



Ministry
of Defence

Navy Command FOI Section
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Ref. 2016/07515

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Via Email: [REDACTED]

23 August 2016

Dear [REDACTED]

Release of Information

Thank you for your correspondence dated 1 August 2016 requesting the following information:

- *How many (a) women and (b) men are in each category of the medical/nursing team on Argus? eg 3 male MOs, 1 female; six MAs, two of whom are female.*
- *How many of each category are Reserves?*
- *Is laundry done by a Chinese team or what? (In the 18 and 19C used to be done by laundresses who were somewhat related to nurses, you see, as not much could be done for poorly men other than rest them in clean beds.)*

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

A search has now been completed within the Ministry of Defence and I can confirm that the information requested is held.

In response to your first question, there is no permanently established complement of medical teams serving in RFA Argus. The medical component is known as the vessel's Force Element Table (FET) which is in a process of constant change according to circumstances and the specific requirement for particular operations. There is no gender requirement for any force element.

We can provide you with a snapshot of the current Force Element Table, the medical complement of RFA Argus as follows.

Medical Complement (Medium Force Element Table) of RFA Argus - Aug 2016

Officers	Female	Male
Doctors/Consultants	~	14
Nursing Officers	9	6
Medical Services Officers ¹	~	~
Physiotherapist/Pharmacist	~	~
Ratings/Other Ranks	Female	Male
Medical Assistants/AHP ²	~	15
Nurses	18	10

Notes

¹Medical Services Officers – non clinical medical Command and Staff officers.

²AHPs - Allied Health Professionals - Radiologists, Biomedical Services etc.

Numbers of 5 or less are represented by ~ to avoid identifying individuals.

In addition members of the Royal Marines Band Service deployed on RFA Argus, 4 female and 15 male in the current FET, have an additional role as stretcher bearers while they are embarked.

With regard to your second question, there are no Reservist personnel listed in the FET breakdown above which is classed as a medium FET manned by Regular RN personnel. The FET would change from 'medium' to 'heavy' depending on the casualty estimate and the perceived number of casualties expected. The Royal Naval Reserve would be involved in uplifting from a medium to a heavy FET. The 'heavy' configuration would bring more medical specialisms to the vessel as well as more beds to the ward area. Essentially a heavy FET would take RFA Argus up to a 100-bed facility from a 38-bed medium facility.

Regarding your final question, laundry support is the function of UK laundrymen. RFA Argus has a staff of two laundrymen.

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, 2nd floor, Zone N 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://.ico.org.uk>.

Yours sincerely,

Navy Command Secretariat - FOI Section