



Ministry
of Defence

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ArmySec/Equip/Animals/FOI2021/00394

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4 February 2021

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your email of 12 January in which you requested the following information:

“Could you provide details of the number of military working dogs destroyed since 2017 together with the reasons for their destruction.

Also, could you provide details of the number of military horses destroyed since 2013 together with the reasons for their destruction.”

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 (MOD), and I can confirm that some information in scope of your request is held.

For the years 2017-2019, 100 Military Working Dogs (MWDs) were euthanised, of which 72 were for veterinary reasons and 28 were for safety.

For the years 2013-2019, 85 Military Working Horses (MWHs) were euthanised, of which 78 were for veterinary reasons and 7 were for safety.

The 2020 data set is not held by the Department. Under Section 16 of the Act (Advice and Assistance) it may be useful if I explain that collation and verification of Military Working Animal (MWA) End of Service data (including information on deaths and euthanasia) is now only undertaken annually in order to improve data quality.

Also, under Section 16 you may find it helpful to note that MWAs provide an invaluable service to our troops, and every effort is made to rehome them at the end of their service life. Decisions are taken following an extensive assessment of the animals and any potential new home. Sadly, there are some occasions where it is not possible to rehome an animal safely. MWAs are only euthanised for one of two reasons; either because the animal poses an unacceptable risk to public safety or due to a veterinary condition causing unnecessary suffering. In such cases decisions are taken following a full assessment by military veterinarians and dog behaviourist experts.

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.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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