



Ref: FOI2020/10030

Defence Business Services

Head of DBS Secretariat

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Mr

1 October 2020

Dear Mr ,

Thank you for your email of 8 September 2020 to the Ministry of Defence (MOD), seeking information about Armed Forces personnel discharged prior to 1975 without a pension.

You requested the following information:

"I would like to know how many Military Veterans there are who were unfortunate enough to leave service before 1975 and not receive a pension".

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 MOD and I can confirm that all the information in scope of your request is held. However, I have to advise you that to answer your question on the number of personnel who were discharged without a pension would exceed the appropriate cost limit.

Section 12 of the FOI Act makes provision for public authorities to refuse requests for information where the cost of dealing with them would exceed the appropriate 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 it, retrieving it and extracting it.

Defence Statistics estimates that between the years 1939 to 1970, there was a minimum of 4.9 million Service leavers. This is calculated using various sources of information on service leavers, including old UK Defence Statistics publications, online published statistics on the numbers in the armed forces, and historic 'Health of the Armed Forces' reports.

As electronic data is not held for these veterans, each archived paper service record would need to be manually interrogated for the information requested. Archived Service records for everyone are between 50 and 250 pages long and are a combination of hand-written and typewritten documents. To interrogate 4.9 million files, would far exceed the appropriate cost limit.

We have an obligation under Section 16 to offer as much advice and assistance as is reasonably practicable and as such we would normally suggest ways in which you can refine your request to bring it below the cost limit. However, due to the broad nature of your request and the numbers involved we are unable to do so on this occasion. We are, of course, open to

considering any other refinement that you might suggest and will process it provided that it comes within the statutory cost-limit.

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

Defence Business Services Secretariat