

exposure

Summer 2023

The combined magazine for the nuclear community

Steve Bexon / BH Associates

Rhydymwyn Valley Works

We visit the secret tunnels of the Rhydymwyn Valley Works

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Community Care Check

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The design of the new Nuclear test Medal has been revealed.

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Foreword

Hello and welcome to the Summer edition of
exposure magazine.

On the 28th of July the Government announced the design
of the new commemorative Nuclear Test Medal recognising
military, civilian, and overseas staff and personnel who
participated in the tests. If you turn to p25 you can see the
design of the medal.

The medal has been shown in the media in production and its
been announced in the press that its expected that the medals
will be posted out to applicants in October. The NCCF are still
posting out medal application forms out to those who don't
have online access. There doesn't appear to be a cut off date
for applications but we urge you to apply as soon as possible to
avoid not receiving yours.

The NCCF have announced an exciting new programme, the
Community Care Check, go to p12 to read all about this.

There isn't a CHRC section in this edition of exposure but will
return to the next edition due out at Christmas.

We hope you enjoy this edition of the magazine.

Editor - exposure

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The Nuclear Community
Charity Fund

Making that difference



BNTVA
the Charity for Atomic Veterans
Registered Charity 1173375



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Rhydymwyn Valley Works

The (MoS) Ministry of Supply Factory, Valley was a Second World War site in Rhydymwyn, Flintshire, Wales. It was used for the storage and production of mustard gas and was later used in the development of the UK's atomic bomb project code named Tube Alloys. In July I was invited to go and have a look at the now disused tunnels, buildings and nature reserve.

The site occupies around 35 hectares of the Alyn Valley, to the south of the village of Rhydymwyn, once a district of Mould 3 miles away.

The area was part of the Gwysaney Estate and was extensively mined for lead with a foundry nearby. Following the closure of the foundry land use on the site was largely agricultural.

Chemical Weapons

In the late 1930s the Chamberlain Government planned that the United Kingdom should be in a position at the beginning of any war to retaliate in kind if the Germans, as expected, used mustard gas. In April/June 1939 the Alyn Valley was surveyed by the Department of Industrial Planning on behalf of the Ministry of Supply (MoS), and Imperial Chemical Industries (ICI) who were tasked with managing this programme.

In 1939 the land was purchased by the Ministry of Supply and developed as a purpose built storage facility and chemical weapons factory.

The Treasury approved the sum of £546,000 for initial work on 27 August 1939, and work began in October 1939 on the storage tunnels in the limestone hillside. The factory, to be called M.S. Factory, Valley, opened in 1941. The government authorised the expenditure of over £3 million for the project and ICI's construction fee was £80,000.



Ministry of Supply Factory, Valley, Rhydymwyn: Building P6

The Factory produced was Runcol and Pyro variants of mustard; records reveal that only the purer and more stable Runcol was made in bulk. Two Runcol plants R3 and R4 were constructed to produce 100 tons per week followed by three Pyro factories P4, P5, and P6 with a potential production capability of 216 tons per week.

From 1940 to 1959, the site was involved in either the manufacturing, assembly or storage of chemical weapons, or mustard gas in bulk containers. And from 1947–1959 the tunnel complex held the majority of the country's stock of mustard gas.

The Nuclear Connection

The MAUD Committee was a British scientific working group formed during the Second World War. It was established to perform the research required to determine if an atomic bomb was feasible.

It was founded in response to the Frisch–Peierls memorandum, which was written in March 1940 by Rudolf Peierls and Otto Frisch, two physicists who were refugees from Nazi Germany working at the University of Birmingham under the direction of Mark Oliphant.

The memorandum argued that a small sphere of pure Uranium-235 could have the explosive power of thousands of tons of TNT.



Preparing to tour the tunnels



One of the side tunnels where mustard gas would have been stored



Viewing a opening through a bricked up tunnel section



Looking back to the entrance

On accepting the findings of the Maud Report in 1941, the government needed to verify that a cost-effective atomic bomb could be manufactured. This required verification that a gaseous diffusion process would work on an industrial scale to provide enough fissile material to manufacture a cost-effective and timely atomic bomb. The Tube Alloys project was formed.

Tube Alloys

The Tube Alloys project was spread over a number of locations some of which were Oxford University's Clarendon Labs, Birmingham University, ICI at Billingham, Liverpool University and Metropolitan Vickers at Trafford Park, Manchester

It was decided to build four prototype gaseous diffusion machines and the contract was awarded to Metropolitan Vickers at Trafford Park in Manchester at a cost of £150,000. This contract required the building of a single cell unit, a double cell unit and two ten cell units. Each of the cells in the first stage units could weigh up to three tons. It was intended to run the two ten cell units in series making a twenty cell unit weighing about 60 tons.

Why Rhydymwyn?

The physical size of the units and their great weight precluded the use of any buildings in the Clarendon. There were also no units of sufficient size on the Trafford Park Industrial Estate or particularly height where a 20-24 feet clearance was needed.

ICI suggested that the redundant Pyro Building P6 at Rhydymwyn may fit the bill.

A number of other sites were inspected before the virtues of P6 prevailed. Although constructed to manufacture Pyro mustard gas it was never fitted out with the manufacturing machinery. It was large enough, had all of the required services readily available, was accessible by all the research and manufacturing sites, and was located in a secure, guarded enclosure.

Wallace Akers the leader of the Tube Alloys project telegraphed from the USA and instructed that all preparations should be made to make P6 ready for installation of the gaseous diffusion units.



Ministry of Supply Factory, Valley, Rhydymwyn: Building P6

During 1941 a great deal of work was carried out on the building to make it ready. This included an enhanced power supply, the filling of air channels, the installations of a new air conditioning system, changing the internal lay-out to provide, offices, laboratories and outside storage.

In the early days James Chadwick was involved before he went to the USA to be the leader of the British Contingent on the Manhattan Project. The Head of the technical section was Rudolf Peierls and his deputy was Klaus Fuchs.

The initial run-up period of the units was dogged with bad engineering practices and delays caused by the need to locate rare materials and parts. This may also have been the result of skilled craftsmen being called up or a lack of appreciation of the fine tolerances necessary in such machines.

During this period the experiments taking place in a redundant poison gas factory in a tiny village in north Wales was at the cutting edge of one of the most important developments in the whole of history.

The Quebec Agreement

In August 1943 Great Britain, the USA and Canada signed the Quebec Agreement which committed the future development of an atomic bomb to take place in North America out of the range of German bombs and closer to the greater resources available there. This resulted in the British contingent of 23 scientists (mainly of foreign birth and education) travelling to North America to help with the Manhattan Project.

There were two types of atomic bombs possible, one by the use of Plutonium and the other by Uranium and both were being developed in North America.

There were also four methods of separating fissile material from Uranium and all four were being developed in the USA. The British had concentrated on the gaseous diffusion method to develop a Uranium bomb.

There was a massive effort in the USA to build a gaseous diffusion plant, this was located at Oak Ridge, Tennessee in a bespoke building called K-25 which covered about 100 acres.

