



Ministry
of Defence

Army Secretariat
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Ref: FOI2018/01081/18/05

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5 October 2018

Dear [REDACTED],

Thank you for your email of 8 January in which you clarified your request of 5 December:

'Please supply information on the number of active and deceased service dogs in the UK armed forces from the most recent date available to either five years ago, or to as far back as the hours will allow FOI officers to provide information for'

to the following:

'When I say 'dogs deceased' I mean dogs who have died during serving in operations, yes.'

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

Firstly, I am sorry for the delay in getting this response to you. A search for the information has now been completed within the Ministry of Defence, and I can confirm that some of the information in scope of your request is held.

I can inform you that as at 1 October 2018, there were 833 military working dogs in service with the British Armed Forces. Information relating to the total number of military working dogs in service, broken down by year, is not held in the format you have requested. Over the past five years, four military working dogs have died on operations. Three died in 2013 (two were killed in action, one died of natural causes) and one died of natural causes in 2016. These fatalities all occurred in Afghanistan.

Military working dogs provide an invaluable service to our troops, including on operations, where their contribution can save the lives of soldiers and the general public. The welfare of all military working dogs in service is of utmost importance and veterinary staff deployed on the front line to ensure they receive appropriate medical care. As well as this all military dog handlers are given first aid training. Unfortunately, there are occasions where a dog will die unexpectedly as a result of an underlying medical condition or as a result of an incident on operations.

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,

Army Secretariat