



Ministry
of Defence

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[REDACTED]
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[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Ref: FOI2016/12711

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[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

8th February 2017

Dear [REDACTED]

Release of Information

Thank you for your correspondence dated 29th December 2016 requesting the following information:

'How many days were the submarines HMS Astute, HMS Ambush and HMS Artful at sea during the years 2015 and 2016?'

'Which of these three submarines have been declared "fully operational"?''

Your enquiry has been considered to be a request for information in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Taking your questions in order, a search has now been completed within the Ministry of Defence and I can confirm that information in scope of your request on the number of days the A Class of Submarine spent at sea during 2015 and 2016 is held, however, cannot be disclosed to you for security reasons related to operational effectiveness under Section 26 (Defence) of the Act.

Section 26 – Defence is a qualified exemption and as such it has been necessary to decide whether the balance of public interest lies in maintaining the exemption or is outweighed by the public interest in disclosure. The public interest test has been completed and the decision has been made to withhold the information as it has the potential to reveal operational practices and commitments that might otherwise compromise current or future Royal Navy operations and capabilities.

In response to the second part of your request, I can confirm that all three boats have completed operational handover and are under Royal Navy control. All boats rotate through planned operating cycles involving maintenance, training, deployment, leave and upgrades. This results in individual boats being at various levels of readiness to deploy, safeguarding the continuous ability of these technologically advanced boats and the highly skilled personnel to deploy in support of Government policies.

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, Ground Floor, ZoneD, 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

Navy Command Secretariat – FOI Section