

The television movie *The Dunera Boys* depicts their experiences,^[7] as do several books and websites.^[8]

On arrival in **Sydney** on 6 September 1940, the first Australian on board was medical army officer Alan Frost. He was appalled and his subsequent report led to a court martial.^[9] Lieutenant-Colonel William Scott, the senior officer, was "severely reprimanded" as was Sgt Helliwell. RSM Bowles was reduced to the ranks and given a twelve months prison sentence and then discharged from the British Army. After leaving the *Dunera* the pale and emaciated refugees were transported through the night by train 750 kilometres (470 mi) west of Sydney to the rural town of Hay in central New South Wales. "The treatment on the train was in stark contrast to the horrors of the *Dunera* – the men were given packages of food and fruit, and Australian soldiers offered them cigarettes. There was even one story of a soldier asking one of the internees to hold his rifle while he lit his cigarette.^[3]"

Back in Britain relatives had not at first been told what had happened to the internees, but as letters arrived from Australia there was a clamour to have them released and heated exchanges in the House of Commons. Colonel **Victor Cazalet**, a Conservative MP said, on 22 August 1940 "Frankly I shall not feel happy, either as an Englishman or as a supporter of this government, until this bespattered page of our history has been cleaned up and rewritten." While interned in Australia, the internees set up and administered their own township with Hay currency (which is now a valuable collectors' item) and an unofficial "university". When the Japanese attacked **Pearl Harbor** in 1941, the prisoners were reclassified as "friendly aliens" and released by the Australian Government. Hundreds were recruited into the Australian Army and about a thousand stayed when offered residency at the end of the war. Almost all the rest made their way back to Britain, many of them joining the armed forces there. Others were recruited as interpreters or into the intelligence services.

Nothing remains of Hay camp except a road called Dunera Way and a memorial stone which reads:

This plaque marks the 50th anniversary of the arrival from England of 1,984 refugees from Nazi oppression, mistakenly shipped out on HMT Dunera and interned in Camps 7 & 8 on this site from 7. 9. 1940 to 20. 5. 1941. Many joined the AMF on their release from internment and made Australia their homeland and greatly contributed to its development. Donated by the Shire of Hay – September 1990.

Later service [edit]

HMT Dunera's next notable services were the **Madagascar operations** in September 1942, the **Sicily landings** in July 1943 and in September 1944, she carried the headquarters staff for the **US 7th Army** for the **invasion of southern France**. After the Japanese surrender in 1945, *Dunera* transported occupation forces to Japan.

Post-war [edit]

In 1950/1951, *Dunera* was refitted by Barclay, Curle to improve her to postwar troopship specifications: her capacity was now 123 First Class, 95 Second Class, 100 Third Class and 831 troops; tonnages now 12,615 gross, 7,563 net and 3,675 tons deadweight.

The **Ministry of Defence** terminated *Dunera*'s trooping charter in 1960 and she was refitted by **Palmers Shipbuilding and Iron Company** at **Hebburn-on-Tyne** in early 1961 for her new role as an educational cruise ship.^[10] New facilities (classrooms, swimming pool, games rooms, library and assembly rooms) were introduced. Her capacity became 187 cabin passengers and 834 children; 12,620 **GRT**, 7,430 **NRT**.

In November 1967 she was sold to Revalorizacion de Materiales SA, and scrapped at Bilbao.

Notes and references [edit]

- ↑ "Maritime Disasters of World War II" . Retrieved 2007-11-23.
- ↑ "Robert Aufrechtig – Dunera Internee" . Retrieved 2007-11-23.
- ↑ ^a ^b http://www.marple-uk.com/misc/dunera.pdf
- ↑ Die verschwundenen musiker : Jüdische flüchtlinge in Australien by Albrecht Dümling, Published by Böhlau Verlag — 2011
- ↑ "Guide to the Ulrich Boschwitz (1915-1942) Collection" . access.cjh.org. Center for Jewish History. Retrieved 3 October 2014.

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- ↑ "Into The Arms Of Strangers" . warnerbros.com. Retrieved 2014-05-03.
- ↑ "The Dunera Boys synopsis" . *IMDb*. Retrieved 2007-11-23.
- ↑ "MS Dunera, Troop Ship To School Ship | Wartime Trips and School Educational Tours" . Dunera.co.uk. Retrieved 2014-05-03.
- ↑ Connolly, Kate (19 May 2006). "Britons finally learn the dark Dunera secret" . *Sydney Morning Herald*. Retrieved 2007-11-23.
- ↑ Educational Cruises were operated by the British India Steam Navigation Company in the 1960s and 1970s, to take school children from British colonies or member countries of the Commonwealth on educational tours in European waters, lasting usually a fortnight. [Quartermaine, P., Bruce, P. *Cruise: identity, design and culture*. Laurence King Publishing, 2006. ISBN 1-85669-446-1. p. 49]

External links [edit]

- Shipping Times
- The Dunera Boys at IMDb.
- HMT Dunera, Troop Ship to School Ship: Wartime Trips and School Educational Tours

until 1942, when he joined the Australian army. He served until 1946. This document was issued by the **Australian Department of the Interior** in lieu of a national passport to facilitate the return to Austria.

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