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Date: 14 December 2015

Thank you for your email of 16 November 2015 which requested the following information:-

*“The questions specifically regard to the UK Mina Salman Support Facility (UK MSSF) that recently began construction in the Kingdom of Bahrain.*

- 1. How many ships will be based at Mina Salman following the construction of the new facility, what type of ships will they be and what type of operations will they be expected to conduct?*
- 2. How many personnel are currently permanently stationed at Mina Salman? How many personnel are temporarily stationed there? How many personnel are expected to be in the UK MSSF upon its completion?”*

Your correspondence has been treated as a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA). A search for the information has now been completed within the Ministry of Defence and the answers to your questions can be found below.

***How many ships will be based at Mina Salman following the construction of the new facility, what type of ships will they be and what type of operations will they be expected to conduct?***

Today there are around half a dozen Royal Navy ships and units deployed in the region and well over 1,200 men and women. This includes the Mine Counter Measures Force that have been located at the Bahrain facilities since 2003. This force of four Mine Counter Measures vessels, supported by one Royal Fleet Auxiliary ship will continue to be permanently located and supported from the new UK Mina Salman Support Facility (UK MSSF). The UK MSSF will support all Royal Navy ships that deploy to the region that pass through Bahrain, but it is too early to say what the future scale of the Royal Navy's deployment to the region will be and whether any further Royal Navy vessels will be permanently located at UK MSSF.

The Royal Navy performs a number of tasks in the region, including: providing maritime security, counter narcotics duties, preventing terrorism, disrupting piracy, surveying key waterways and developing mine hunting expertise. The Mine Counter Measures Force although located in Bahrain is deployed throughout the Gulf region and ensures freedom of navigation of vital shipping lanes.

***How many personnel are currently permanently stationed at Mina Salman? How many personnel are temporarily stationed there? How many personnel are expected to be in the UK MSSF upon its completion?***

Personnel deploy to Mina Salman on a 6-month deployment and there are approximately 126 personnel currently located there. The exact number will fluctuate as personnel move in and out of theatre, and at any given time a number of these will be based on-board ships deployed to other parts of the Gulf region.

Plans are still being drawn up regarding the final complement at the UK MSSF. It is therefore too early to provide the exact number of personnel who will be based there. UK MSSF will also provide accommodation for visitors and personnel from Royal Navy ships alongside.

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 this office 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, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor, MOD Main Building, Whitehall, SW1A 2HB (e-mail [CIO-FOI-IR@mod.uk](mailto: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,  
PJHQ J9-FOI-Secretariat