



From: DCDS Pers Secretariat
Zone J, Seventh Floor,
MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
Main Building, London, SW1A 2HB.

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Our Reference:

26-01-2010-104440-001

Date: 11 February 2010

Dear XXXXXXXX,

Thank you for your correspondence dated 26 January 2010 which has been considered to be a request for information in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000. Your request has been passed to my department and I have been asked to respond.

You requested the following information:

I would like to request information on the number of members of the Armed Forces who have gone absent without leave (AWOL) for each year from 2000 to 2009, inclusive.

I would also like each annual figure broken down into:

- (a) The number of permanent absconders**
- (b) The number who returned voluntarily**
- (c) The number who were located by police or army officials**

The information you requested concerning Service personnel who have been categorised as Absent Without Leave (AWOL) between 2000 and 2009 is set out below. Where we cannot provide information the reason for non-disclosure is explained.

Royal Navy

Year	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Total AWOL	-	92	111	120	184	196	157	114	123	84
Still AWOL	-	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	4
Arrested By Civil Police	Information not held centrally							31	28	14
Arrested by Service Police								9	11	12
Surrendered to Civil Police								0	5	3
Surrendered to Service Police								44	49	26
Returned Onboard								25	22	25

- Figures are not available pre-2001.
- The level of detail requested is not available for 2001-2006 inclusive as it is not held centrally as it is now in the Archives. The man hours required recalling this information

and sifting through it to find the necessary breakdown would exceed the cost limit set by the FOI Act 2000. This is currently £600 for three and a half days work by one individual.

- The figures for 2007 and 2008 do not tally with the totals for those years as personnel, who were initially reported as missing, were found to be either sick or have a legitimate reason for being absent when they were found a day or so later. With the introduction of the Armed Forces Act 2006 an improved system of recording has been introduced.

Army

Year	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Total AWOL	2709	2647	2951	2824	3032	2720	2334	2311	2140	2109
Still AWOL	34	44	52	55	83	71	80	107	135	321

The Army are unable to provide data on the number of permanent absconders, numbers who returned voluntarily or who were located by police or army officials as their data are not held in a format that allows for such a breakdown.

Please note that the total figures are for all incidences of AWOL, so the same individual may have been recorded as AWOL more than once.

Royal Air Force

Year	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Total AWOL	27	28	25	38	57	37	10	26	13	8
Number of RAF Personnel still AWOL from each year	0	2	4	2	1	2	1	0	0	4
Number of RAF Personnel who returned to unit voluntarily per year	1	0	2	0	0	0	2	13	5	1
Number of RAF Personnel Apprehended by Civilian or Service Police	2	1	0	1	0	1	3	7	6	2
Number of RAF Personnel who surrendered themselves to Civilian or Service Police	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Number of RAF Personnel returned to unit by unknown method	24	23	19	34	56	34	4	4	1	0
Number of RAF Service Personnel recorded as AWOL and now sick at home (i.e. not yet returned to unit)	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	1

I hope you find this information useful.

Yours sincerely

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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 me in the first instance. If informal resolution is not possible and you are still dissatisfied then you may apply for an independent internal review by contacting the Head of Corporate Information, 6th Floor, MOD Main Building, Whitehall, SW1A 2HB (e-mail CIO-FOI-IR@mod.uk). Please note that any request 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.

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