



Headquarters
New Zealand Defence Force
Defence House
Private Bag 39997
Wellington Mail Centre
Lower Hutt 5045
New Zealand

OIA-2026-5701

6th May 2026

Spencer Jones

fyi-request-33989-ff80408b@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear Spencer Jones

I refer again to your request of 7 March 2026, under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA), seeking information relating to the existence of a national register of those who meet the definition of 'veteran' under the Veterans' Support Act 2014, and my response to you of 7 April 2026.

The New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) and Veterans' Affairs (VA) provide the Minister for Veterans with regular updates on relevant operational matters. The following items, which relate to or are closely aligned to the topic you have requested information on, were included in briefings to the current Minister, for the period specified.

Status Report to the Minister for Veterans for the week beginning 6 May 2024

Recording of qualifying operational service

A change has been introduced relating to the recording on the NZDF's HR information system (SAP) of an individual's qualifying operational service (QOS) - by country or location - and the dates of the related deployment.

All QOS completed from the date the change was introduced, 1 May 2024, will now be recorded on SAP, and will be accessible to the staff concerned, and their managers. The next phase of this project will be looking to add records of QOS status from earlier deployments (those that took place between 2014 and the current date).

The new solution will record an individual's QOS deployment (by country or location) and the dates of the deployment, using a bulk upload process to load the data into SAP.

A notification email will then be sent to affected personnel, and this will include a link to relevant information about entitlements from Veterans' Affairs that they have become eligible for.

There are currently only three deployments (with a total of around 40 personnel) who have qualified for QOS status since the new system came into operation, with the first contingent being those taking part in OP FARAD (MFO Sinai) who will return to New Zealand later this month.

Status Report to the Minister for Veterans for the week beginning 29 September 2025

Veteran data added to VA's client management system

We have previously advised you that VA has received data from the NZDF on service members who had undertaken qualifying operational service since 2014 (and who may therefore be eligible for support under the Veterans' Support Act); and that VA now receives a qualifying operational service update each month from the NZDF.

Last week, VA was able to add this data to our client management system – this involved more than 1,400 veterans (including those who remain in service as well as those who have since left active service) who are now formally registered with VA, so they will be known to us should they apply for support at some stage in the future.

Work is under way to source data for those who achieved qualifying operational service earlier than 2014, and who have not yet "opted in" to VA by making a claim with us.

Status Report to the Minister for Veterans for the week beginning 6 October 2025

Public consultation about the proposed data collection approach and content of the New Zealand census

Veterans' Affairs has been advised of the intention of Stats NZ to release a public consultation document on the proposed future of the New Zealand census. The intention which is being canvassed is a new approach, aimed at delivering an effective and efficient census within a modern administrative data-first framework.

While we had no comment to make on the Cabinet paper, we have signalled that we will be seeking to engage on the public consultation document regarding the definition of veteran given in the document and on data needs.

We have noted that the consultation document states that in New Zealand a veteran is anyone who has completed a period of military service with the New Zealand Defence Force but no longer serves. We feel that this could have the potential for confusion, and it may be helpful to let Stats NZ know that there is a different legal definition of this term in New Zealand, and this should perhaps be noted in their document.

We will also be keen to engage with them on data collection. It is good to see that consideration is being given to collecting data on those who have served and that they are seeking to identify what use such data could be put to.

Status Report to the Minister for Veterans for the week beginning 27 October 2025

Veteran data added to the Stats NZ Integrated Data Infrastructure

VA previously worked with Stats NZ to have de-identified data on Vietnam veterans added to the Integrated Data infrastructure (IDI) that Stats NZ manages.

We have arranged to supply another batch of de-identified data for input to the IDI before the end of the year. The data will not include any names or addresses, and, when we advise veterans that it will be added to the database, we will reassure them that privacy issues have been carefully considered, and we are confident that the data is safe, and no one's personal information will be compromised. We will not be supplying any data that we hold about spouses or children.

Once this material has been added, it will be available, under carefully controlled arrangements, for a range of research to be undertaken which will ultimately benefit all veterans. The need for more research on Kiwi veterans, and the gaps in our knowledge about them as a group, have been known for a long time. The development of The Veteran, Family and Whānau Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy Framework – Te Arataki highlighted the problem, as it was largely based on studies from overseas because of the lack of research from within New Zealand and about New Zealand service personnel

Once veteran data is in the IDI, researchers can take a closer look at things like how veterans engage with government agencies, what their needs might be, and the impacts of their deployments. The Veterans' Medical Research Trust Fund sponsors researchers to use IDI as one of reference tools.

We will be letting veterans know about this through our email newsletter, and have published a webpage for veterans to read more about our plans and the IDI. The address for this webpage is www.va.mil.nz/IDI.

In addition to these weekly updates, two briefings to the Minister are enclosed. The Social Wellbeing Agency paper 'Building an evidence base for understanding veteran outcomes' which was included as an annex to Enclosure 2 can be found online, from the Social Investment Agency website.

You have the right, under section 28(3) of the OIA, to ask an Ombudsman to review this response to your request. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or freephone 0800 802 602.

Please note that responses to official information requests are proactively released where possible. This response to your request will be published shortly on the NZDF website.

Yours sincerely

GA Motley

Brigadier

Chief of Staff HQNZDF

Enclosures:

1. Possible Question on Military Service for New Zealand Census
2. Report on Interrogation of Integrated Data Infrastructure to Identify and Explore a Veteran Cohort