



Ministry  
of Defence

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27 July 2020

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your email of 8 June in which you asked for the following information:

- 1. How many service personnel have gone AWOL since 2011? Please can you break down the figures on a yearly basis and into separate categories of RAF, Army, Navy and other.*
- 2. Of those of who have gone AWOL, how many were prosecuted for desertion and what were the sentences? Again please can you break down the figures on a yearly basis and into separate categories of RAF, Army, Navy and other.*
- 3. How many of these AWOL personnel are still AWOL and not accounted for?*

I am treating your correspondence as a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000. A search for the information has now been completed within the Ministry of Defence, and I can confirm that information in scope of your request is held.

The information you have requested can be found below, but some of the information falls entirely within the scope of the absolute exemptions provided for at section 40 (Personal Data), and section 21 (information accessible by other means) of the FOIA and has been withheld. Section 40(2) has been applied to some of the information in order to protect personal information as governed by the Data Protection Act 2018. When absolute exemptions are used, there is no requirement to consider the public interest in making a decision to withhold the information.

Information relating to part one and three of your request has been provided below. Please note in relation to all data provided:

- All figures are as at 15 June 2020.
- The figures in the table below represent those cases that are reported to the Service Police and entered on to REDCAP and Police National Computer. A unit has up to an eight day period to post Service Personnel as AWOL in accordance with tri-Service regulations, laid out in Joint Service Publication (JSP) 830 Chapter 10, available on the Gov.uk website.
- The figures in the table below are for the number of AWOL offences reported, not the number of personnel who have gone AWOL. An individual may be recorded as AWOL more than once in this time period.
- These figures are single service estimates and are not official statistics produced by Defence Statistics.
- Rounding is used as a means of disclosure control and the preservation of anonymity.
- Figures have been rounded to the nearest 10; numbers ending in 5 have been rounded to the nearest multiple of 20 to prevent systematic bias.

- Totals and sub-totals have been rounded separately and so may not appear to be the sum of their parts.
- “-” denotes zero or rounded to zero.

**Total number of occurrences of AWOL by year and Service, as reported to the Service Police**

Year	RN	RM	Army	RAF
2011	50	10	1,450	10
2012	40	-	1,060	-
2013	20	10	820	10
2014	10	10	670	-
2015	20	10	550	-
2016	10	-	420	-
2017	20	-	330	-
2018	10	-	360	-
2019	10	-	310	-
2020	-	-	90	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>6050</b>	<b>40</b>

Part two of your request has been withheld as it is available by other means and is therefore exempt from release.

Under Section 16 of the Act (Advice and Assistance) you may find it helpful to note that court martial results from January 2010 onwards are published on the [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) website, here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/court-martial-results-from-the-military-court-centres>

In answer to part three of your request, the number of those recorded as AWOL as at 15 June is 110 for the Army and zero or rounded to zero for the other Services.

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](mailto: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