



Ministry
of Defence

Navy Command FOI Section
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[REDACTED]

21 April 2015

Dear [REDACTED]

Release of Information

Thank you for your correspondence dated 6 April 2015 which has been considered to be a request for information in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000. You requested the following information:

Please provide the information for the last 100 years:

- 1. Please provide a list of any names that were proposed for Royal Navy ships but not used. Also provide any information available explaining why the name was rejected. Please provide the date the ship was named and the name it was eventually given.*
- 2. Please provide a list of any names that were proposed for submarines but not used. Also provide any information available explaining why the name was rejected. Please provide the date the submarine was named and the name it was eventually given.*
- 3. Please also provide information about who is in the current naming committee within the MOD. Please provide name and rank of the members and details of any remuneration for their work on the committee.*

I am writing to advise you that following an extensive search of our paper and electronic records, I have been able to establish that the recorded information you requested is both incomplete and not held in any collated form by the Ministry of Defence. Our efforts to try to locate the information have now reached the appropriate cost limit, which for central government departments is set at £600. This figure represents the estimated cost of one person spending 3 and one half working days in determining whether the Department holds the information, as well as locating, retrieving and extracting the information. Under the terms of Section 12 of the FOI Act, this means that we are not obliged to comply with your request and therefore no information on names is provided. If you were to refine your request by limiting it to a particular class of ship or submarine we might be able to assist you further.

Under Section 16 of the Act (Advice and Assistance) I will provide information about the process that is used for selecting the names of new Royal Navy surface ships and submarines.

The Ships' Names and Badges Committee first met on 5th December 1918, but the Committee does not choose the names; it has the role of an advisory body. It considers names for new classes of warships as directed by the Controller of the Navy and subject to any parameters laid down by the Controller or the Navy Board. A theme may be specified, or the Committee may be asked to suggest themes. The Committee makes its recommendations to the Board, including information on the history of the names. The Board will review that advice, and may accept it, may ask for further names or themes to be considered, or may reject the advice entirely and select different names. Once the Board has reached its conclusion on the best names and the Secretary of State has approved them, in the final stage the names are submitted to the Sovereign for royal approval; once that approval has been given, the names cannot ordinarily be changed.

As the name is not final until it has received royal approval, the logical effective date the name is selected would either be the date when the Sovereign gives approval, or the date when the name is formally conferred upon the ship by her sponsor at the time of her launch, although before then it will normally have been announced to Parliament and be generally known.

The composition of the Ships' Names and Badges Committee is variable. Currently there are four permanent members: the Chairman (Head of the Naval Historical Branch), the Secretary (the Admiralty Librarian), the Naval Regional Commander for Eastern England (because this post has responsibility for ship affiliations) and the Naval Adviser on Heraldry, currently Garter King of Arms. Other members are seconded as required: if the Committee is, for example, considering names for new Royal Fleet Auxiliary (RFA) vessels, an RFA representative would normally be included to represent the views of his branch of the Naval Service. Only the Garter King of Arms, not being employed by the Ministry of Defence, receives any separate remuneration for his work on the Committee, in the form of an annual honorarium. The names and ranks of officials in posts on the committee are withheld under s40(2) of the FOI Act 2000.

Section 40(2) applies to personal data relating to third parties. The release of personal information relating to other individuals would contravene the principles of the Data Protection Act 1998, namely Principle 1 – personal data shall be processed fairly and lawfully and not unless certain specified conditions are met, and Principle 2 – personal data shall be obtained and processed only for specified and lawful purposes and not further processed in a manner incompatible with the purposes. In this instance, data has been provided for internal recording purposes only and not with the expectation that it would be made public.

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 Information Rights Compliance team, 1st 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.

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 investigate your case until the MOD internal review process has been completed. Further details of the role and powers of the Information Commissioner can be found on the Commissioner's website, <http://www.ico.org.uk>.

Yours sincerely

Navy Command Secretariat – FOI Section