



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

OIA-2023-4842

23 November 2023

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]@nzme.co.nz

Dear [REDACTED],

I refer to your email of 12 October 2023 requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA), the following information:

1. *When did Putze disengage from NZDF?*

Major Justin Putze was released from the New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) with effect from 8 Jun 2020.

2. *What is the status of the recommendations?*

The status of each the recommendations produced by the court of inquiry was provided to you in the response of 10 October 2023.

3. *Assuming the recommendations of a "two drinks max" rule was followed, when did that instruction go out across NZDF deployments and when did it come into effect?*

This recommendation was not accepted as regulations with regard to duty and alcohol are covered by the Armed Forces Discipline Act 1974 and the Multinational Force and Observers regulations. This was noted in the Assembling Authority comments.

4. *In relation to the allegations of sexual assault which fell outside the three-year limitation, it means NZDF has one or more known sexual offenders in its ranks. Has this been addressed in any way? Or if not, is it the case that those individuals - potentially predatory - are able to deploy and serve alongside others who could fall into a risk category?*

There is only one case of alleged sexual assault during the deployment. This involved a person from a foreign military allegedly sexually assaulting a member of the NZDF. It was reported immediately afterwards, however the complainant advised that they did not wish the complaint to proceed any further (paragraph 134 of the Court of Inquiry report). At paragraphs 111-114 of the Court of Inquiry report, a case concerning assault is covered. While this incident had been described by others as "indecent" or of "a sexually aggressive nature", the NZDF serviceperson was charged with common assault and plead guilty.

5. *In relation to those awarded commendations for maintaining NZDF values, when were those commendations made and what was the nature of those commendations?*

These commendations are currently being processed. The details of these awards are confidential until the award is presented, at which time information will be made public.

6. *In relation to the achievement certificates and other performance recognition recommended by Putz and questioned in the Col, was a review carried out to ascertain the actual merits or otherwise of those awards?*

All nominations for award in the NZDF are reviewed to determine the suitability of the recipient prior to being considered by the NZDF Honours and Awards Assessment Panel.

7. *Is NZDF able to contextualise the extent of the command failure here and the consequence of it? I've read many Cols in the last decade or so and nothing that stretches quite like this from high command to an operational setting where operational command failure led to such widespread collapse of discipline, morale and apparently values. Is there any other (public) operational deployment in which issues have emerged that NZDF considers comes close?*

I understand this has been addressed in a previous response to you from Defence Public Affairs.

You retain 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