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Mr David Gee  
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7 October 2022

*Dear Mr Gee,*

Thank you for your email of 14 September 2022 in which you requested the following information:

Can you please tell me: 1. How many suicides/open verdict deaths in the army between 2001 and 2020 were of infantry personnel (including infantry trainees). 2. The number of infantry personnel in each year between 2001 and 2020.

I am treating your correspondence as a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000. A search for the information has now been completed within the Ministry of Defence, and I can confirm that the information in scope of your request is held and is provided below.

Question 1. In the period 1 January 2001 to 31 December 2020, there were 64 coroner confirmed suicides<sup>1</sup> verdicts among UK regular Army Infantry personnel.

Source: Defence Statistics Health.

Question 2. The number of Infantry personnel in each year between 2001 and 2020 is provided in the table below.

**Table 1. Regular Army Infantry personnel, as at 1 April each year, 2001 - 2020**

Year	Total
2020	19,355
2019	18,836
2018	19,629
2017	20,778

2016	21,561
2015	22,005
2014	23,217
2013	25,875
2012	26,712
2011	26,797
2010	27,367
2009	26,598
2008	25,401
2007	25,691
2006	26,292
2005	27,310
2004	28,664
2003	28,786
2002	28,863
2001	28,927

Source: Analysis Army

Notes/Caveats:

1. The figures are for the Trade Trained Regular Army only and therefore exclude Gurkhas, Full Time Reserve Service, Mobilised Reserves, Army Reserve and all other Reserves, but includes those personnel that have transferred from GURTAM to UKTAP.
2. All Officers of Paid Rank Colonel and above are excluded from these figures, regardless of late Arm/Service.
3. Other Ranks in Senior Soldier Continuity Posts are excluded from these figures, regardless of late Arm/Service.
4. Figures are for all Infantry personnel, regardless of where they may be serving.

Section 16 (Advice and Assistance). You may find it helpful to note that the information presented includes coroner-confirmed suicides in line with the definition used by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) in the publication of National Statistics. The National Statistics definition of suicide includes deaths given an underlying cause of intentional self-harm or an injury/poisoning of undetermined intent. In England and Wales, it has been customary to assume that most injuries and poisonings of undetermined intent are cases where the harm was self-inflicted, but there was insufficient evidence to prove that the deceased deliberately intended to kill themselves and thus given an open or narrative verdict by the coroner.

Figures are for regular personnel and only those reservists who have died whilst on operational deployment as Defence Statistics Health do not routinely receive notification of all reserve deaths.

Figures for suicides/open verdicts include both trained and untrained personnel.

The Joint Personnel Administration (JPA) system is the most accurate source for demographic information on UK Armed Forces personnel.

A service person's cap badge was identified using the 'Cap Badge' field in JPA. Anyone with a Cap Badge of 'Infantry' has been included in this analysis.

Defence Statistics Health produce an annual National Statistic on [Suicide in the UK Armed Forces](#) which is released at the end of March every year.

If you have any queries regarding the content of this letter, please contact this office in the first instance. Following this, 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](mailto: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,

Army Policy and Secretariat

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<sup>i</sup> Suicides collectively refer to all suicide, open verdict and narrative – open deaths in line with National statistics reporting.