



Ministry  
of Defence

Navy Command FOI Section  
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2016-04576

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[REDACTED]  
Via email: [REDACTED]

9 May 2016

Dear [REDACTED],

Release of Information

Thank you for your correspondence dated 20 April 2016 requesting the following information:

*'Please can you tell me the locations of all known underwater mines that are in any area of UK territorial waters.'*

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

A search for information has now been completed within the Ministry of Defence, and I can confirm that no information in scope of your request is held. As far as we are aware, there are no known active mines in UK waters. We do have RN records of general areas where thousands of both UK and German sea mines were laid around the UK during WWII but not their actual locations.

Although after the war there were extensive minesweeping operations to clear these mine-lays, it remains a possibility that a very small minority of unexploded mines could have been missed. Possible reasons include, being originally laid in the wrong position during war-time conditions, poor record keeping of laid positions, mines may have drifted/sunk/been covered by bottom sediment over time. Given that over 70 years has passed since they were laid, it is impossible to know their exact numbers, what has happened to them, their current status, or where they are now, though we are confident that none are currently a threat to surface navigation.

Under Section 16 of the FOI Act (Advice and Assistance) you may find it helpful to know that the Naval Staff History on British Mining operations during the Second World War was issued in 1973, and a copy currently resides in The National Archives under ADM234/560 & 561. The second reference is the chart book that accompanies the text. The National Archives can be contacted as follows:

Website: <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk>

Post: The National Archives, Kew, Richmond, Surrey, TW9 4DU.

Their catalogue is available on the web so you may be able to search for the information you are looking for, although you will not be able to view any of the documents online. Alternatively, you could telephone them for assistance on: 020 8876 3444.

If you decide to visit The National Archives you will either need to bring your Reader's Ticket or, if you do not possess one, you will have to obtain one at the front desk. For this you will require some form of identification, a passport, driving licence etc. They do not charge for reader's tickets, they are free. Alternatively, you may consider employing a researcher to carry out the work for you. If you do decide to do

this, then The National Archives will supply you with a list of independent researchers who will make a charge for their time. The National Archives do not carry out research on behalf of individual members of the public.

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, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Zone N, 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

Navy Command Secretariat – FOI Section