In December 1943 Peierls and Fuchs travelled to the New York and went to a meeting with the Manhattan Project leaders on the gaseous diffusion project. They were in difficulty with the initial design and welcomed their input. Fuchs and Peierls worked as consultants for the Kellogg Corporation at Columbia University designing the K-25 plant at Oak Ridge.



In January Peierls left to go to Los Alamos to run the Theoretical Section and lead the British contingent. Fuchs stayed at Kellex until the Spring when he went to Los Alamos to lead the section working on the lens system for the Plutonium Bomb and he is credited with the design of the initiator for that device.

Experiments continued until 1945 when the equipment was moved to Didcot and Harwell. The results of the experiments led to the building of the gaseous diffusion factory at Capenhurst, Cheshire. Building P6 is now a Grade II listed building and is of international importance; for a brief period it was at the leading edge of nuclear physics.

The Cold War

As a result of Great Britain's previous WWII experiences disruption to supply, transport and communications, the government decided to set up a system of food and raw material stockpiles to counter the threats of a nuclear war.

These stores were mostly based on the reuse of existing government owned sites and buildings; and the former MoS Factory, Valley was adapted to become one of these storage sites.



Camouflage paint schemes can still be seen on many of the buildings on the site

Sources

- <https://www.rhydymwynvalleyhistory.co.uk/>
- <https://www.subbrit.org.uk/sites/rhydymwyn-valley-works/>
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/M._S._Factory,_Valley

The Rhydymwyn Valley Nature Reserve

M.S. Factory, Valley has not been used since the mid-1990s. In the preceding postwar period many of the buildings were still in use, mainly as a buffer storage depot, but some were demolished because they were considered dangerous. The site has become a Nature Reserve and a Visitor Centre was built on the site of the old gatehouse.

The western side of the site is woodland wild garlic, snowdrops, bluebells and orchids. The River Alyn flows in from the north-west corner of the site and follows the western side of the valley. The river originally meandered through the centre of the valley but it was diverted as part of the early construction works. The site is now home to 7 species of reptile, 8 species of fish, 17 species of butterfly/moth and 8 species of bat and 67 bird species have nested or been observed on the site.

The Tour

The site is open for visitors all year round, however tours of the tunnels are restricted to small windows each year.

The RVHS undertook Tunnel Tours at the Rhydymwyn Valley site on the 16th July when I attended.

Approximately 120 people taken through in groups of 20. The tour includes a talk on the history and construction of the tunnels. All hard hats, hi-vis jackets and headlamps are provided at the start of the tour, along with safety information.

The Tunnel tour cost £15, the website says its £5 but I suspect they haven't updated the website.

The Society is planing tours in 2024 but haven't yet announced any dates. If you would like to tour the tunnels I would contact the History Society for further information - details to the right.



Rhydymwyn Valley
HISTORY SOCIETY



www.subbrit.org.uk

The tour itself is more suited to people who are physically fit and to walk for an hour or so with no issues.

The tunnel systems have uneven surfaces with 1 to 2 inches of standing water in places. The tunnels are also quite cold with an average temperature of only 6°C all year round. Its recommended that stout / waterproof footwear is worn along with clothing suitable for low temperatures. Wellington boots are probably the best option as it was muddy and water did splash as we walked the tunnel systems.

It also has to be noted that anyone who is pregnant isn't allowed to tour the tunnel systems due to the higher levels of Radon Gas in the tunnels.

The tour of the surface buildings doesn't require any safety wear but the surfaces are generally uneven. There was a mix of tarmac, gravel and what appeared to be a strange hard bitumen looking uneven surface on many of the paths. Much of the paths are also covered in overgrown vegetation and entering buildings often required walking through waist high vegetation and ground covering tendrils.

A big thank you to the guides of the History Society and to Phil from Subterranea Britannica for the very interesting tour of the Rhydymwyn Valley Works.

Editor

Contact Details

Rhydymwyn Valley History Society
Visitor Centre
17, Nant Alyn Road
RHYDYMWYN
Flintshire
CH7 5HQ

Telephone **01352 781129**
Email **info@rhydymwynhistorysociety.co.uk**

Website
www.rhydymwynvalleyhistory.co.uk/

Location

Visitor Centre
17 Nant Alyn Road
Rhydymwyn
Flintshire
CH7 5HQ

The Visitor Centre can be found at the end of Nant Alyn Road in Rhydymwyn.

Opening Times

The Rhydymwyn Valley Site is open to members for managed access:

Mon - Fri 8am - 6pm
Sat - Sun 9am - 5pm

By Car

From the main A541 Mold-Denbigh road, turn into Nant Alyn Road, opposite the Rhydymwyn Service Station. Postcode for SatNav **CH7 5HQ**

