



Ref: FOI2023-013

[REDACTED]

11<sup>th</sup> April 2023

Dear [REDACTED],

Further to our previous correspondence regarding your request for the following information:

*I'd like to make a FOI request to see what sort of information, if any, you might hold about passengers on the troopship Dunera which left Southampton in late 1957 to sail to Christmas Island, returning in 1958.*

*The trip out was via the Panama Canal, and the return leg via Honolulu. The boat was transporting Royal Engineers to and from the nuclear testing grounds.*

*The passengers also included several dozen wives and children of 25th Field Regiment RE who were visiting Christmas Island.*

*Can you summarise what information if any you hold that might relate to this voyage, and in particular see if you hold any information about blood tests conducted on servicemen or civilians, including those wives and children, prior to departure, and after their return? Some of their names and dates of birth are listed below, which may help in your search - could you tell me if you hold information about any of them?*

*Anne Barnes 19.6.21*

*Dorothy Ruth Brown 14.12.17*  
*John Christopher Brown 13.7.43*  
*David Thomas Brown 30.7.56*

*Annelise Sophie Clay 7.3.19*

*Maria Louise Cottam 10.11.25*  
*Nieves Cottam 6.9.52*  
*Elena Cottam 27.10.54*

*Dorothy Canary 25.9.37*  
*Margaret Clubley 30.4.15*

*Henrietta Dobson 24.7.27*  
*Neil Patrick Dobson 28.4.55*  
*Paula Eileen Dobson 2.1.57*



*Joan Forster 19.7.30  
Stephen Dixon 10.1.56*

*Sarah Smith Midford 5.3.31  
Lorna Jane Midford 18.4.55  
Valerie Anne Midford 6.5.57*

*Margaret Smith born approx 1951  
Barbara Smith  
Caroline McCutcheon  
Michael McCutcheon*

Your request has been handled as a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the Act).

A search for the requested information within the Atomic Weapons Establishment (AWE) has now been completed, and we can confirm that some information in scope of your request is held.

We are able to disclose the attached information regarding the ship's departure and arrival times, as well as the below extract from an untitled document regarding a war pension claim dated 5<sup>th</sup> April 1984:

**1956 to 1958. The MS Dunera sailed with servicemen posted to the Christmas Island Task Force from Southampton on 30 December 1957. The troops were disembarked at Christmas Island and those whose tour of duty had been completed were taken aboard and sailed for UK on 1 February 1958, arriving at the home port of Southampton on 13 March 1958. The MS Dunera's stay at Christmas Island in 1958 was for only a matter of a few days in late January of that year during which period no detonations of nuclear weapon devices occurred.**

We also hold information within a book called *Grappling with Bomb: Britain's Pacific H-bomb tests* by Nic Maclellan, published in 2017. Pages 283-284 mention the MS Dunera and families visiting Christmas Island. However, under section 21 of the FOI act, information reasonably accessible to the applicant by other means, you can purchase the book online or any book retailer.

We can confirm that we could not locate any information about blood tests conducted on those aboard the MS Dunera or about any of the people you've listed.

Please remember to quote the reference number above in any future communications. If you have any queries regarding the content of this letter, please contact this office in the first instance.

If you are unhappy with the way your request has been handled you have a right to request an internal review within 40 days of receiving this letter, by writing to [information.requests@awe.co.uk](mailto:information.requests@awe.co.uk) or our postal address: Information Requests Team, AWE Aldermaston, Reading, RG7 4PR. If you are still unhappy after an internal review has been completed, under the provisions of Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 you have the right to take your complaint to the Information Commissioner's Office. Please note the



Aldermaston ▪ Reading  
Berkshire ▪ RG7 4PR

[www.awe.co.uk](http://www.awe.co.uk)

Commissioner will generally not consider a complaint until you have exhausted AWE's internal complaints process.

Yours sincerely,

AWE Information Requests Team



Royal Fleet Auxiliaries  
and Merchant Ships

Various notes from M.O.D.

and AWE Archives.

SS Denera

Troopskip.

Ship's  
records

Dep.	Southampton	30.12.57	
Arr.	Ch. Is.	Late Jan.	(ov. 31.1.58 to 5.2.58)
Dep	" "	1.2.58	
Arr.	Southampton	13.3.58	