdict deaths, in line with the definition used by the Office for National Statistics (ONS), since research has shown that these deaths share many similarities with suicides except that in the case of open verdict deaths, the intention of the deceased to take their life has not been sufficiently proven to the satisfaction of the coroner.

Deployment

The total number of personnel deployed has been derived from the Joint Personnel Administration (JPA) 'Move and Track' system for deployments from April 2007 onward. Deployments prior to 2007 have been derived from departmental Legacy Systems. All figures provided are provisional and subject to change.

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

Overseas deployments are defined as the total number of personnel deployed outside the UK's borders. This includes all military personnel mobilised for contingency, wartime, United Nations peacekeeping and humanitarian operations.

Royal Air Force personnel who are not deployed within an operation theatre yet who fly over / into different operation theatres on a daily basis are reported as being deployed to a main operation and airbase location. The deployed base may not necessarily be geographically located within the associated theatre.

The above mentioned figures are rounded to the nearest 10, numbers ending in 5 have been rounded to nearest multiple of 20 to prevent systematic bias. "-" denotes zero or rounded to zero.

Prior to 1 April 2007 Legacy System deployment data does not include deployment dates. Defence Statistics are able to identify personnel as having deployed to Afghanistan or Iraq but not the date at which they were deployed.

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

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 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:

Up to 2009 if Service personnel withheld consent, their data was supplied in fully anonymised format. Defence Statistics received 11 records for Armed Forces personnel assessed with PTSD for the period January 2007 - June 2009, but with no demographic information provided, so deployment information was unknown. In 2009/10 DCMH staff agreed to collect basic demographic information (Service, gender, rank, age and deployment) for Service personnel who withheld consent thus enabling Defence Statistics to include these cases within demographic breakdowns.

During 2007 DCMH staff were not required to complete ICD-10 information in their monthly returns. Between 1 January and 31 December 2007 Defence Statistics received 36 Armed Forces personnel records identified as previously deployed to Afghanistan that did not have information regarding a specific mental disorder. In addition, between 1 January 2007 and 31 December 2013, 160 Armed Forces personnel identified as previously deployed to Afghanistan 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.

Defence Statistics maintains a database of individual deployment records from November 2001. Data prior to April 2007 was derived from the single services Operation Location tracking (OPLOC) systems and data since April 2007 is obtained from the Joint Personnel Administration (JPA) system. The data covers deployments on Operation TELIC (Iraq) (2003-2011) and Operation HERRICK (Afghanistan) (2001-present).

Deployment markers were assigned using the criteria that an individual was recorded as being deployed to the Iraq and/or Afghanistan theatres of operation if they had deployed to these theatres prior to their appointment date. Person level deployment data for Afghanistan was not available between 1 January 2003 and 14 October 2005. Therefore, it is possible that some UK Armed Forces personnel who were deployed to Afghanistan during this period and subsequently attended a DCMH/In-patient facility for PTSD have not been identified in this response.

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.

In line with Defence Statistics' rounding policy (May 2009) all numbers fewer than five have been suppressed. Where there is only one cell in a row or column that is fewer than five, the next smallest number has also been suppressed so that numbers cannot be derived from totals. Where there are equal values, both numbers have been suppressed.

We are committed to giving everyone who serves in our Armed Forces all the help and support they need. That is why this Government has invested £7.4m to improve the mental health services available and ensure help is available for everyone who needs it.

There is a wide range of support available including tailored NHS mental health services, 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. We recently introduced a new Structured Mental Health Assessment (SMHA) within routine medical assessments to help ensure mental health issues are identified at an early stage.

We have further introduced several anti-stigma campaigns including the "Don't Bottle it Up" campaign to encourage any serving personnel and veterans who need help to come forward to access the wide

range of support available. Through these campaigns we expect to see more referrals for mental health support over the coming years.

Medical Discharge Data

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 2013/14 prior to the next statistical release, due in July 2014, as set out in the Statistics and Registration Service Act, 2007.

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.

Principal cause is the first principal coded cause on the medical discharge paperwork (F Med 23). Contributory cause contains all other principal coded causes and any contributory coded causes on the medical discharge paper (F Med 23).

Figures for mental and behavioural disorders have been compiled using the International Classification of Diseases & Related Health Problems version 10 (ICD 10), specifically ICD 10 code group F00 - F99 (Mental and behavioural disorders).

The tables presented have been scrutinised to ensure individual identities have not been revealed inadvertently. In line with Defence Statistic's 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.

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, suicides, mental health and veterans 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)