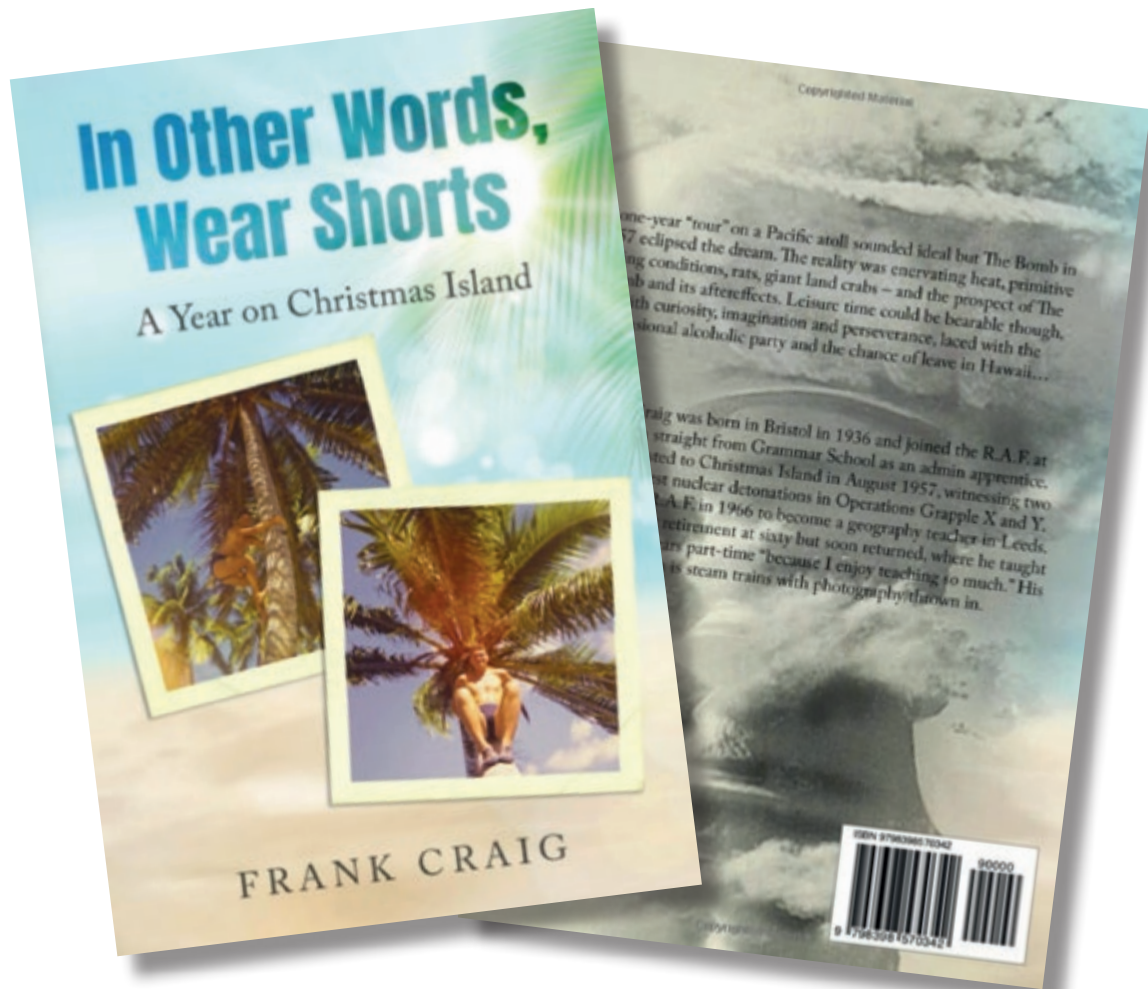
By Bus

Route 14 or 14C
Mold - Rhydymwyn

The Visitor Centre is a 5 minute bus journey from Mold bus station. Please check timetables before travelling.

In Other Words, Wear Shorts: A Year on Christmas Island

A new book of Frank Craig's time on Christmas Island is now available. Visit Amazon to buy a copy.



A one-year "tour" on a Pacific atoll sounded ideal but The Bomb in 1957 eclipsed the dream. The reality was enervating heat, primitive living conditions, rats, giant land crabs – and the prospect of The Bomb and its after effects. Leisure time could be bearable though, with curiosity, imagination and perseverance, laced with the occasional alcoholic party and the chance of leave in Hawaii...

Frank Craig was born in Bristol in 1936 and joined the R.A.F. at seventeen straight from Grammar School as an admin apprentice. He was posted to Christmas Island in August 1957, witnessing two of the biggest nuclear detonations in Operations Grapple X and Y. He left the R.A.F. in 1966 to become a geography teacher in Leeds.

He took early retirement at sixty but soon returned, where he taught for fourteen years part-time "because I enjoy teaching so much." His passion is steam trains with photography thrown in.

Frank's book can be bought on Amazon in Paperback and Kindle versions.

Search for **Frank Craig** or **In other Words Wear Shorts**
ISBN 979-8398570342

The Nuclear Community Charity Fund

Community Care Check

A great new programme from the NCCF & BNTVA wins grant support from the Office of Veterans Affairs.

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Lasting Power of Attorney

A guide on how to appoint a Power of Attorney

P16

Community Care Check

A great new programme from the NCCF & BNTVA wins grant support from the Office of Veterans Affairs Almost twelve months ago the NCCF began looking at how we reach our potential beneficiaries, Care Wellbeing and Inclusion Fund applications were falling and whilst the number of beneficiaries remained fairly constant we became concerned that many people who could benefit from the NCCF were just not coming forward.

We realised there were three key things that needed to be done

- Increase the Beneficiary Community reach
- Encourage more CWI Fund Applications
- Increase engagement within the beneficiary community

To deliver a project that would address these three goals nationwide would be a huge task that would swamp the resources of the charity. We developed the idea of running a pilot scheme so that we could develop each stage of the process ensuring it was maximised to our goals in our community.

Along with a number of initiatives from both the NCCF and the CHRC the Community Care Check concept was showcased to the Veterans Minister and representatives from the Office for Veterans Affairs and the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust at the Victory Services Club in London at the end of January 2023.

We were asked to submit a bid for funding by the OVA for the Community Care Check Pilot.

The creation of this programme affects a significant sea change in the manner the NCCF delivers its charitable purpose.

We will move from reactive to proactive methodology, using £70,000 of the Office of Veterans Affairs funding, we are going out into the community, looking for interventions and expanding the reach of our interactions, we can achieve our change and adopt a proactive methodology along with building a unified supportive community under the BNTVA Connect initiative.

The OVA funding means that our initial cohort can be 150 beneficiaries who connect to a family pool of just under 1000 people. Anecdotal evidence shows that any increase in health and wellbeing amongst beneficiaries propagates throughout their family. The NCCF has dedicated an additional £30,000 to the project along with ringfencing £200,000 to fund the increase in Care Wellbeing and Inclusion grants made while it is live.

The pilot will run over the next two years and the initial cohort of 150 beneficiaries has been selected from both the NCCF and BNTVA, under a data-sharing agreement. This will ensure that we can grow the project adapting and learning as we progress. Once the pilot has completed we will be publishing the results and analysis which will drive the development of a national outreach project.

As the pilot progresses we will be facilitating meetings under the banner 'BNTVA Connect' These will range from telephone support networks, through local coffee mornings or afternoon teas to mini-conference events across regions.

The outreach team will be headed by Ian Higginbottom, the son of a military veteran who also worked within the nuclear industry. Ian has a wide experience in developing and maintaining interactive relationships, he is professionally qualified in Safeguarding and is a member of the Befriending network.

In the first instance at the end of this year, we will write to every person in the pilot region advising them they are eligible to join the pilot cohort. We will also provide details of what this involves and specific security information they can use to validate any contact from the outreach team.

The progress of the pilot will be reported in future issues of exposure.



“

This is a great pilot project for our community, we will be developing a national strategy to take the 'Community Care Check' and 'BNTVA Connect' out across the UK and at the same time we will be delivering direct help to those in most need.

Ian Hall NCCF Chairman



Togetherall

Get support. Take control. Feel better.

A safe community to support your mental health 24/7

Connect with others experiencing similar feelings

Feel safe trained professionals are always on hand

Stay anonymous we protect everyone's identity within the community

Get results research shows that our tools, courses and resources help

Togetherall is an online peer support network available on any internet browser. Members can anonymously connect with others in a safe and judgment-free space. The platform is monitored 24/7 by trained professionals and has a wide range of self-help tools and resources. Togetherall is widely commissioned in the NHS and by local authorities, employers, universities, and the Armed Forces.

NCCF Community members are able to access Togetherall services by registering as "Part of the UK Armed Forces Community." Membership is free and is open to Veterans and their Family members.

Join a supportive, anonymous community that understands

Togetherall is a safe and inclusive space where members can connect with others and feel supported. Serving personnel, veterans and family members of the military can post, read the posts of others, or offer support within the Togetherall community. There's no judgment or stigma. They can also join a smaller, dedicated space specifically designed for military members, veterans, personnel, and their family members to create meaningful and deeper connections around topics that are important to them.

Togetherall has a wealth of practical wellbeing tools and resources. Togetherall's online programmes are evidence-based courses. These courses are designed to help people manage a variety of mental health difficulties and improve their health and wellbeing at a pace which suits them. There are also courses available that support members with their self-development, such as assertiveness training and managing procrastination.

Using the Courses?

Courses are available to all members of Togetherall, you can join a course at any time and can take as many as you like (although it's recommended to do one at a time). Within each course, there are a variety of tools available which help you get the most out of each course.

Course Talk-about – A community space within each course where group members can support one another, exchange hints and tips and discuss topics relevant to the course
 Printable worksheets – A selection of templates members can use to self-monitor and complete tasks
 Goal-Setter – A tool members can use to create, save and review goals
 Journal – A private space which allows time for reflection

Feeling isolated?

