

# **Background Quality Report**

## **Royal Navy and Royal Marines Monthly Personnel Situation Report**

### **1. Introduction**

#### **Overview**

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) publishes a wide range of Armed Forces personnel statistics. The main purpose of these statistics is:

- To inform policy and decision making within the Department,
- To measure the performance of the Ministry of Defence against Government and Parliament targets and
- To inform general debate in Government, Parliament and the wider public.

This Background Quality Report covers the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Monthly Personnel Situation Report, published on the Ministry of Defence statistics website at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ministry-of-defence/about/statistics>

The Royal Navy and Royal Marines Monthly Situation Personnel Report was first produced in July 2008. It was initially produced in response to ministerial requests for ad-hoc information and mirrored a report which was already produced for naval staff.

#### **Methodology and Production**

The Personnel Situation Report shows summary strengths and flows of the Royal Navy and Royal Marines as at the first day of the month. Full Time Reserve Service (FTRS) personnel are included in six of the tables.

A monthly extract, as at the first of each month, is taken from the Joint Personnel Administration (JPA) system on the sixth calendar day of each month. The lag helps to minimise the impact of individuals not immediately updating their JPA record. The data undergoes a series of automatic validation checks and edits to ensure its basic quality. The extract is then stored on a MySQL database as part of a time-series of extracts maintained by Defence Statistics (Navy). A further series of validation checks and corrections are made using expert knowledge and data obtained from other sources within the Department.

The latest situation data is extracted from the MySQL database and combined with separate information on liability (the number of Service personnel needed) in order to create a series of comma-separated (csv) data files required for the various tables. These are fed into an Access database which holds additional information for all naval personnel. The published tables are produced in Microsoft Excel and using queries of the Access database to populate them. The file is finally secured in Adobe Acrobat professional and published in PDF format. A cover note is created which highlights the main figures in the publication.

The Royal Navy and Royal Marines Monthly Situation Personnel Report is an official statistic produced and published in line with the UK Code of Practice for Official Statistics. The publication date is pre-announced on the release calendar on the gov.uk statistics website:

[https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/announcements?utf8=%E2%9C%93&keywords=&topics%5B%5D=&organisations%5B%5D=ministry-of-defence&from\\_date=&to\\_date=&commit=Refresh+results](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/announcements?utf8=%E2%9C%93&keywords=&topics%5B%5D=&organisations%5B%5D=ministry-of-defence&from_date=&to_date=&commit=Refresh+results)

A list of individuals who have pre-release access to the Situation Report is also published on the MOD statistics website:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/defence-statistics-pre-release-access-list>

Individuals in the roles listed are given access to the publication 24 hours in advance of publication.

#### **Contact Details:**

Defence Statistics (Navy) Head of Department is responsible for these statistics. Contact details are as follows:

Defence Statistics (Navy)  
Room 223 West Battery, Whale Island

Tel: 02392 625956

Portsmouth, PO2 8DX

Email: [DefStrat-Stat-Navy@mod.uk](mailto:DefStrat-Stat-Navy@mod.uk)

Defence Statistics (Navy) welcome feedback on this Background Quality Report or any of the statistics mentioned.

## **2. Relevance**

The Royal Navy and Royal Marines Monthly Situation Personnel Report contains strengths and flows for a range of detailed breakdowns, including rank, branch and specialisation. It compares strengths and liability at a detailed level and presents this information in tables and graphs. It also examines length of service by rank and numbers who have left or joined the trained strength of the regular Royal Navy and Royal Marines. The detailed information meets the basic requirements of all the known users of the product.

## **3. Accuracy**

### **Data Sources**

The main data source for compiling the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Monthly Personnel Situation Report output is the database of monthly extracts from the Joint Personnel Administration (JPA) system. These extracts cover all personnel in the Armed Forces. Personnel must be present on the system in order to be paid and there is therefore a high degree of certainty over the accuracy of the overall strength figures.

Key information for managing individuals is recorded and updated centrally with other information being completed by the individual through a self-service tool. There is a reasonable amount of late reporting which can adversely impact the statistics. Therefore more detailed breakdowns can be less accurate than the high-level figures, particularly for flows such as exits from the Service and changes from the untrained to trained strengths. Obtaining the extract on the sixth calendar day of the month overcomes much of the impact of late reporting.

Defence Statistics (Navy) cleanse and correct around 300-400 records within each monthly extract to ensure the quality of key fields (such as service, branch, rank and exit category) is sufficient to be published as an official statistic.

