



Ministry
of Defence

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28 May 2015

[REDACTED]

Thank you for your further email of 24 March clarifying your earlier request for information as follows:

"1. The number of Armed Forces Widows/ widowers pensions awarded between March 1973 and April 2005, year on year by financial year, under all Armed Forces Pension schemes and also the same information for War Widows Pensions payable under the War Pension Scheme.

2. The number of Armed Forces Widow/widowers pensions relinquished because of remarriage or cohabitation, year on year by financial year, between March 1973 and April 2005."

I am treating your correspondence as a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA). I should first like to apologise for the delay in this reply.

A search for the information has now been completed within the Ministry of Defence (MOD), and I can confirm that some of the information in scope of your request is held. For the purposes of my reply I shall first address your questions as they apply to widows/widowers benefits under the Armed Forces Pension Scheme (AFPS), and then those with benefits under the War Pension Scheme (WPS).

AFPS Widows/Widowers

The MOD holds the information on AFPS widows/widowers that you have requested. However, I have to advise you that we will not be able to answer both your questions without exceeding the cost appropriate limit. This is because to extract the information from our IT systems would involve some six days of staff effort.

Section 12 of the Act makes provision for public authorities to refuse requests for information where the cost of dealing with them would exceed the appropriate limit, which for central government is set at £600. This represents the estimated cost of one person

spending 3.5 working days in determining whether the department holds the information, and locating, retrieving and extracting it.

The MOD may be able to provide some information in scope of your request if you reduce or refine your request to bring the cost of compliance under the limit. For example we could provide a response to Question 1 or Question 2 as it relates to AFPS widows/widowers within the cost limit, but not to both. Please contact me if you would like to pursue this.

WPS Widows/Widowers

Relating to War Widows Pensions I can confirm that the MOD does not hold data on the following:

- Registered claims between 1973 and 31 March 1989.
- Pensions surrendered due to remarriage between 1973 and 31 March 2003.
- Pensions surrendered due to cohabitation between 1973 and 31 March 2003.

The information we can provide is in Table 1 below.

Table 1: War widow(er)s pensions awarded under the WPS, by financial year, 1917 – 31 March 2005, numbers¹

Number of War Widow(er)s Pensions Awarded	Financial Year										
	All Pre 1996 ²	1996/97	1997/98	1998/99	1999/00	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	
	54,610	38,815	4,935	1,765	1,630	1,385	1,445	1,425	1,225	1,095	890

1. The sum of the sub-totals may not sum to the totals due to rounding.

2. Pre 1996 includes those currently in receipt of a pension that was awarded between 1917 and 1995.

Table 2 presents the numbers of war widow(er)s' that were awarded under the WPS between 1917 and 31 March 2005, but later had their pension relinquished between 1 April 2003 and 31 March 2005 due to remarriage or cohabitation.

Table 2: Relinquished war widow(er)s pensions, by reason type and financial year, 1 April 2003 – 31 March 2005, numbers¹

Reason for surrendering their pension	Financial Year		
	All	2003/04	2004/05
Remarriage	55	30	25
Cohabiting	0	0	0

However, the other requested information on War Widows Pensions is considered to be reasonably accessible to you and has therefore been withheld under Section 21 of the FOIA. The information can be found in the annual Official Statistic Summary on claims, awards and recipients of pensions, allowances or other payments under the War Pension Scheme which is published on the following Gov.UK website:

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

You may wish to be aware that the next publication is due for release on 4 June 2015.

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.org.uk>

Yours sincerely,

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