53% of members who felt isolated before they joined Togetherall, felt less isolated after using the platform.

What courses are available?

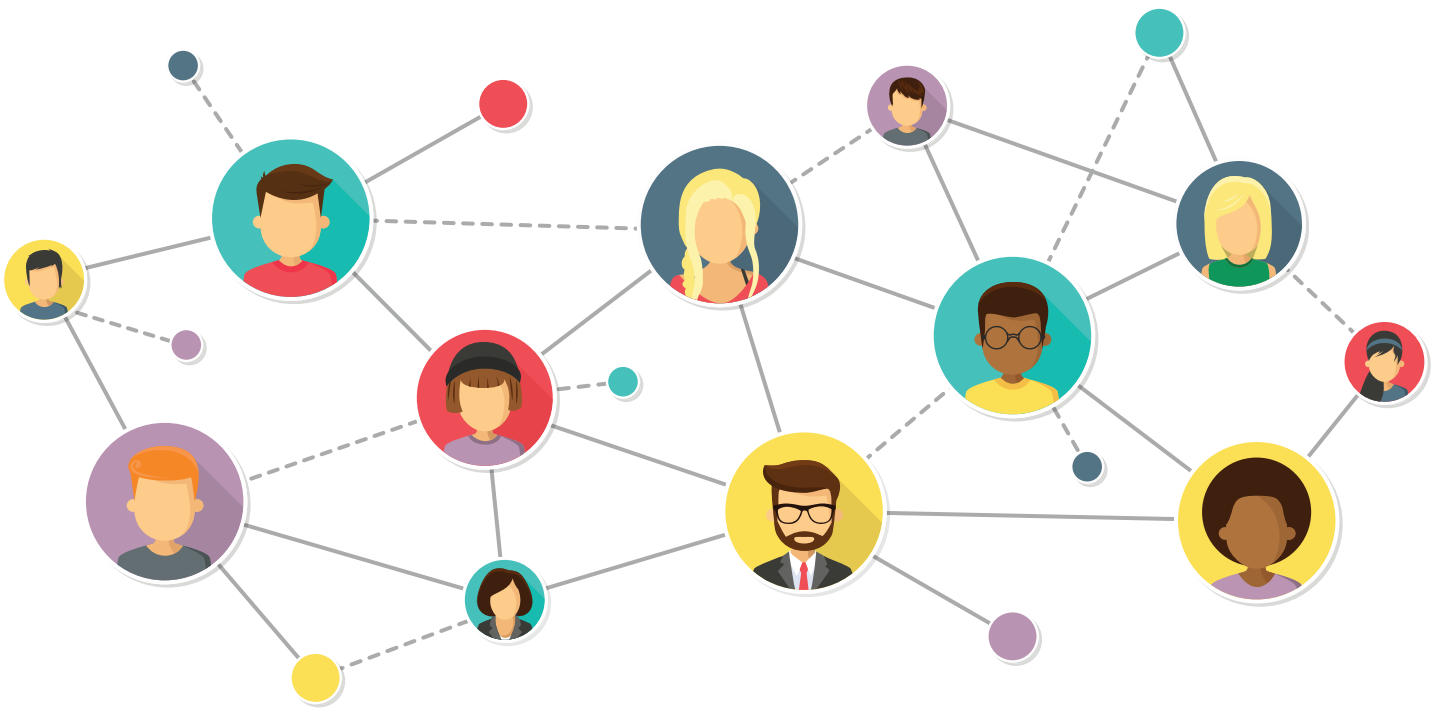
- **Mental Health & Wellbeing Courses**
 - Managing Depression
 - Managing Health Anxiety
 - Managing Panic
 - Managing Social Anxiety
 - Managing Stress & Worry
 - Managing Phobias
 - Managing OCD
 - Managing Self-harm
 - Managing Anger
 - Improve Your Sleep
 - Veterans' Grief & Loss
 - Veterans' PTSD
- **Healthy Lifestyle Courses**
 - Quit Smoking
 - Cut Down Your Drinking
- **Self-development Courses**
 - Problem-Solving
 - Assertiveness Training
 - Balance Your Thinking
 - Stop Procrastinating

“

Being anonymous is a godsend. I feel like I can truly write down what I'm thinking without judgement or stigma.”

“

The members on here are amazing. I've realised I'm not alone and actually helping others in my position makes me feel like I have something to give.”



“

On good days I can support others. On bad days, when I need support, I can find information to understand how to deal with it.”

“

I was always the strong one, but when I was signed off with work-related stress, I thought I was a failure. On logging in to Togetherall, I wasn't alone anymore. I've been using it for a year now, and I'm recovering and back at work. I'm truly grateful for Togetherall.”

Lasting Power of Attorney

There may come a time when, because you are incapable of managing your property and financial affairs, you will need someone to do this for you. You can formally appoint a friend, relative or professional to hold a Power of Attorney that will allow them to act on your behalf.

If you lose mental capacity, unless you've already filled in the Power of Attorney forms, your loved ones will need to apply through court to become 'deputy', this is a long and expensive process.

By setting up a Lasting Power of Attorney (LPA), you can nominate a relative or trusted friend before you lose capacity. Under the LPA you can appoint one or more representatives to act for you and can determine how they work together to make decisions on your behalf.

You may be thinking "This doesn't affect me, I'm perfectly well". This is a common misunderstanding. The key thing to remember is...

You can only set up a Lasting Power of Attorney when you have mental capacity. Once you've lost capacity, it's too late.

Health and welfare lasting power of attorney

Use this LPA to give an attorney the power to make decisions about things like:

- Your daily routine, for example; washing, dressing, eating
- Medical care
- Moving into a care home
- Life-sustaining treatment.

It can only be used when you're unable to make your own decisions.

Property and financial affairs lasting power of attorney

Use this LPA to give an attorney the power to make decisions about money and property for you, for example:

- Managing a bank or building society account
- Paying bills
- Collecting benefits or a pension
- Selling your home.

It can be used as soon as it's registered, with your permission.

Make a lasting power of attorney

You can make your own LPA without employing a solicitor or LPA specialist, we have included the information on how to do this along with a guide to the current costs of using a legal representative.

You can make a lasting power of attorney yourself or for another person online or by using paper forms.

Either way, you need to get other people to sign the forms, including the attorneys and witnesses. You can get someone else to use the online service or fill in the paper forms for you, for example; a family member, friend or solicitor.

You must register your LPA or your attorney will not be able to make decisions for you.

It takes up to 20 weeks to make an LPA if there are no mistakes in the application. It's usually quicker if you make it and pay online.

Make an LPA online

Create or sign in to an existing account to:

- Make an LPA
- Continue making an LPA that you've already started

You can then:

- Get help and guidance at each step
- Save your forms and complete them later
- Review your answers and fix any mistakes

You need to print out the forms and sign them when you've finished.

You can begin this process by visiting this link - <https://www.lastingpowerofattorney.service.gov.uk/home>

Use a Printed Form

You can download blank forms for manual completion from; <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/make-a-lasting-power-of-attorney>



Signing the forms

You need to sign the forms before you send them off. They also need to be signed by:

- The attorneys
- Witnesses
- A 'certificate provider', who confirms you're making the LPA by choice and you understand what you're doing

Everyone must sign the same original document. They cannot sign copies or use digital signatures.

