

HARMONY GUIDELINES

We need to strike a balance between deploying people to do the job they joined up for, training and spending time with their families. To help get the work/life balance right we have "Harmony Guidelines" - not rules - for the length of time Service personnel spend away and the interval that they should have between operational tours.

BACKGROUND

Each Service sets guidelines for the maximum time Service personnel should spend away from their families (known as Individual Separated Service), and the minimum time that they should have between operational deployments (known as tour intervals). These differ to reflect the nature of specific single Service requirements, ethos, expectation and the way they deploy on operations. They are based on the routine level of concurrency that the Armed Forces are resourced and structured to sustain. Since the Armed Forces have been operating at or above this level since 2002 this has inevitably constrained their ability to meet Harmony guidelines, particularly for personnel in Pinch Point specialist trades.

Separated Service is defined as "Absence from normal place of duty or lack of freedom to enjoy leisure at the normal place of duty/residence at place of duty". This should encompass all periods away including operations, training and any other mandated tasks. Separated Service is recorded using 16 different codes for different activities thereby allowing analysis of separation patterns. Operational deployments are recorded as Code 1 and are clearly identifiable from other pre-operational training or routine activities. Through this process it is possible to provide a picture of tempo and effect.

The current set of individual Harmony guidelines, shown below, have been derived from analysis of historical norms and judgements, training requirements, deployment patterns and the unique culture of each Service.

- a. **Royal Navy.** The RN, unlike the Army and the RAF, need to deploy to sea to maintain currency, experience and effectiveness through training and deployment activities. This places a greater requirement for personnel to be separated from their base port, parent air station or RM barracks. The RN recognise that their Harmony is

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a considerable commitment, albeit one that is accepted, and take considerable steps to ensure that they maintain the guidelines through proactive management of personnel as individuals. RN personnel should not be separated for longer than 660 days in a 3 year rolling period.

b. **Army.** The individual Harmony guideline for the Army is 415 days separated service in a rolling 30 month period, which is deemed to be the amount of separated service which is believed to be sustainable without long term damage. The 415 days are based on: an Operational Tour - 173 days; Pre-Deployment Training - 23 days; Army Foundation Training - 142 days (level 1/2 - 80 days, level 3/4 - 42 days, level 5 - 20 days); Other - 57 days (20 days on training support tasks, 40 days on career courses and 17 days on admin/duty commitments). During 2007-08 the Joint Personnel Administration system collated Separated Service records for every individual on a consistent basis for the first time, although the system is still bedding in for the Army and their figures remain provisional.

c. **Royal Air Force.** The RAF Harmony guidelines reflect its ability to meet the current operational tempo while retaining a degree of flexibility in the management against tasks and retention of personnel. The criterion of 280 days away from home during a rolling 2-year period enables commanders to monitor and, broadly, to measure resilience at the same time as balancing exercise commitments and morale-enhancing deployed duties against periods of operational separation.

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