



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

18

May 2025

OIA-2025-5354

Dear [REDACTED]

I refer to your email of 16 April 2025 requesting information concerning the United States Boeing C-17 Globemaster III in New Zealand. Your request has been considered under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA), and a response is set out below.

*When was NZDF notified of arrival of G17 globemaster into NZ territorial waters EEZ and activities around Payload and flight plan.*

24 March 2025. The flight (RCH281) was supporting Excercise Southern Steel 25, which was a joint firefighting activity including US Military, NZDF and Australian Defence Force personnel. The activity involved a US Air Force C-17 operating from Wellington and Base Whenuapai for the pickup of exercise equipment and personnel and their return to the US.

*We're NZDF involved in BIO security-related checks at wellington.*

No. Personnel from New Zealand Customs Services (NZCS) and Ministry for Primary Industries performed the customs/bio-security related checks.

*Where NZDF involved in refuelling aircraft at whenuapai.*

Yes.

*DID NZDF staff enter aircraft at whenuapai.*

Yes. The C-17 crew offered Royal New Zealand Air Force Base Auckland personnel the opportunity to conduct visits through the aircraft. A small number of personnel took up this opportunity and were escorted by the C-17 crew at all times.

*Was immigration notified of transit of foreign individuals picked up at whenuapai.*

The NZCS were notified.

*We're foreign individuals housed at whenuapai before being airlifted from Whenuapai*

The passengers who participated in Excercise Southern Steel 25 stayed in barracks on Base and the crew were accommodated off Base.

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

**GA Motley**

Brigadier

Chief of Staff HQNZDF