



Ministry
of Defence

Navy Command FOI Section
Navy Command Headquarters
3 Deck, Leach Building
Whale Island
PORTSMOUTH
PO2 8BY

FOI2022/09321

E-mail: NavyStratPol-SECFOI@mod.gov.uk

Mr L Pritchard
request-884597-736e0669@whatdotheyknow.com

02 September 2022

Dear Mr Pritchard,

Release of Information

Thank you for your correspondence of 4 August 2022 in which you requested the following information:

'Please could you give the number of personnel with every rank (comissioned and "other rank") in the Royal Marines in each year 2000-2022 (inclusive)?'

Your enquiry has been considered to be a request for information in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the Act).

A search has been completed within the Ministry of Defence (MOD) and I can confirm that information in scope of your request is held. However, in considering your request, it has been determined that some of the information you have requested falls under the qualified exemption at section 26 (Defence) of the Act.

Under s26(1)(b) information is exempt if its disclosure under the Act would, or would be likely to, prejudice the capability, effectiveness or security of any relevant forces.

As section 26 is a qualified exemption, it has been necessary to conduct a Public Interest Test to assess whether release of the information would, or would be likely to, prejudice the effectiveness and capability of our Armed Forces. This has now been conducted and I can advise that after careful consideration of the information and for the reasons detailed below, the balance of public interest was found to be in favour of withholding the detailed breakdown of Royal Marine (RM) ranks both Officer and Other Ranks for each year from 2000 to 2022.

It is accepted that there is a public interest in the current and future capabilities of the RM, and release of the information would provide assurance that the RM are resourced appropriately to enable them to deliver their Defence objectives. However, there is also a compelling interest in ensuring that the security and effectiveness of our Armed Forces is not compromised by the release of this information. Due to the small numbers in the RM, it would be easy to determine patterns in strength over that period of time which could be used to derive tactical level information on current and future operational capabilities of the Armed Forces resulting in the information being used to degrade and disrupt important elements of RM duties.

What I can provide is the total annual number of RM Officers and Other Ranks for the period 2000-2022. This information is enclosed at Annex A to this letter.

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.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

Navy Command Secretariat - FOI Section

Table 1. Strength of Trained Regular Royal Marines, as at 1 April 2000-2022

	01-Apr-00	01-Apr-01	01-Apr-02	01-Apr-03	01-Apr-04	01-Apr-05	01-Apr-06	01-Apr-07	01-Apr-08	01-Apr-09	01-Apr-10	01-Apr-11
Total	5987	6114	6136	6336	6505	6406	6463	6551	6631	6737	7056	7381
Officers	603	584	594	614	652	658	677	692	681	736	785	809
Other Ranks	5384	5530	5542	5722	5853	5748	5786	5859	5950	6001	6271	6572

	01-Apr-12	01-Apr-13	01-Apr-14	01-Apr-15	01-Apr-16	01-Apr-17	01-Apr-18	01-Apr-19	01-Apr-20	01-Apr-21	01-Apr-22
Total	7215	6848	7048	7016	6881	6747	6388	6169	5939	5853	5816
Officers	792	761	757	764	766	767	758	759	760	758	785
Other Ranks	6423	6087	6291	6252	6115	5980	5630	5410	5179	5095	5031

Source: Analysis(Navy)