



Ministry of Defence

Ministry of Defence
Defence Business Services Secretariat
Room 6303
Tomlinson House
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Thornton-Cleveleys
FY5 3WP

Ref: FOI2018/10015

Email: DBSRES-Secretariat@mod.gov.uk

[REDACTED]

7 August 2018

Dear [REDACTED],

Thank you for your email of 16 July requesting the following information:

“As at 19 July 2018, how many Arctic Star medals have been issued to males and how many to females?”

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 some information in scope of your request is held.

However, I have to inform you that Section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act makes provision for public authorities to refuse requests for information where the cost of dealing with them would exceed the appropriate cost limit, which for central government is set at £600. This represents the estimated cost of one person spending 3.5 working days in determining whether the department holds the information, locating, retrieving and extracting the information.

As the application form for the Arctic Star medal does not ask for the gender of the applicant, in order to fully answer your question the service record of the applicant would have to be located, retrieved and the information extracted. The cases for personnel in the Royal Marines, Army, and Royal Air Force amount to 1,044 medals and to locate, retrieve and annotate gender would take an estimated six minutes per record. This would total 104 hours. The FOI Act hourly rate for these calculations is £25 so the cost would be £2,610. As to the Royal Navy, the retrieving of this data is more problematic as 15,980 records would require a manual Pay and Victualling trace at an average of 90 minutes per record and would therefore exceed the cost limit of £600.

Under Section 16 of the Act (Advice and Assistance), you may find it helpful to note that the MOD does not have access to the records of recipients of the Arctic Star medal who served in the Merchant Navy, the Royal Fleet Auxiliary, the Royal Canadian Navy, the Royal Australian Navy and the Royal New Zealand Navy. However, you may find it useful to know that it wasn't until 1993 that women were allowed to serve on board Royal Navy vessels as full members of the crew.

If you have any queries regarding the content of this letter, please contact this office in the first instance.

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.gov.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,



DBS Secretariat Team