## **Outputs**

All figures published in the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Monthly Personnel Situation Report are rounded to the nearest 10 with numbers ending in 5 rounded to the nearest 20 to prevent systematic bias. Rounded figures are less precise, but not less accurate. Less precision improves the clarity of the outputs and provides an appropriate indication of the underlying accuracy. Rounding in this way is Defence Statistics' preferred method of disclosure control in published statistics as it preserves anonymity of data subjects.

## **4. Timeliness and punctuality**

The time lapse between the reference date of the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Monthly Personnel Situation Report and the date of publication is approximately 6 weeks. It takes at least 12 days for the data to become available and for any necessary corrections to be made. It then takes up to a further week for production, checking and amending of the report as necessary. Data is not published until the publication of UK armed forces monthly personnel statistics at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/uk-armed-forces-monthly-service-personnel-statistics-index>

All publication deadlines have been met since the implementation of JPA.

## **5. Accessibility and Clarity**

All Royal Navy and Royal Marines Monthly Personnel Situation Reports from January 2010 are available from:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ministry-of-defence/about/statistics>

Editions dating back to 1 July 2008 can be found in the online UK Government Web Archive:

<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140116142443/http://www.dasa.mod.uk/index.php/publications/>

The publication contains notes detailing the main categories and definitions used in the tables. Graphical representations are used to illustrate some of the statistics, to enable improved interpretation by non-expert readers. Consideration has been given to data visualisation guidelines on accessibility, in accordance with Defence Statistics advice.

## **6. Coherence and Comparability**

The report is always fully consistent in terms of the total numbers of servicing regular personnel with the other Royal Navy and Royal Marines and Tri-service publications produced by Defence Statistics. Inconsistencies are identified and rectified before publication.

## **7. Assessment of User Needs and Perceptions**

The Commodore Naval Personnel Strategy is the key Naval user of the report, providing personnel with a detailed picture of the Royal Navy and Royal Marines to assist with planning and measuring performance of different policies. The report is also used to inform public and parliamentary debate.

## **8. Performance, Cost and Respondent Burden**

The Royal Navy and Royal Marines Monthly Personnel Situation Report is only published electronically for customers to view and print as required.

The burden on data suppliers on producing the report is minimal. Extracts from JPA are required by Defence Statistics (Navy) irrespective of the production of the report. Additional data such as the liability and information from Training establishments are produced for management purposes. The extra burden of providing it to Defence Statistics (Navy) is minimal.

## **9. Confidentiality, Transparency and Security**

### **Security**

All staff involved in the production process are bound by the Official Secrets Act and have undertaken training in relation to the Data Protection Act. All data is stored, accessed and analysed using the Ministry of Defence's restricted network and IT systems. The access of raw data via JPA and SQL databases is password protected.

### **Confidentiality**

Some of the data collected and stored for the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Monthly Personnel Situation Report contains service numbers and is restricted. All published outputs provide rounded totals of individuals shown by strengths and flows ensuring disclosure is not feasible. Defence Statistics' rounding policy ([https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/561507/MOD\\_Statistics\\_-\\_Disclosure\\_Control\\_and\\_Rounding\\_Policy-amd.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/561507/MOD_Statistics_-_Disclosure_Control_and_Rounding_Policy-amd.pdf)) is used for all Royal Navy and Royal Marines Monthly Personnel Situation Report outputs. The policy states that decisions on disclosure control should be made on a case-by-case basis. All totals in this report are rounded as described in section 3. This ensures consistency in statistical disclosure control. Access to unrounded data would only be provided with approval via a Data Access Agreement.

### **Transparency**

The production process is considered to be transparent. This quality report informs users of the method, production and quality of the output. Any significant errors identified after publication would result in revisions in the next publication and explanations to the reasons behind the revisions.

## 10. References

Reference	Link to Website
Royal Navy and Royal Marines Monthly Situation Personnel Report	<a href="#">Royal Navy and Royal Marines Monthly Situation Personnel Report</a>
Royal Navy and Royal Marines Quarterly Pocket Brief	<a href="#">Royal Navy and Royal Marines Quarterly Pocket Brief</a>
UK Code of Practice for Official Statistics	<a href="#">UK Code of Practice for Official Statistics</a>
Ministry of Defence Statistics Web Archive	<a href="#">Ministry of Defence Statistics Web Archive</a>
Monthly Service Personnel Statistics	<a href="#">Monthly Service Personnel Statistics</a>