



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

OIA-2023-4632

2 March 2023

[Redacted]  
[Redacted]

Dear [Redacted]

I refer to your email of 7 February 2023 requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA), the following:

*the changes to Battalion strength numbers and how they have changed during the years 2020, 2021 and 2022 for 1st and 2/1st bns RNZIR.  
also the numbers of pers from those bns who were kicked out due to covid vaccine refusal and those who chose to 717 to avoid the vaccine mandate for service pers.  
only from regular force RNZIR.*

The following table provides the strength of the combined 1<sup>st</sup> and 2/1<sup>st</sup> Battalions of the Royal New Zealand Infantry Regiment (RNZIR) as at 31 July 2022.

Year	2020	2021	2022
Strength	1,493	1,529	1,294

In October 2022, four personnel from 2/1 RNZIR were released following the New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) Retention Review process for members of the Armed Forces who were not fully vaccinated for COVID-19 pursuant to the NZDF vaccination schedule. Information regarding voluntary release because of vaccination requirements is not readily retrievable and would require a significant effort generating information from many repositories (both digital and in hard copy). This part of your request is therefore declined in accordance with section 18(f) of the OIA.

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](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, with your personal information removed.

Yours sincerely

**AJ WOODS**  
Air Commodore  
Chief of Staff HQNZDF