



## Joint Medical Group Secretariat

### Headquarters Joint Medical Group

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Grant Thomson

Reference:

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Date: 24 September 2019

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Dear Mr Thomson

Thank you for your enquiries of 29 August 2019 requesting the following information:

*"I would like to know what quantities of Mefloquine- Lariam have been used from 2003 to 2004"*

*"Were soldiers of 202 field hospital issued or prescribed mefloquine -Lariam before or during Op telic 1 Iraq 2003?"*

*"Was 33 field hospital issued or prescribed mefloquine -Lariam before or during Op telic 1 Iraq 2003?"*

*"Was my unit (highland band of the Scottish division) issued or prescribed mefloquine - Lariam before or during Op telic 1 Iraq 2003?"*

*"I would like to know if Mefloquine-Lariam was issued - prescribed to soldiers on Op telic 1 Iraq (2003)"*

*"I would like to know if Lariam - mefloquine was given to soldiers in Iraq on op telic 1 (2003) if yes how many."*

*"was Mefloquine - Lariam used in op telic 1 2003. I would like to know the quantities used in 2003"*

*"I would like to know how many Freedom of information requests the MOD have received asking for information regarding mefloquine- Lariam and how many could not be supplied"*

*because the request was beyond the scope of limitation £600 or 2.5 days work? all the other requests asking for information regarding Lariam have had a similar outcome to my request and i would like to have an overall picture of how you the MOD have managed these specific requests”*

*“Was Mefloquine - Lariam issued or prescribed in Iraq op telic 1 in the month of January 2003 (quantities issued please)”*

*“Was Mefloquine - Lariam issued or prescribed in Iraq op telic 1 in the month of February 2003 (quantities issued please)”*

Thank you for your enquiries of 2 September 2019 in which you asked the following:

*“I received pre-deployment training at Gosport before deploying to Iraq in 2002/2003 where I received all my equipment and medication I would need while on tour. please can I get exactly what I was given from my NAPS-BAPS Tablets to the equipment and other medication I was issued or prescribed? my service number is 25135401”*

*“from pre-deployment until August 2003 was Lariam - Mefloquine issued or prescribed to soldiers in Op telic one? purchase orders and distribution orders must exist showing the movement of this drug to its destination and issuing or prescribing to soldiers.”*

Your enquiries are being treated as requests for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. The Ministry of Defence (MOD) can confirm that it holds information within the scope of your enquiry.

Under the Appropriate Limit and Fees Regulations public authorities are able to aggregate two or more requests where they relate to any extent, to the same or similar information. provided certain conditions are met. These are where the FOI requests:

- are made by one person, or by different persons who appear to the public authority to be acting in concert or in pursuance of a campaign;
- are received within any period of 60 consecutive working days.

Under Section 12(4) of the FOI Act, provided these conditions are met, the Department is permitted to regard the estimated cost of complying with any of the requests to be the estimated total cost of complying with all of them for the purpose of considering whether complying with the request would exceed the appropriate limit.

The MOD is therefore applying exemption 12(4) to all of your requests for information about mefloquine and medications provided during Op TELIC, as they were all received since 29 August 2019. It has been estimated that the cost of complying with your requests aggregated under the Fees Regulations as explained above would exceed the appropriate limit and therefore under the terms of Section 12 of the Act, we are not obliged to comply. The appropriate limit is specified in regulations and for central government this is set at £600. This represents the estimated cost of one person spending three and a half working days in determining whether the Department holds the information, locating, retrieving and extracting it.

The MOD may be able to provide some of the information requested if you reduce or refine your request to bring the cost of compliance under the limit. Under Section 16, Advice and Assistance, the MOD can advise that a search can be undertaken of FOIA requests recorded on eCase (the MOD system for managing FOIA requests) to determine the number of requests that contain the words ‘Lariam’ or ‘mefloquine’.

As previously explained, the recommended anti-malarial drugs for Op TELIC were Chloroquine and Paludrine. To confirm the medications actually prescribed to personnel on Op TELIC would

require individual Service records to be retrieved and reviewed. This would necessitate the identification and review of numerous records that are not held centrally, including individual medical records of current and former Service personnel. Given the many thousands of personnel involved on Op TELIC, the effort and cost required would exceed the appropriate limit.

To determine medications you were given in service, a Subject Access Request for your Service medical records would need to be made (to the Army), in accordance with data protection legislation. Details of how to do so are available [here](#).

Such personal information, if held, would be exempt from disclosure if requested under the FOIA. The relevant exemption is Section 40 (Personal Information). As an absolute exemption, the public interest in its application does not need to be considered.

Please respond to this letter if you would like to refine your request or require further advice in doing so.

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.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,

Joint Medical Group