



Ministry of Defence

Air Command Secretariat
Spitfire Block
Headquarters Air Command
Royal Air Force
High Wycombe
Buckinghamshire
HP14 4UE

Ref: FOI-2015-04082

e-mail: [REDACTED]

26 May 2015

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your email of 28 April requesting information relating to RAF St Athan.

I am treating your correspondence as a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000. We have completed a search of our records and I can confirm that the MOD does not hold any of the information within the scope of your request.

For clarity, I will answer your questions in turn.

- 1) *I am seeking information on gate guardian for RAF Saint Athan.*

We can not find any records which show that MOD St Athan, formerly RAF St Athan had a gate guardian.

- 2) *Is there a list of all aircraft used?*

No information is held.

- 3) *Specifically I am looking for a Spitfire that was there during the 50's, but could use the information on all aircraft.'*

No information is held regarding this aircraft being used as a gate guardian at RAF St Athan.

Section 16(1) of the FOIA requires the public authority to provide advice and assistance wherever possible. You may find it useful to note that the only record we hold of a Spitfire at St Athan is the Spitfire MK356 that was built at Castle Bromwich, West Midlands in March 1944. It was initially allocated to No. 443 'Hornet' Squadron, Royal Canadian Air Force at RAF Digby, Lincolnshire and later moved to No. 144 (Canadian) Wing. On 14 April 1944 the aircraft flew its first operational mission. The Spitfire flew 60 operational sorties, taking damage on several occasions and in June 1944 the aircraft's third 'wheel-up' landing ended its operational life. The Spitfire was relocated to RAF Halton until 1951 when it was used as a gate guardian at Hawkinge, Bicester, Locking and Henlow. In 1968 it joined the RAF Museum Reserve Collection at St Athan. It remained at St Athan during its programme of restoration (1992 to 1997), when the aircraft flew for the first time in 53 years, to join the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight.

Further information relating to the Spitfire MK356 can be accessed at the link below:

<http://www.raf.mod.uk/bbmf/theaircraft/spitfiremk356.cfm>

If you are not satisfied with this response or 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**, 1st 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, <http://www.ico.gov.uk>

Yours sincerely,

Air Command Secretariat
Air DRes Sec 4b1