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E-mail: Analysis-Health-PQ-FOI@mod.gov.uk

3 March 2023

Ref: FOI2023/01517

Dear [REDACTED],

Thank you for your email dated 3 February 2023 requesting the following information:

From 2006 (or the most recent date that you could start the analysis) please provide me with a table showing (i) the total, and (ii) an annual breakdown of the number of women service personnel who have been aeromedically evacuated due to pregnancy.

Please could you break the total number by the numbers evacuated from the (i) army, (ii) navy and (iii) RAF.

During that time period which three Navy ships has seen the most woman service personnel aeromedically evacuated due to pregnancy and how many women was this?

I am treating your correspondence as a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 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. Some of the information about women aero-medically evacuated from ships falls entirely within the scope of the absolute exemption provided for at section 40 (Personal Data) of the FOIA and has been withheld.

Section 40(2) has been applied to some of the information to protect personal information as governed by the Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR. In line with JSP200 Statistics Disclosure Guidance, numbers fewer than five are suppressed to reduce the possible inadvertent disclosure of individual identities. Section 40 is an absolute exemption and there is, therefore, no requirement to consider the public interest in deciding to withhold the information. The information you requested is enclosed.

Between 1 January 2008 and 31 December 2022, **319** female UK service personnel were aeromedically evacuated due to pregnancy. **Table 1** presents this information by year and **Table 2** presents this information by service.

Table 1: Female UK service personnel aeromedically evacuated due to pregnancy, numbers^{1,2}

1 January 2008 to 31 December 2022

Year	Number of personnel
All	319
2022	11
2021	6
2020	10
2019	10
2018	10
2017	14
2016	17
2015	10
2014	23
2013	33
2012	28
2011	36
2010	20
2009	41
2008	50

Source: Aeromedical Evacuation Control Centre (AECC) and Defence Patient Tracking System (DPTS)

1. Includes initial aeromedical evacuations only, numbers do not include connecting flights and reverse aeromedical evacuations. Aeromedical Evacuation is defined as patient movement towards the UK; patient movement in any other direction is defined as Reverse Aeromedical Evacuation.
2. Females may be counted more than once if they have had multiple initial aeromedical evacuations for pregnancy during the same time period.

Table 2: Female UK service personnel aeromedically evacuated due to pregnancy, by service, numbers^{1,2}

1 January 2008 to 31 December 2022

Service	Number of personnel
All	319
Royal Navy ³	54
Army	173
RAF	92

Source: Aeromedical Evacuation Control Centre (AECC) and Defence Patient Tracking System (DPTS)

1. Includes initial aeromedical evacuations only, numbers do not include connecting flights and reverse aeromedical evacuations¹. Females may be counted more than once if they have had multiple initial aeromedical evacuations for pregnancy during the same time period.
2. Females may be counted more than once if they have had multiple initial aeromedical evacuations for pregnancy during the same time period.
3. Royal Navy includes Royal Navy and Royal Marines personnel.

Between 1 January 2008 and 31 December 2022, the three ships with the most female UK service personnel aeromedically evacuated due to pregnancy were HMS Montrose, HMS Ocean and HMS Edinburgh with a total of **14**. Of the three ships, HMS Montrose had the highest number of female UK service personnel aeromedically evacuated due to pregnancy.

In line with JSP 200 (April 2016), the suppression methodology has been applied to ensure individuals are not inadvertently identified dependent on the risk of disclosure. The Ministry of Defence has already released through a previous FOI request, the three ships with the most female UK service personnel aeromedically evacuated due to pregnancy between 1 January 2008 and 31 December 2021. During the past year, there has been an increase of fewer than five female UK service personnel aeromedically evacuated from the three ships. The total number has been provided to reduce the possible inadvertent disclosure of individual identities.

Under section 16 of the Act (Advice and Assistance), you may find it useful to note the following:

Figures presented above include UK Regular and Reservist personnel.

These figures have been compiled using data from Brize Norton Aeromedical Evacuation Control Centre (AECC) and the Defence Patient Tracking System (DPTS).

The numbers presented will be the minimum number of females returned from theatre as a result of pregnancy. If women become pregnant in theatre, or discover they are pregnant in theatre (or at sea), they are returned at the first convenient opportunity. This may be via an aeromed flight if there is space available, but emergency cases will be given priority. Alternatively, they may be returned on a routine flight, in which case Defence Statistics will not have sight of the reason for their return. For normal pregnancy cases, it is more important to ensure a safe return than an immediate one. Additionally, it must be noted that it is possible that there will have been some individuals who returned to the UK without being recorded on the AECC or DPTS as pregnant, and their details will not have been recorded centrally.

Aeromedical Evacuation is the medically supervised movement of patients to and between medical facilities by air transportation. The RAF Aeromedical Evacuation Service provides the worldwide patient air movement capability for Defence 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Patients are risk assessed prior to flight, and when necessary, trained medical teams are provided to deliver care in the air. Defence Statistics receive Aeromedical Evacuation records monthly from the Aeromedical Evacuation Control Centre (AECC) at RAF Brize Norton, which commenced in April 2006 for Iraq and Afghanistan only, and April 2008 for worldwide evacuations.

The numbers presented in this response include the number of personnel aeromed only. These numbers do not include connecting flights and reverse aeromedical evacuations.¹

The DPTS commenced on 8 October 2007 and was set up to enable the capture of tracking data for aeromedically evacuated patients at the place where healthcare is being delivered along the care pathway. It is a live system and is constantly being updated retrospectively as such the data are provisional and subject to change.

The DPTS is not a medical or welfare record system; medical records are held on the Defence Medical Information Capability Programme; welfare records are held in single Service welfare databases. The DPTS is not an authoritative record of personnel and demographic details, these details are held on Joint Personnel Administration system.

Defence Statistics have included female personnel aeromed to the UK with any of the following recorded diagnoses; 'Womens – Obstetrics', 'Womens – Obstetrics - Pregnancy - Normal', 'Womens – Obstetrics - Pregnancy – Disorder' and 'Womens - Family Planning – TOP' (Termination of Pregnancy (TOP)), or where pregnancy was identified in the injury/illness mechanism field or free-text commentary in the DPTS.

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,

¹ Aeromedical Evacuation is defined as patient movement towards the UK; patient movement in any other direction is defined as Reverse Aeromedical Evacuation.

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/>.

I hope this is helpful.

Yours sincerely

Defence Statistics Health Head (B1)