



Ministry
of Defence

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Ref: FOI2016/08926/10/03

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20 October 2016

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your email of 22 September in which you requested the following information:

Details of the numbers of women who have applied to join the Royal Armoured Corps and any other units which are described as ground close combat roles.

Could you also provide details of the numbers of serving females soldiers who have applied to join the RAC.

I am treating your correspondence 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 I can confirm that the information in scope of your request is held. The information you have requested is below. All numbers have been rounded to the nearest five as a means of disclosure control and to preserve anonymity. Please note that these figures are single service estimates only and are not official statistics.

The first part of your request has been interpreted as the number of external applicants for the Royal Armoured Corps (RAC). As at 21 Sep 2016, 70 applications had been received from females expressing a preference for service as a soldier in the Royal Armoured Corps (RAC). Applications for the infantry are not currently open yet as the role will not open until 2018. Of the 70 applications, 30 selected the RAC as their first of the three preferences that candidates choose during the application process.

Officers do not make an application to join a specific capbadge before enlistment, as selection for regiments takes place during the first and second terms at Sandhurst. However, external application data shows that 15 applicants have expressed interest in the RAC, and less than five have expressed an interest in the Infantry.

As at 27 September less than five female soldiers have applied to transfer to the RAC.

Under Section 16, to be helpful, you may wish to note that the former Prime Minister announced on 8 July 2016 that following a recommendation by the Chief of the General Staff, the previous exclusions on women serving in Ground Close Combat roles, specifically

the Royal Marines, RAC, Infantry and Royal Air Force Regiment have now been lifted. Implementation is being carried out incrementally with some units within the RAC open now, and all other Ground Close Combat roles, including the Infantry, being open in 2018. This will enable implementation to be rolled out in a deliberate, responsible and methodical manner which will allow mitigation measures, such as updated Physical Employment Standards, to be put in place.

The first officer Regimental Selection Board to consider women for the RAC will sit in December of this year. Subject to successful completion of the Commissioning Course in April 2017, those successful at the Board could move immediately to role-related training. Should they successfully complete role-related training, women could arrive in their units by November 2017.

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, 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.org.uk>.

Yours sincerely,



Army Secretariat