Who can be a witness or certificate provider

Witnesses and certificate providers must be 18 or over.

Attorneys can witness each other sign, but they cannot:

- Witness you sign
- Sign as the certificate provider

You cannot be a witness if you're the person appointing an attorney.

How much does a Power of Attorney cost?

There's a compulsory cost of £82 to register a Power of Attorney (in England and Wales – it's £83 in Scotland, £151 in Northern Ireland). If you earn less than £12,000/year though, you can provide evidence to pay a reduced fee of £41. Those on certain benefits (this link downloads a PDF list of the qualifying benefits) are exempt from fees.

It's £82 for the property and finance LPA.

In Scotland or Northern Ireland?

In Scotland, there are three Powers of Attorney: one for financial matters, called a continuing Power of Attorney; one for personal welfare, a welfare Power of Attorney; and a combined Power of Attorney that covers both continuing and welfare, which is the most common.

For full details, see the Office of the Public Guardian (Scotland) and Alzheimer Scotland's Money and Legal Matters guides.

<https://www.publicguardian-scotland.gov.uk/> <https://www.alzscot.org/living-with-dementia/money-and-legal-matters>

For Northern Ireland see NIdirect's Power of Attorney info. <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/managing-your-affairs-and-enduring-power-attorney>

How much does a solicitor charge for power of attorney?

The charges for a Power of Attorney will increase when you use a solicitor. Typically, these charges for power of attorney can start at £400 plus VAT but, depending on the complexity of your needs, can go up to £1,000.

Often, the first conversation you have with a solicitor is free.

What about using a Power of Attorney specialist?

As with solicitors, you can use an organisation whose role is in creating the power of attorney. The power of attorney charges in this case usually start around £250 and can go up to £1,000 for particularly complex cases.

Notification

While every effort's been made to ensure this article's accuracy, it doesn't constitute legal advice tailored to your individual circumstances. If you act on it, you acknowledge that you do so at your own risk. We can't assume responsibility and don't accept liability for any damage or loss which may arise as a result of your reliance upon it. If in any doubt contact a Solicitor.

Op Fortitude



Op FORTITUDE - the pathway for homeless veterans - launched nationally by Veterans' Minister Johnny Mercer to end veteran homelessness in 2023

Op FORTITUDE is funded by The Armed Forces Covenant Fund to deliver a centralised referral pathway into veteran-supported housing. The remit of the team will be to work with individual veterans at risk of or experiencing homelessness, supporting them either into suitable accommodation or supporting them to maintain their current home.

The approach involves creating a pathway from the veteran at risk of experiencing homelessness to veteran-supported housing or organisation that can support them to keep their current home and avoid becoming homeless in the first place, as well as other unsupported veteran housing. At the centre of this is a team dedicated to making that link.

The hotline is part of an £8.55 million fund, which will also bring wraparound support services to support 1,300 veterans across more than 900 housing units

The underlying issue causing the person to be at risk of homelessness could be one or more of a range of issues, including income maximisation, employment, mental or physical health, substance misuse etc.

The Veteran Charity Sector has a rich history of providing support to veterans in these and many other areas and have a vital role to play in preventing veteran homelessness.

Op FORTITUDE will also prove to be a critical resource for these agencies and any veterans they are working with who may be homeless.

The Op FORTITUDE Pathway will open for referrals on 3 July 2023, with an initial focus on tenancy sustainment and high-risk referrals and will be fully operational by the date at which the Op FORTITUDE funded supported housing goes live on 1 September 2023.

Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Rt Hon. Johnny Mercer MP, said:

"Everyone deserves a place they can call home, not least those who have served their country. Today's launch is a huge milestone in ending veteran homelessness and a clear demonstration of this government delivering on its promises.

"There is a lot of great work being done across the country to help veterans get the right level of support. Op FORTITUDE is about bringing all of this together, so any veteran has a clear pathway to get local and customised care.



Veteran Minister - Johnny Mercer

Chris McAndrew / UK Parliament (Attribution 3.0 Unported (CC BY 3.0))

Further Information
Veterans who are homeless or at risk of homelessness and the organisations working with them are encouraged to contact the Op FORTITUDE hotline from Monday 3 July 2023 on 0800 952 0774 or through a secure web portal at riv.org.uk/opfortitude

Further information can be found at www.riverside.org.uk/care-and-support/veterans

From 3 July, the following housing providers will be accepting Op FORTITUDE referrals: Launchpad, Alabare, ENTRAINSPACE, STOLL, MySpace Housing, Healthier Heroes, SSAFA (female-specific), Royal British Legion Industries, Riverside Group and Erskine.

By September, all funding recipients new to the network will be plugged in: Veteran Homes Scotland, Wigan Council, LiveWest Homes and New Pastures Housing Ltd.

Befriending



A friendly chat when you need it

Thousands of older people have made lasting friendships or simply enjoyed a chat when they wanted one, through the Age UK free telephone friendship service and the Silver Line helpline.

What is telephone friendship?

As we get older, we may find we spend more time on our own. This can sometimes feel lonely, boring or make us miss friends or family. If you or someone you know is missing the joy of regular conversation, Age UK and their partner charity The Silver Line can help.

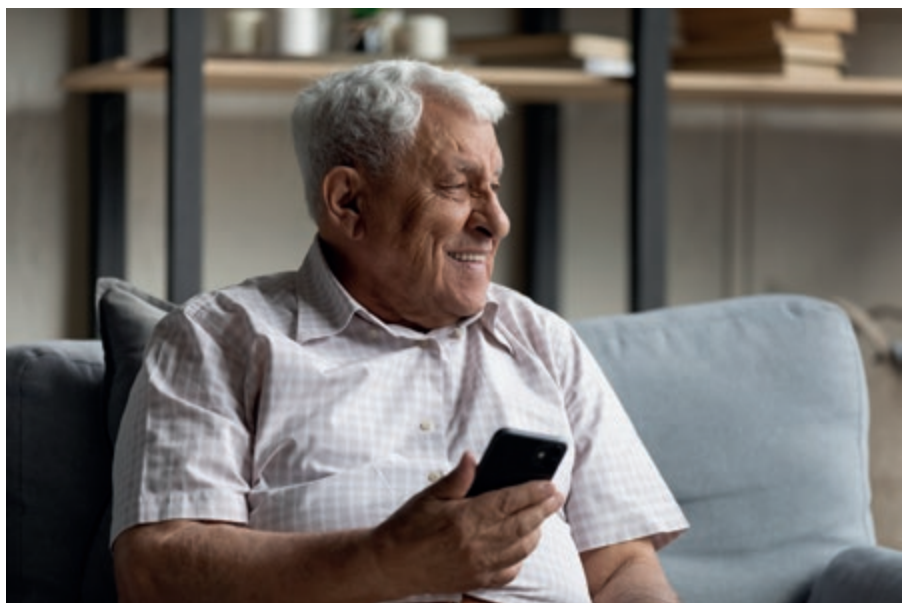
They offer free telephone friendship services so you can enjoy chatting with someone over the phone, all from the comfort of your own home. Whether you'd like to speak to someone every week, or just want to talk when the need strikes, They are there to help.

