



Ministry
of Defence

Ministry of Defence
Main Building
Whitehall
London
SW1A 2HB

Ref: FOI2017/06020

Reply to: [REDACTED]

23 June 2017

Dear [REDACTED],

Thank you for your email of 17 June 2017 requesting the following information:

"I love the British military. I bought some uk military uniform on ebay, but am worried that I maybe in breach of the army uniform act or other uniform regulations if I start wearing them in public. I want to know if its a crime for a civilian to be wearing the military uniform?"

I bough british army 95 desert combat shirt, British army issue shirt PCS MTP multicar, German military flecktarn camo army shirt and military baseball cap."

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

There is no general offence of impersonating a member of the Armed Forces, and many actors do so in theatre and films. It is similarly not wrong for a civilian to wear uniform or former military clothing for their own preference or entertainment, as long as they are not claiming to be a member of the Armed Forces or hold a rank they are not entitled to.

It is however an offence under the Official Secrets Acts to wear Service uniform for the purpose of gaining admission to a prohibited place or for a purpose prejudicial to the safety or interests of the State within the meaning of the Acts. The unauthorised wearing of Service uniform in this way or the wearing of uniform in a manner that is likely to bring contempt on to it, are criminal offences which may be punished by a fine or imprisonment.

Someone who gains commercial or financial advantage from a misrepresentation of a Service position would almost certainly be committing an offence and may find themselves the subject of court action against a charge of committing fraud. Even without resorting to the criminal law, most employers would react adversely to someone who gives a false impression, either by statement or dress, of a former Service career they did not have, in order to gain employment or promotion. Any person found out in such deceit could reasonably expect to be dismissed.

In closing I can clarify that although use of a military uniform for misrepresentation is taken seriously as I have indicated, the wearing of part of a decommissioned uniform by a civilian for non-malicious purposes is not illegal. Indeed many fancy-dress shops and outfitters have acquired such for rental or purchase.

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 FOI 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,

Defence People Secretariat FOI