



Ministry of Defence

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Ref: FOI2017/09691/79486/07/02

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1 November 2017

E-mail address: [REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED],

Thank you for your email/letter of 9 October in which you requested the following information:

"I would like to request the amount of injuries caused through riding horses without saddles in the Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment, within the last five years.

I would like a full year by year brake down of numbers where applicable.

If riding without saddles is no longer carried out, I would like to request when this was stopped and why".

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

A search for the information has now been completed within the Ministry of Defence, and I can confirm that the number of HMCR personnel injured through riding horses without saddles are as follows:

2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
0	~	~	~	0

Notes:

"~" shows a value that is less than 5 but greater than 0 to limit disclosure and identification of personnel.

With regard to your final question, I can confirm that riding without saddles during Guard exercises was ceased around May 2015. This followed a review which showed that more serious injuries were sustained by personnel who fell off horses riding without a saddle than those with a saddle. However, blanket rides are still conducted as a lesson at the Household Cavalry Training Wing. Under section 16 of the FOIA, it might be helpful if I explained that during such rides, the horses are initially ridden with a saddle to make sure they are settled. The saddle is then removed and the blanket (gel pad) is fitted. This is conducted so the soldier understands how the tack is fitted and so they are aware of how they should sit and ride but also what it feels like for when they get to the squadrons.

The blanket ride is used as an assurance check prior to beach rides, where horses are ridden bareback and which take place every year, which take place each year. If the Officer or Soldier

has not completed the blanket ride and does not have their name on the competency register, they are not permitted to ride without a saddle on the beach.

If you have any queries regarding the content of this letter, please contact this office in the first instance. Following this, if you wish to complain about the handling of your request, or the content of this response, you can request an independent internal review by contacting the Information Rights Compliance team, Ground Floor, MOD Main Building, Whitehall, SW1A 2HB (e-mail CIO-FOI-IR@mod.uk). Please note that any request for an internal review should be made within 40 working days of the date of this response.

If you remain dissatisfied following an internal review, you may raise your complaint directly to the Information Commissioner under the provisions of Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act. Please note that the Information Commissioner will not normally investigate your case until the MOD internal review process has been completed. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF. Further details of the role and powers of the Information Commissioner can be found on the Commissioner's website at <https://ico.org.uk/>.

Yours sincerely,

Disclosure and Litigation Leader