Everyone needs someone to talk to sometimes

We need connection whatever our age – especially if we live alone or further away from family. Age UK's Silver Line Helpline gives anyone aged 55 or over the opportunity to exchange a friendly word, access support, or enjoy a long enriching conversation.

Why not become a Befriender What's great about becoming a telephone friend?

It's a free, simple way to give something back through a weekly call to an older person. Age UK's dedicated team will match you with someone who has shared interests.



fizkes / Shutterstock



I used The Silver Line every night for about three weeks, and it really kept me going. They're lovely, I've not spoken to anybody that I haven't felt has been listening or engaging. I can put my hand on my heart and say I don't think I'd be here without them.

Call free on 0800 4708090

The Silver Line Helpline run by Age UK is a free, confidential telephone service for older people. We provide friendship, conversation and support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

CWI Fund - Applying for Help

Here is a step by step guide to the process of applying for help from the CWI Fund.

1

Ask for an application form

Contact us to ask for an application form by:

email office@thenccf.org
or call **01158 883 442**

If you call you will reach an answer machine, just leave your name and number and tell us you'd like an application form. We will call you back to check your address and give you any further information you may need and will post or email you a form as to your preference. You can also apply by post to:

**NCCF, PO Box 8244
Castle Donington
Derby
DE74 2BY**

2

Fill out your application form

When you receive your form please fill out all sections to the best of your ability, please don't leave any sections blank. If you have any problems filling out the form, please let us know so we can help. Otherwise read through following guide to each section, starting at Section 1 above.

Section 1 - Applicant details

This section is for the person applying to give us their Name and contact details. If you are applying as a spouse, widow or descendant of a veteran we will also ask for details of the veteran. We finally ask for you to provide 2 forms of identification with your name and address on it, this can be the top of a bank statement or bill.

Section 2 - Financial details

In this section we ask you to show your **household** (not individual) **Income** and **Expenditure** on a monthly basis. If you pay for something quarterly or once a year, calculate the yearly cost and divide by 12 for the monthly figure. We have provided a **Other Regular Financial commitments** space for any other spending or income that you can think of. And finally there is a space to fill in your **Savings and Investment Details**. We split this between **General Savings** (including Investments) and **Ring Fenced Savings**. Ring Fenced savings are funds you are using for a particular expense ie: Property repairs, funeral costs, new windows or a new car.

Section 3 - Care, Wellbeing and Inclusion situation

This section is to help the Grant Panel understand the overall situation of the applicant and areas of suffering that could be addressed by the CWI Fund. We ask you to give details on your **Domestic Situation**, number of people in household and what help and support from family and friends. In **Health Situation**, tell us any health issues and restrictions that have an impact on independent living. And finally **Identified Issues**, this is where you can tell us if you have an idea of what may be a solution to your problems, for example: Unable to walk to the shops - a Mobility scooter would solve this problem.

Section 4 - Application approvals

In this section we ask you to authorise us to conduct an assessment called an **ILA** (Independent Living Assessment), or have our contractors visit you to assess your needs. Contractors can include Occupational therapists, maintenance contractors, equipment demonstrators or fitters (bathroom, stairlift etc). We advise that you do approve these activities as we may not be able to provide assistance without them. All visits will be arranged with yourself to suit your availability and needs.

Section 5 - Confirmation and GDPR options

Here we ask you tell us how you would like us to contact you and if you want to subscribe to our magazine. We tell you how we hold your data and for how long. Finally we ask you to confirm you have read our terms and conditions and to sign and date your application.

3

Send the form back to us

Give your form a final check to make sure that all sections have been filled out and that you have read the terms and conditions. If you have a paper form post it back to:

NCCF Care
PO Box 8244
Castle Donington
DE742BY.

If you have a electronic PDF form then email it back to **office@thencf.org**

If approved you will be sent an offer letter from the NCCF with a description of the goods and/ or services we are offering for you to accept. If more information is required, the fund manager will contact you. If rejected you will receive a letter stating the reason why your application was unsuccessful.

If you feel the panels decision wasn't correct you can write to the NCCF Chairman with your reasons with any supporting facts and/or evidence.

4

The Decision Process

When we receive your application, your information is used to create an anonymous Grant Application Summary that is presented to the Grant Panel for review. Each case is anonymous to prevent any bias on the decision, the only people who know the identity of the applicant are the Fund Managers and any contractors providing services for the application.

If the Fund Manager needs to clarify anything on your application they will contact you.

The Grant Panel review your application and either;

- Approve
- Ask for more information, or
- Reject the application.

5

Delivery of goods and services

We contact our suppliers who may have to survey your property or demonstrate goods to you. For instance replacing a bathroom with a wet room would need a survey while a motor scooter would need demonstrating and a test to make sure it suits your needs. If you are happy the NCCF pays the relevant suppliers for the goods and/ or services, and delivery will be arranged once the goods / services are ready and are supplied at a time that suits you.

More information on the CWI Fund can be found at:
www.thencf.org/cwi-fund

IMPORTANT - PLEASE NOTE

If at any point **before, during** or **after** the application process you decide to purchase any goods or services yourself the NCCF cannot reimburse you or anyone else for the costs.

Please do not announce on social media that you have applied to the fund. If any grant panel members see such an announcement they can excuse themselves from the decision process and the application could potentially fail. Applications are anonymised to prevent any bias in the decision process.

Any form of lobbying the charity to make a favourable decision on an application will not be tolerated and the application will be rejected. This includes any threats of legal action, press involvement, defamatory comments or threats to NCCF trustees and / or its subcontractors.

When filling out the application please be clear and concise and fill out all of the sections to the best of your ability. This will ensure the application is processed quickly and If you are unsure and need help please contact us.

Compliant with GDPR the BNTVA has shared data from its membership database with the NCCF to facilitate the distribution of the BNTVA editorial in this edition and as part of the Community Care Check programme which, will operate within the nuclear community between 2023 and 2025. The data shared consists of Name, Telephone Number, Address and email address. If you have any questions or concerns please contact the NCCF Data Controller through office@thencf.org



BNTVA

the Charity for Atomic Veterans
Registered Charity 1173575

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All the latest news from the Charity

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Nuclear Medal Design

The design of the new Nuclear test Medal has been revealed

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Veteran in the press

Gerry Robert Interviewed by the Guernsey Press

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BNTVA News Update

The trustees of the BNTVA wish to advise their members that the charity remains engaged in an employment tribunal which means that it is not proper for them to share any detailed information until this has run its course and matters are resolved.



Chris Dorney / Shutterstock



Charity Commission Regulatory Review

This aside we are happy to report that on the 3rd of August 2023, the Charity Commission announced that they had concluded their regulatory case and issued a series of guidance to the charity.

The Commission's findings covered two areas:

Financial Controls

It appears trustees did not have appropriate financial controls in place and could not access the bank accounts for an extensive period of time.

Decision-Making and Responsibility

It appears the trustees did not have appropriate mechanisms in place to gather or review information about the charity.

