



Ministry
of Defence

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Ref: FOI2017/03233

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24th March 2017

Dear [REDACTED]

Release of Information

Thank you for your correspondence dated 10th March 2017 requesting the following information:

'I am conducting research into religious belief in the Armed Forces and would like to obtain information you hold. Although you already supply some information on this subject, it only covers the main world faiths and not Humanism and Atheism. If the number of Sikhs, Muslims etc in the Armed Forces is not classified then I would hope that neither are the number of Humanists and Atheists.

I would therefore be most grateful if you would please provide me with data on:

- A breakdown of "Religion" and "Religion Requirements" as held on JPA; ideally this should be taken as a snapshot on one day.*
- Figures for the 3 Services should be separated out.*
- The data should show how many personnel are in each category under the data field "Religion".*
- Taking each of those categories (eg No Religion, Christian etc) in turn, the data should show the breakdown of the choices personnel subsequently made under the data field "Religion Requirements". In other words how many Christians went on to select "Humanist, etc" i.e. not just how many of those who declared "No Religion" went on to select from this field.*
- The data should allow a calculation to be made of the response rate to these questions i.e. the unknown/blanks are also important.*
- The data should be supplied in absolute figures not as percentages. I can work these out from the figures.*
- In order to anonymise the data, it should be rounded to the nearest 10. Numbers ending in 5 may be rounded to the nearest multiple of 20 to avoid systematic bias.'*

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

I can confirm that the Ministry of Defence does hold information in scope of your request which can be found in Annex A attached to this letter. It should be noted that the breakdown of religion

declared by all members of the Armed Forces has 'Humanist' listed as one of the categories of 'No Religion' rather than as a category of any Christian denomination. This is the accepted method of religious classification used by the Ministry of Defence for its Service Personnel.

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, Ground Floor, Zone D, 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

Navy Command Secretariat – FOI Section

Table 1: Religion of UK Regular Forces Personnel as at 1 October 2016

Religion	Religion Reqts	All Services	RN/RM	Army	RAF
Total		150,250	37,500	84,490	33,270
Buddhist		730	40	640	50
of which	Buddhist	730	40	640	50
Christian		110,870	22,540	64,520	23,810
of which	Baptist	620	100	360	160
	Christian	500	190	70	230
	Church in Wales	1,130	100	820	210
	Church of England	66,810	13,570	37,780	15,450
	Church of Ireland	850	110	610	130
	Church of Scotland	5,930	1,110	3,500	1,320
	Congregational	30	10	10	20
	Eastern Orthodox	~	~	-	-
	Free Church of Scotland	30	20	10	~
	Free Presbyterian	830	10	810	~
	Greek Orthodox	20	~	20	~
	Lutheran	10	-	10	~
	Methodist	2,890	500	1,760	630
	Moravian	10	~	~	~
	Orthodox	60	10	40	10
	Pentecostal	500	60	420	30
	Plymouth Brethren	10	-	~	~
	Presbyterian	420	110	190	110
	Presbyterian Church in Ireland	510	30	410	70
	Presbyterian Church of Wales	10	~	10	~
	Quaker (Society of Friends)	~	~	~	-
	Roman Catholic	15,900	3,350	9,360	3,200
	Russian Orthodox	~	-	~	-
	Salvation Army	90	20	50	20
	Scottish Episcopal Church	50	10	30	10
	Seventh Day Adventist	170	20	140	~
	United Free Church of Scotland	~	~	~	~

	United Reformed Church	110	20	50	40
	Other Christian	630	20	580	20
	Christian (Unspecified)	12,750	3,170	7,450	2,130
Christian Tradition		210	70	90	50
of which	Christian Scientist	20	10	~	10
	Christian Tradition	60	20	10	20
	Church of Jesus Christ Of Latter-Day Saints (Mormon)	60	10	40	10
	Jehovah's Witness	~	-	-	~
	Unitarian	10	~	~	~
	Other Christian Tradition	60	20	30	10
		1,060	20	1,010	40
Hindu	Hindu	1,060	20	1,010	40
of which		70	10	50	10
Judaism	Judaism	70	10	50	10
of which		530	40	440	50
Muslim	Muslim	530	40	440	50
of which		170	10	140	20
Sikh	Sikh	170	10	140	20
of which		34,990	9,530	17,000	8,460
No Religion	Agnostic	6,710	760	4,990	960
of which	Atheist	13,780	2,240	8,980	2,570
	Humanist	250	60	110	80
	No Religion	1,760	520	360	880
	Other Beliefs	280	100	120	70
	Secularist	20	10	10	10
	No Religion (Unspecified)	12,180	5,850	2,430	3,900
		740	180	400	160
Other Religions	Baha'i	~	-	~	-
of which	Druid	10	~	~	~
	Jainist	~	-	-	~
	Pagan	130	20	80	20
	Rastafarian	160	40	120	10
	Spiritualist	40	10	20	10
	Wicca	20	~	10	~
	Zoroastrian (Parsee)	~	-	~	-
	Other Religions	380	110	160	120

Kirati					
of which	Kirati	90	~	90	-
Unknown		90	~	90	-
of which	No Value	790	50	110	630
		790	50	110	630

Source: Defence Statistics (Tri-Service)

Notes:

Figures are as reported on the Joint Personnel Administration Database

UK Regular Forces comprises Full-time personnel but does not include Gurkhas, Full Time Reserve Service personnel and Reservists.

Rounding:

Numbers are rounded to the nearest 10.

Numbers ending in 5 are rounded to the nearest 20 to avoid systematic bias.

Totals and sub-totals have been rounded separately and so may not equal the sums of their rounded parts.