

3rd December 2025

Public Office (Accountability) Bill 2025: Call for Evidence

To whom it may concern,

My name is Steve Foote. I am the son of the late John Foote who was a British Nuclear Test Veteran. He served in the Royal Navy as an able seaman on HMS Narvik during Operation Grapple Y and Z at Christmas Island in 1958. He witnessed 5 nuclear bomb detonations. I was born in 1963 a year before my father left the Navy. Although very fortunate compared to many other descendants, I was born with very poor eyesight and a lazy eye. My mother and father wanted more children but were unable to have them. A few years after I was born my father had testicular cancer. My 25 year old daughter is autistic and suffers panic attacks. My 21 year old son has a chest deformity which is undiagnosed but fortunately does not seem to cause him trouble. Although I consider my family to be fortunate relative to many other nuclear test veterans families, I still worry about any future health implications for my children and myself. Like every nuclear test veterans family we worry about the implications for any future generations.

In 2022 I began the process of trying to gain access to my late father's naval medical records. I also joined the LABRATS International campaign for justice and accountability for the British Nuclear Test Veterans and their families. The experience of trying to gain access to the medical records and hearing other descendants and veterans experiences has lead to me submitting this evidence.

I hope that this bill would mean that in future others would not have to suffer the lies and deceit that we have. The truth about how our nuclear test veterans were treated has been subject to a cover-up that has been continued by the Ministry of Defence and successive governments for over 70 years.

I was continually blocked from gaining access to my late father's medical records. The documentation that they require such as birth certificate and death certificate are deliberately drip fed to delay as much as possible. Having provided all the documentation they had asked for, I was told that I had not provided all the necessary documentation. When I asked what other documentation they required, they did not reply. I had clearly proven my executorship but the naval secretariat refused to acknowledge that I had done so. Eventually unlike many descendants I did gain access to my father's medical records. This was because after my local MP wrote to the Minister for Veterans who decided to personally sign off on me receiving the medical records. However when I received the records most of them were found to be missing. This includes most of my father's annual medical exams and anything during his time at the nuclear tests. In the index of the records there are 3 chest x-rays listed. One taken in March 1957 before my father served at the

tests. Another taken at Pearl Harbour in-between the Grapple Y and Grapple Z tests and another taken a couple of years after the tests. The x-rays themselves, the results of the x-rays and reason for them being taken is missing from the medical records. I have made further enquiries about these x-rays. The Atomic Weapons Establishment say they know nothing about them. The naval secretariat will not even reply to my emails and engage with me.

According to documents released last year my father should have had a blood test taken before leaving for the nuclear tests and also should have had blood tests taken during the tests. If these were taken they are also absent from his medical records.

The whole process of trying to gain access to the medical records and attempting to get answers about the missing records has been totally and utterly draining. I feel that I have been lied to and gaslit. The MoD seems to treat us with total and utter contempt. They consider us an inconvenience.

The states claim that our servicemen were not put in harms way is a complete total and utter lie. There is evidence that blood and urine tests were carried out and some veterans remember this being done.

The MoD has spent millions of taxpayers money to continue to cover-up and deny the veterans and their families the truth and justice that they deserve.

The bill could have prevented so much of this. A full duty of candour would have stopped the MoD lies and those responsible would be held accountable. The MoD seems to continue to believe that when the last veteran dies the problem will go away. It will not because descendants will continue to fight until justice is done and the truth is told.

I strongly urge the government to pass this bill. I recommend the following:

- * A full duty of candour with real consequences and no exceptions.
- * Those at the top that are in charge should be held personally accountable
- * All public authorities including the MoD and intelligence services should be subject to the duty of candour and duty to assist.
- * Families should have full legal parity

I wish for the above to be taken into consideration. The law must not be watered down in any way. The culture of cover-ups must be ended forever. No individual or family should be subjected to lies and deceit by those that hold power, ever again.

Yours sincerely

Steve Foote