The Charity Commission has issued advice and guidance in relation to the above points based on section 15(2) of the Charities Act 2011, the BNTVA trustees have now taken this guidance on board and are implementing the recommended procedures.

Section 15(2) advice is not regarded as a legal order or direction of the Commission.

Other News

Membership Charges

We also wish to remind people that during the first part of 2023, we took the decision not to charge any membership this year. We have cancelled the Direct Debits but if you have a Standing Order please cancel it. Similarly, if you have sent a cheque we will not be drawing on it. If we have already received payment will contact you to discuss refunds.

Shop Orders

We have managed to resolve most of the shop orders however, If you have ordered items from the shop and have not yet received them please contact Shelly at s.grigg@bntva.com

Gift Aid

There has been a great response to our call for gift aid claim authorisations from members and it has allowed us to reclaim a significant amount of funds from HMRC. These funds along with the financial arrangements we have already secured ensure both charity solvency and that all the archives and collections are protected for future generations.

Appreciation of Support Received

Finally, we would like to personally thank all of the members who have sent us messages of support. We have had a very difficult time managing all the issues the charity faced to ensure the BNTVA and its heritage survive.

This Editorial section of Exposure is provided by the BNTVA. They accept sole responsibility for the content, source and accuracy of their section including any liabilities arising therefrom. All copyright and attribution are as stated.

National Atomic Veterans Awareness Day (NAVAD) 2023

NAVAD will be celebrated at the National Memorial Arboretum at Alrewas, Staffordshire this year on Sunday the 1st of October 2023.



Steve Bexon / BH Associates

National Atomic Veterans Awareness Day (NAVAD) at the National Memorial Arboretum, Alrewas

Due to issues at the NMA we have had to revise the timings from our original publication, please note the revised times below.

A service will be held by the Very Reverend Nicholas Frayling, BNTVA Chaplain, in the NMA Chapel at 11:30 followed by a procession to the BNTVA memorial where there will be an Act of Remembrance. Following this, a light lunch will be made available where visitors can celebrate 40 years of the BNTVA movement, where we can reflect on what has gone before and look to the future for the organisation.

Parking is not included but can be prearranged which also saves on the cost of the ticket. Simply visit this link and enter your details: <https://www.maximcloud.co.uk/nationalmemorialarboretum/day/>

Persons wishing to attend should also pre-register for the event by contacting Shelly Grigg who will be coordinating, either:

Email: s.grigg@bntva.com

Write to:
NAVAD 2023
PO Box 8244
Derbyshire DE74 2BY

Or call:
Tel 07752 125 444

If you have specific mobility needs please advise Shelly as we may be able to book assistance from the venue.

If you do not register you will still be able to attend but we may not be able to provide you with the refreshment package.

Nuclear Tests Medal Design Revealed

Many veterans of Britain's nuclear tests will receive a new medal in time for Remembrance Sunday. On the 28th of July 2023, the British Government announced the design of the new Commemorative Medal recognising military, civilian, and overseas staff and personnel who participated in Britain's nuclear testing programme in the 1950s and 1960s.

Minister for Veterans' Affairs,
Rt Hon. Johnny Mercer MP, said:

“

As thousands flock to the cinemas to watch Oppenheimer, it's important to remember the contributions of the veterans, scientists and staff who worked on Britain's nuclear programme. Our nuclear deterrent continues to underpin both our security and the security of our NATO allies and this new medal is a fitting tribute to all those who worked to develop this vital defence.

The medal design features an atom surrounded by olive branches and bears the words "Nuclear Test Medal". The obverse will bear an effigy of His Majesty the King. The simplicity of the design was chosen to reflect the multitude of different roles that were carried out by the broad range of recipients. The ribbon design includes white, yellow, black and red, with the lighter blue for the sky and ocean, representative of the Pacific.

The medal will also be awarded posthumously. Veterans, civilian staff and next of kin from across the UK and Commonwealth can apply for the commemorative medal through the MOD's Medal Office, which will be free of charge.

The full Nuclear Test Medal eligibility criteria can be found here - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/nuclear-test-medal-eligibility-criteria>

Download the MOD Application Form here -

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/applying-for-medals>

You will be able to find detailed information on the application process here - <https://www.labrats.international/medal>

The page includes information on the eligibility criteria, frequently asked questions and also a useful video showing you how to fill out the application form.



Guernsey Veteran in his local newspaper

Veteran Gerry Robert was interviewed by Guernsey Press will be one of the many to receive the new medal this year. Gerry is shown holding a thank you letter from the queen from 2012, here is the story from the newspaper by Mark Ogier from December 2022.



Gerry Robert with a thankyou letter from the Queen during her Diamond Jubilee in 2012 - Picture Luke Le Provost, 31617866

AN ISLANDER who was present at four tests of nuclear weapons by the British military in the 1950s is in line to receive a special medal for his service.

Gerry Robert was 21 when he witnessed the explosion of four hydrogen bombs at Christmas Island in the Pacific in 1957.

He had arrived in March that year as a corporal in the Royal Army Service Corps.

When the first bomb dropped he was on board the HMS Messina some 300 miles away, but said he had a clear view of the test after having his back to the actual detonation.

'We were told to turn back to look at the blast afterwards, and we watched the mushroom cloud forming,' the 86-year-old said.

'We were speechless. It was devastating, we couldn't believe what we were seeing.'

That first bomb was a 300 kiloton hydrogen bomb. By contrast, the largest of the two atomic bombs dropped on Japan was 25 kilotons.

More than a dozen were tested at Christmas Island, leading to it getting the nickname 'Fire Island'.

The last one Mr Robert saw dropped was 1.8 megatons.



Gerry Robert in uniform aged 16

He remembered how the soldiers were instructed to sit with their hands on their knees at the start of the test. 'When the plane dropped the bomb you could see all the bones in your fingers,' he said.

It was when he came back to the UK that he started suffering the effects of the tests.

He started bleeding internally, and was rushed to Colchester Hospital where he spent nine hours in surgery.

After he recovered, he stayed in the Army until the early 1970s, when he moved to Guernsey where he worked as a butcher until he retired.

As a member of the British Nuclear Test Veterans Association, he was pleased to hear that medals would be given out for those who experienced these and other tests. 'We've been asking for this for years,' he said. 'We certainly deserve it, that's for sure.'

Their contribution was recognised by the Queen when she sent a thank you message to the veterans on her Diamond Jubilee.

Mr Robert was not aware of any other test veterans from Guernsey.

The UK paid tribute to these veterans at the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire last month, at a ceremony to mark the

70th anniversary of the nation's first atomic test.

Some 22,000 personnel, including civilians, are thought to be eligible to receive the medal, which can also be awarded posthumously.

The first medals are expected to be awarded next year, which will also see the start of a project in which veterans will be interviewed for a digital archive of testimonies about their experiences working on the tests.

The full story can be read at <https://guernseypress.com/news/2022/12/30/we-couldnt-believe-what-we-were-seeing/>

Young people interview Nuclear Test Veterans

What happens when young people get to ask the questions? A new educational project puts young people in the interview chair to discover the experiences of Nuclear Test Veterans and to bring their stories to schools across the UK.

