



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

OIA-2026-5742

25<sup>th</sup> May 2026

John Anderson  
[fyi-request-34404-3e8c9ced@requests.fyi.org.nz](mailto:fyi-request-34404-3e8c9ced@requests.fyi.org.nz)

Dear John Anderson

I refer to your email of 7 April 2026, requesting under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA) the following information about a *Naval lawyer...sent to WestPoint Military Academy in the United States for two years*

1. *The total cost involved including accommodation, allowances, travel and the cost of the any study. Please break the costs down by area (for example, study fees)? How were these costs funded?*
2. *What was the purpose of the time at WestPoint ? What duties did the officer undertake?*
3. *What value did it provide to the NZDF?*
4. *Is this a recurring position?*
5. *What was the criteria to be considered, how did this process occur? Please release all records relating to this.*
6. *What qualifications were obtained (our understanding was a Masters degree).*
7. *How has topics studied assisted the NZDF? Please provide evidence and examples of this such as policies or new training.*
7. *If a Thesis exists, please provide this.*
8. *Please provide all policy relating to lawyers continuing education in the NZDF, including what specific funding is provided to military lawyers for post graduate study.*
9. *Is it standard practice for military lawyers to have post graduate funded and if so - what is the policy around this?*

It is determined that your request concerns Commander Prema McIntosh being at the United States Military Academy at West Point (West Point) between June 2022 and July 2024. A publicly available press release relating to this is available on the New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) website.<sup>1</sup>

As a point of clarification, your query seems to be premised on Commander McIntosh studying at West Point; that is incorrect. West Point only teaches undergraduate courses, not postgraduate courses. Commander McIntosh was at West Point as an Associate Professor in the Law Faculty teaching the *Law of War for Commanders* to undergraduates.

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.nzdf.mil.nz/media-centre/news/teaching-law-of-war-at-west-point/>

Whilst teaching at West Point, Commander McIntosh completed a Masters program via distance with the University of Reading. The thesis is publicly available online.<sup>2</sup>

The posting was paid for from Defence Legal Services' baseline funding. Actual NZDF expenditure is unavailable and the approximate costs are outlined in Enclosure 2. The cost of the University of Reading Masters program was (GBP) £9,500.

The continuing professional development of members of the armed forces provides both direct (knowledge and skills transferable to the workplace) and indirect benefits to the NZDF, as well as individual personnel. In this particular instance it allowed for the continuing professional development of a senior member of Defence Legal Services, provided a strategic engagement opportunity with a partner military, contributed to promoting interoperability between partner militaries, contributed to the Lieber Institute's mission, and enhanced New Zealand standing within this influential academic centre for international humanitarian law.

It is not a recurring position. The opportunity arose from Professor Michael Schmitt contacting the (then) Director Defence Legal Services with an offer for a senior legal officer, being a Major or Lieutenant Colonel equivalent. All senior legal officers meeting the criteria were invited to apply, and the decision to approve Commander McIntosh was made by the Senior Appointments Board. A copy of the relevant Defence Legal Services Minute and the dot-point brief for the Senior Appointments Board are enclosed. Where indicated, operational information is withheld in accordance with section 6(a) of the OIA; information provided on a basis of confidence from the United States' Government is withheld in accordance with section 6(b)(i) of the OIA; personal information is withheld in accordance with section 9(2)(a) of the OIA; and, signatures are withheld in accordance with section 9(2)(k) of the OIA.

In accordance with section 28(3) of the OIA, you may ask an Ombudsman to review this response to your request. Information regarding the process is available at [www.ombudsman.parliament.nz](http://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. DLS Minute 95/2021
2. Dot-Point Brief for Senior Appointments Board

---

<sup>2</sup> <https://centaur.reading.ac.uk/id/eprint/120143>