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of Defence

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Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your email received on 10 October 2019 where you asked (in follow-up to FOI2019/09042 Internal Review):

"I would like to make a request for the data that you have pointed out in the stand alone database from 1991 -2016"

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

The internal review conducted was following your request for the following information:

"How many Gulf Vets have been denied a War Pension since 1991?"

Therefore, the department has interpreted your request to be for information on unsuccessful War Pension claims between 1991 and 2016, as recorded on the standalone Gulf 1 database.

Between the end of the 1990/91 Gulf Conflict and 31 March 2016¹, there were 9,524 War Pension Scheme (WPS) claimants recorded on the standalone Gulf 1 database as having a cleared claim for compensation. The criteria for adding WPS claimants to the database was confirmed service in the 1990/91 Gulf Conflict.

There were an additional 520 claimants with registered WPS claims on the standalone database that either went on to be withdrawn by the claimant, or were not cleared as at 31 March 2016.

Of the 9,524 claimants with a cleared WPS claim on the standalone database;

- 9,089 (95%) claimants were identified as successful, i.e. it was determined that they had sustained a Service-attributable injury/illness. Note that whilst the claimant recorded their deployment to the 1990/91 Gulf Conflict on their WPS claim form, their injury/illness may not have been a result of their deployment, but as a result of wider Service in the UK Armed Forces prior to 6 April 2005
- 435 (5%) claimants were identified as having been rejected (or unsuccessful), i.e. it was determined that their injury/illness was not Service-attributable.

¹ DBS Vets UK ceased to continue to update the standalone Gulf 1 database from 1 April 2016.

Please note that information on the standalone Gulf 1 database has not been validated and data are held independently to the War Pension Computer System (WPCS). The database may include individuals who, despite claiming Gulf war-related injury/illness, may not have deployed to the Gulf.

Under Section 16 (Advice and Assistance) you may find it helpful to note the following:

The War Pension Scheme (WPS) provides no-fault compensation for all ex-service personnel where illness, injury or death is caused by Service from the start of the First World War in 1914 up until 5 April 2005. The WPS is managed by the Ministry of Defence (MOD) with all compensation claims administered by Defence Business Services (DBS) Veterans UK. Electronic WPS information is held on the War Pension Computer System (WPCS).

The MOD holds electronic WPCS data for all first disablement pension claims on or after 1 April 2003. Electronic WPS data for claims registered prior to this date are incomplete, particularly for unsuccessful claims which were routinely archived after 18 months.

Following the end of the 1990/91 Gulf Conflict, WPS claimants who reported that their injury or ill health was a result of their deployment to this conflict were recorded on a separate standalone Microsoft Access database, managed by DBS Veterans UK (previously the Service Personnel and Veterans Agency). This database was managed separately to the main War Pension Computer System (WPCS). DBS Vets UK ceased to continue to update the database from 1 April 2016 due to duplication of effort as the MOD were able to identify veterans of the 1990/91 Gulf Conflict using other sources.

Claimants recorded on the standalone database were also recorded on the WPCS. Therefore, there is overlap between the electronic data held on both systems for claims registered since 1 April 2003. There were 2,844 claimants recorded on the standalone database who were also identified as having registered a first claim for compensation or after 1 April 2003, as reported in the department's response to your previous request for information (ref: FOI2019/10540).

Unsuccessful claimants: WPS claimants with a rejected first claim and no subsequent successful outcome. Unsuccessful claimants are those whose injury/illness was deemed not Service-attributable. Please note that some unsuccessful claimants as at 31 March 2016 may go on to become successful at a future date.

Successful claimants: WPS claimants deemed to have a service-attributable injury/illness. This includes those awarded an ongoing War Pension, those awarded a gratuity (one-off) lump-sum payment, and those where the Service-attributable injury/illness was not serious enough to be awarded monetary compensation. Successful claimants are those with either;

- A successful first claim, or
- An unsuccessful first claim, that went on to have a successful outcome, e.g. following appeal.

Claims are determined as successful or unsuccessful following the five stages of claims consideration:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/517104/HOCS_FOI_2016_02036_Attachment-War_Pension_Scheme_WPS_five_stages_of_claims_consideration.pdf

Claims not cleared as at 31 March 2016 may have gone on to be cleared after this date. Outcomes for these claims will have been recorded on the WPCS and will therefore have been reported within the figures provided to you in response to your previous request for information (ref: FOI2019/10540).

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

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