



Ministry
of Defence

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

Ref. 2020/00387

[REDACTED]

6 February 2020

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your e-mail of 10 January 2020 asking for details about the Hawk T1. Specifically, you requested the following information:

"Please can you provide the AFT for the Hawk Tmk1 aircraft of 100 Sqn, RAF Leeming and 736 NAS, RNAS Culdrose.

If possible for 100 Sqn can this be broken down by usage such as: Phase IV trg, Close Air Support (CAS) particularly for JFACTSU, Aggressor, Defence Engagement, Refresher Courses, Continuation Trg & Currency.

If possible for 736 NAS can this be broken down to: support to FOST, RNSFC, Op Assurance & Trials, Exercises and Continuation Trg & Currency."

I am treating your correspondence as a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA). We have now completed a search of our paper and electronic records for the information you requested and I can confirm that some information within the scope of your request is held.

The annual flying task for 100 Squadron for Financial Year 2019/20 is 3560 hours whilst for 736 Naval Air Squadron is 1790 hours. The annual flying task for both units for Financial Year 2020/21 has not been set yet. Information breaking the total FY 2020/21 figures down into sub categories is held. However, this is withheld under Section 26 (Defence) of the Act.

Section 26(1)(b) of the Act provides that we should withhold information which would be likely to prejudice the capability, effectiveness or security of relevant forces. The Act requires that we should carry out a Public Interest Test in this respect to show that the reasons for withholding the information outweigh the reasons for releasing information.

The release of the annual flying task broken down further into sub categories would increase public understanding of current and future military capabilities and strategic effect of the Armed Forces Fast Jet contingency in support of UK objectives and at the same time demonstrate the MOD's commitment to transparency.

However, while 736 NAS and 100 Squadron cannot be considered as a front-line units, they do provide vital support and operational readiness training for front line units in both the Royal Air Force and Royal Navy. Release of the information, broken down into specific categories would offer an immediate measure of the time spent by frontline forces exercising against real targets. When coupled with other information that is already in the public domain, this could be clearly aligned to specific operational capabilities and could be used by potential aggressors to target, disrupt and degrade a crucial element of Armed Forces capability. It would also indicate tactical level information regarding the UK Armed Forces' assessment of current and future threats and planned responses to these threats. This could be used by hostile powers to mitigate and degrade the impact of these plans and associated responses which would negatively impact on Defence.

I therefore conclude the balance of the public interest for providing a breakdown of the annual flight tasking into specific categories for these two units is firmly in favour of maintaining the exemption under S.26(1)(b).

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.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


Secretariat 3a1
Air Command