



Ministry of Defence

Ref: FOI2016/07485

Ministry of Defence
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Dear [REDACTED]

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

"To ask HMG whether they record the number of bomb disposal staff / officer fatalities on duty - domestically - and if so for the number of fatalities by year to be released.

There is no start date period for this request however the end date can be 31 July 2016."

I am treating your correspondence as a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA 200)

A search for the information has now been completed within the Ministry of Defence, and I can confirm that information in scope of your request is held.

Defence Statistics have interpreted 'domestically' as all those deaths that have occurred as a result of incidents in the UK and therefore do not include any deaths which occurred abroad or, deaths where personnel may have been aeromedically evacuated back to the UK as a result of incidents which occurred abroad.

From 1 April 2007 to 31 July 2016, **two** UK Armed Forces¹ bomb disposal personnel have died in the UK whilst 'on duty'. Both individuals were from the Army (one officer and one rank) and both deaths were due to disease/natural causes. **Please note, neither death occurred whilst carrying out disposal of explosive ordnance.**

Defence Statistics (Health) compiles the Department's authoritative deaths database for all **UK Armed Forces personnel who died whilst in Service** going back to 1984. Information is compiled from several internal and external sources from which we release a number of internal analyses and external National Statistics Notices.

UK Armed Forces bomb disposal personnel have been identified as follows for each individual Service using the Joint Personnel Administration (JPA) system. JPA is the system used by the Armed Forces to deal with matters of pay, leave and other personnel administrative tasks. JPA replaced a number of single-Service IT systems and was implemented in April 2006 for the RAF, November 2006 for the Naval Service and April 2007 for the Army.

Section 12 of the FOIA 2000 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. Therefore, as you have not specified a start date, Defence Statistics have provided figures from 1 April 2007 (the date all three services were live on JPA) in order not to exceed the appropriate cost limit mentioned above.

¹ Tri-Service regular and reservist personnel

Naval Service – Those personnel with ‘Diver’ as their specialisation on the JPA system.

Army – Those personnel with a trade on the JPA system of ‘Ammunition Technician’ for the Royal Logistic Corps with current explosive ordnance disposal competences held on the JPA system and any Corps of Royal Engineers personnel with current explosive ordnance disposal competences held on the JPA system.

RAF – Those personnel who are members of 5131 (Bomb Disposal) Squadron. Please note, it is not possible to identify in JPA those personnel from within the squadron who specifically undertake bomb disposal.

Figures are for tri-Service regular and reserve personnel.

Would you like to be added to our contact list, so that we can inform you about updates to our statistical publications covering suicide and open verdict deaths in the UK Armed Forces and consult you if we are thinking of making changes? You can subscribe to updates by emailing: DefStrat-Stat-Health-PQ-FOI@mod.uk

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, 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, <https://ico.org.uk>.

I hope this is helpful.

Yours sincerely
Defence Statistics (Health) Head (B1)