



Ministry
of Defence

Air Command Secretariat
Spitfire Block
Headquarters Air Command
Royal Air Force
High Wycombe
Buckinghamshire
HP14 4UE

Ref: FOI 2023/12040

[Redacted]
[Redacted]

3 November 2023

Dear [Redacted],

Thank you for your correspondence of 6 October 2023 requesting the following information:

The number of promotions of RAF Survival Equipment Fitters in the rank of Flight Sergeant to Warrant Officer from 2013 until now and the timescale of each promotion.

I further request under the same act the current number of Raf Survival Equipment Fitter Flight Sergeant established posts from 2013 until now.

I am treating your correspondence as a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA). I can confirm that information in scope of your request is held.

Between 1 April 2013 and 31 March 2023, the total number of Survival Equipment Fitters/Technicians that have been promoted from Flight Sergeant to Warrant Officer is 26.

Of the 26 promotions above, the below table shows the time in years between promotion to Flight Sergeant and promotion to Warrant Officer.

Time in years to promote	Number of promotions
<1	[Redacted]
1	[Redacted]
2	[Redacted]
3	[Redacted]
4	7
5	7
6	[Redacted]
7	[Redacted]

I can advise that information in scope of your request for the time to promote from Flight Sergeant to Warrant Officer falls entirely within the scope of the exemption Section 40 (Personal Data) 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. Section 40(2) requires the Department to conduct a balancing exercise; this exercise involves balancing the rights and interests of individuals against the legitimate interests in disclosure. This is not the same as carrying out the public interest test associated with certain exemptions in FOIA. The balancing exercise is carried out in order to decide whether the exemption in section 40(2) is engaged. In particular, there is no assumption of disclosure in the legitimate interest test, as there is with qualified exemptions. The outcome of the balancing exercise lay in withholding all data when the number of individuals was equal or less than 5 and could identify individuals.

In regard to the second part of your request, below is the number of Survival Equipment Fitter/Technician established posts with the preferred or only rank of OR-7 as at 1 April each year since 2013.

Year	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
No. of established posts	18	18	18	17	19	18	16	16	16	17	20

Under Section 16 (Advice and Assistance) you may find it helpful to know that in 2019 the title 'Survival Equipment Fitter' was changed to 'Survival Equipment Technician'. Both titles have been included in the above data.

In the Royal Air Force, OR-7 aligns to Flight Sergeant and Chief Technician, with the latter rank not used by Survival Equipment Technicians.

If you have any queries regarding the content of this letter, please contact this office in the first instance.

If you are not satisfied with this response or you wish to complain about any aspect of the handling of your request, then you should contact us in the first instance at the address above. If informal resolution is not possible and you are still dissatisfied then you may apply for an independent internal review by contacting the Information Rights Compliance team, Ground Floor, MOD Main Building, Whitehall, SW1A 2HB (e-mail: cio-foi@mod.uk). Please note that any reason for an internal review must be made within 40 working days of the date on which the attempt to reach informal resolution has come to an end.

If you remain dissatisfied following an internal review, you may take your complaint 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 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 Commissioners website at <https://ico.org.uk/>.

Yours sincerely,

[Signed electronically]

Air Command Secretariat