



Ministry  
of Defence

Air Command Secretariat  
Spitfire Block  
Headquarters Air Command  
Royal Air Force  
High Wycombe  
Buckinghamshire  
HP14 4UE

Our Ref: 2019-09380

[REDACTED]  
Email: [REDACTED]

11 September 2019

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your email of 13 August 2019 requesting the following information:

- A) Does the RAF retain flying logbooks (personal flying records) of post war aircrew who have left the service through retirement or death. RAF FORM 176, 414 etc.*
- B) If so provide quality current held.*
- C) Provide procedure.*

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

I can confirm that the MOD holds some information in scope of your request. To establish if the department holds all of the information you have requested is estimated to exceed the appropriate cost limit, therefore this is exempt under Section 12(2) of the FOI Act. Unfortunately, I am unable to offer a suggested refinement to bring your request under the cost of compliance. However, if

Under Section 16 – Help and Assistance - Please see below a relevant policy excerpt relating to the retention of flying logbooks;

**Retention and Disposal of Flying Logbooks**

26. Flying logbooks for military personnel are official documents and as such are the property of HM Government. Personnel ceasing to be employed on flying duties will, however, be allowed to retain their logbooks when all official action for which the books may be required is completed.

27. Flying logbooks will be retained until the individual is no longer eligible for employment for flying duties. Flying logbooks will then be disposed of in accordance with the directions below. At a coroner's inquest into a fatal accident the flying logbooks of the personnel concerned must be produced for inspection if required.

**Security and Disposal**

28. When Aircrew are deceased, missing, a prisoner of war, or declared to be illegally absent or insane, their logbook(s) will be impounded by the appropriate ADH or AM(MF). It must be scrutinized

to ensure that no security risk is likely to arise from its disposal to the originator or his next of kin, either immediately or in the future. After scrutiny, the logbook may be disposed of in one of the following ways: a. It may be returned to the originator on application, however if the originator has ceased duties as a result of disciplinary action, the logbook will not be returned.

b. Unless returned to the originator, it will be security classified and retained by the appropriate authority.

29. The logbook(s) of deceased personnel may be forwarded to the next of kin after scrutiny, provided that they contain no information of Secret or higher category, nor contain entries that might cause pain to the next of kin. Under no circumstances may logbooks be forwarded to next of kin without permission of the appropriate command chain (normally not less than 2-star level).

You may find it useful to know that flying log books are retained by the Service person on retirement or returned to the Next of Kin if the service person is deceased. In exceptional circumstance the Department may retain the flying log book. However, in order to establish if we hold any flying log books for the period you have requested a manual search of thousands of personnel files would be required. Information is archived by individual service record and not by the specific Trade or Branch.

If you are not satisfied with this response or 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, 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 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,

[Original signed]

Air Director Resources Secretariat ■