The project called Remember Together: Nuclear Test Veterans, sees veterans being interviewed by young people from schools across the UK to create intergenerational films. These films will then be shown at the UK digital schools events on 3rd October to mark the anniversary of Operation Hurricane and bring nuclear history into classrooms from Inverness to St Ives. Educational organisation Big Ideas is running the project and has been awarded a grant by The Office for Veterans' Affairs from the Nuclear Test Veteran Community Fund.

CEO and founder of Big Ideas, Dr Virginia Crompton, talks about the power of letting young people co-produce the films: "When young people get to co-produce a story and discover it in their own way asking their own questions, the stories they uncover can be surprising and always powerful. In my experience young people have the ability to get straight to the emotional heart of an issue, in a different way to adults, and people often open up more to young people than they would otherwise. That is the magic of intergenerational storytelling in my view."

Dr Virginia Crompton is a Senior Research Fellow at the Institute of Historical Research at the University of London and previously spent 18 years as a Producer at the BBC where she founded the BBC Radio 4's flagship programme The Long View.



Young people from St John's Catholic Comprehensive with Nuclear Test Veteran, John Folkes in his home.

She is passionate about creating new spaces for people to engage with history in creative and meaningful ways.

As part of the project, Nuclear Test Veteran John Folkes was interviewed in his home by young people from St John's Catholic Comprehensive School in Gravesend in July 2023. John was asked to fly into the mushroom cloud of a nuclear bomb in 1956 during a British nuclear test taking place in Maralinga in Southern Australia as part of Operation Buffalo.

He showed the young people the picture of his plane flying towards the mushroom cloud and talked in detail about not just his experience of that day but the long journey he took to get there.

The young people were astounded by the picture and his experience and were eager to discover more. During the interview they asked about how he felt as a young man at the time and how he feels now looking back. The young people and John established a strong emotional connection during the interview that will translate well into the resulting film.



John Folkes could see the value of having young people ask the questions. He wants his experiences and the experiences of other Nuclear Test Veterans to be passed down and remembered by young people. When asked what he hoped to gain from sharing his story now, John replied: “What is particularly important to me is your presence, both of you, sharing it with the younger generation so hopefully we can learn.”

In September Big Ideas will be working with young people from Lliswerry High in Newport, Wales who will be interviewing Nuclear Test Veteran Brian Davis. Brian was sent to Christmas Island and witnessed the first British hydrogen bomb test. The students are particularly interested in how Brian felt as an 18 year old travelling so far from home, as well as how he felt when the bomb went off.

They are proud to be representing Wales in this national project and hearing more about Brian’s experiences.

Remember Together: Nuclear Test Veterans aims to raise awareness among a new generation of the service and experience of these veterans and to deepen young people’s understanding of the UK’s place in the world since 1945.

Big Ideas would like to acknowledge the support and guidance of both Alan Owen, founder of LABRATS and Dr Christopher Hill, Associate Professor at the University of South Wales and of course to the veterans for their generosity and willingness to share their stories with young people.

“

I find the whole project so rewarding, that the generations are being brought together. It makes a continuity with history. I am so pleased to think my story is being passed down.

John Folkes

For more information about the project, please email: RememberTogether@big-ideas.org

BIG IDEAS

Oppenheimer – Movie

Oppenheimer was released in the UK on the 21st of July, to worldwide acclaim.

The Oppenheimer film is based on Kai Bird and Martin J. Sherwin’s 2005 biography of the late scientist, American Prometheus, examining both his moral agonies at creating the bomb and the terrifying global rush to armament sparked by his work. We are taken to moments such as the Trinity Test of July 1945, when nuclear weapons were detonated for the first time under test conditions – all recreated by Director Christopher Nolan without computer graphics.

The film stars Cillian Murphy as J. Robert Oppenheimer and Emily Blunt as his wife, biologist and botanist Katherine “Kitty” Oppenheimer. Oscar® winner Matt Damon portrays General Leslie Groves Jr., Director of the Manhattan Project, and Robert Downey, Jr. plays Lewis Strauss, a founding commissioner of the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission.

The movie is still on general release and is showing at all of the large cinema chains.



Stefano Chiacchiarini '74 / Shutterstock

We Have Ways Podcast

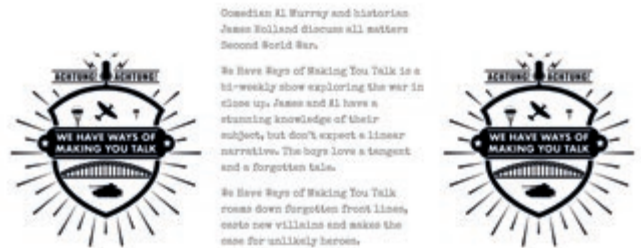
Comedian Al Murray and historian James Holland discuss all matters Second World War.

For those who haven’t heard of this I can thoroughly recommend giving this Podcast a listen. It’s hosted by Historian and Author James Holland and Comedian and Author Al Murray who’s a big supporter of the Nuclear Veterans. Shows are cast twice a week and it covers World War 2 but occasionally branches off into other directions.

Of particular interest was an episode from April this year where they discuss the German Nuclear Programme and whether or not it was a was ever a realistic proposition during the Second World War.

It’s available on all the big Podcast hosting platforms, Apple Podcasts, Spotify, Google Podcasts Audible etc or visit the website at:

www.wehavewayspod.com



Dates for Your Diary



All Tests Reunion 2023

Pontins, Sand Bay, Weston-Super-Mare
The adult-only reunion brings together Veterans and their families for a week-long holiday.

Call **0203 286 3988** or to download a form visit: www.labrats.international/atr



National Atomic Veterans Awareness Day (NAVAD) 2023

National Memorial Arboretum (NMA) Alrewas.
To pre-register for the event contact Shelly Grigg via:

Email s.grigg@bntva.com or write to:

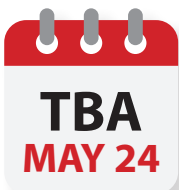
NAVAD 2023
PO BOX 8244
Derbyshire
DE74 2BY



National Service of Remembrance 2023

Cenotaph, Whitehall, London. To obtain an application form send details to:

BNTVA Remembrance Parade
NCCF
PO BOX 8244
Castle Donington
DE74 2BY



BNTVA Conference 2024

Details on this event will be published once a location and date have been finalised.



Send us your Story

If you have a story that you would like to share and be published in exposure magazine then get in touch with us.

If you have something to say that would be of interest to our reader then why not write about it and send it to us. It doesn't necessarily have to be about your service or the tests, any experience or information you think would be interesting to the community would be welcome.

If you are unsure or need help or advice please call:

0115 888 3442

Please clearly leave your name and telephone number and we will get back to you.

Email

editor@exposure.press

Or write to

The NCCF
PO Box 8244
Castle Donington
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exposure

The combined magazine for the nuclear community

NCCF Board of Trustees

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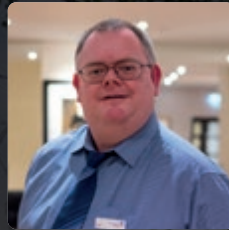
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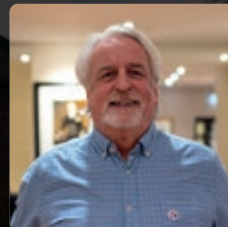
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