

exposure

Winter 2023

The combined magazine for the nuclear community



NAVAD 2023

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Next years convention has been announced

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The BNTVA collection and Archive - Your Heritage, Your Trust

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Foreword

A Message from the Chaplain, the Very Revd Nicholas Frayling

Family time...

Whenever Nuclear Veterans get together, whether at our Memorial at the Arboretum or at more local event, I think of a family. There is a sense of togetherness among those who served, but also among their families, not least their children and grandchildren who have heard the stories.

Like all families, there are tensions, and uncertainty about what the future may hold. At the Memorial in October, there were prayers, tears, silence, memories, pride, anger, all mixed together; much like a normal family! And afterwards there was shared food, laughter and good conversation.

Christmas is the time of year when 'family' is to the fore: tree, toys, trinkets and, for the fortunate, time spent together. Somewhere in the middle of it all is the most important Family of all. A Christmas prayer asks that we may 'go in heart and mind even unto Bethlehem, to see this thing which has come to pass'. The situation in Israel and Palestine this year would be such as to make a physical journey impossible.

But the heart of the Christmas story is 'God with us': God taking human form in Jesus, to feel our sadness and to share our gladness. So this is the time of year to renew our prayers and hopes for what the old carol calls 'this old and weary world'.

May I wish all readers -Veterans and your families - a happy Christmas and new year, and my own prayer that 2024 will bring peace in the Holy Land, and in our homes and our hearts.

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National Atomic Veterans Awareness Day NAVAD 2023



This Years NAVAD took place on Sunday the 1st of October at the National Memorial Arboretum

In a slight change to previous years a service was held in the Arboretums Millennium Chapel and was conducted by The Very Revd Dr Nicholas Frayling KStJ, Chaplain to the British Nuclear Tests Veterans' Association.

As is normal for NAVAD, the attendance was very good at around 40 people. We gathered together in the chapel at 11.30 for the service.

Also in attendance were the British Forces Broadcasting Service (BFBS) who filmed the whole event as well as a photographer from the national press.



The Very Revd Dr Nicholas Frayling

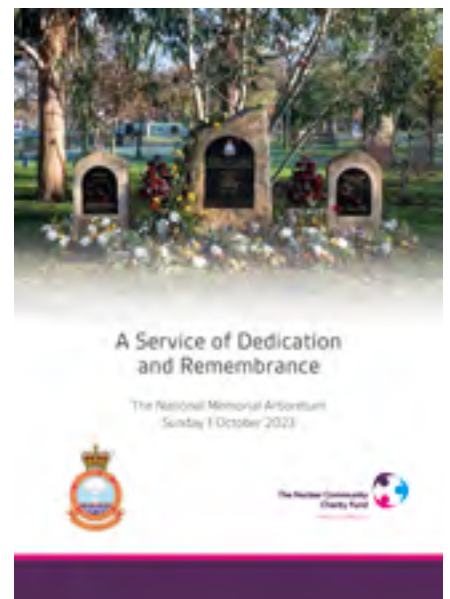
The Introduction in the order of service read as follows:

This Act of Worship provides an opportunity to give thanks for those who served: the living – among whom many are ill – as well as those now departed. It also provides an opportunity to pray for the peace of the world, and for those who in our own generation face danger on behalf of us all.

During the service former Chairman of the BNTVA, Mr Nigel Heaps MBE read a passage from the bible before the Chaplain addressed all gathered.

The final part of the service at the Chapel was observed and the National Anthem was played by the organist. We then moved on to the BNTVA memorial.

As any you who have attended NAVAD before, we are more often than not exposed to autumnal wind and rain. Thankfully this year the weather was kind to us and the 5 minute walk from the chapel to the memorial was very pleasant.



The Order of Service







We gathered around the BNTVA memorial for the Act of Remembrance.

The Bugler played a very emotional Last post followed by the Reveille.

Wesley Perriman laid a wreath on behalf of the BNTVA and the NCCF.

After the event the congregated stayed to chat and greet each other while the BFBS interviewed veterans. All who attended were given a voucher to redeem at the NMA restaurant for tea and cake.

We would like to Thank Nicholas for conducting the service and the Bugler and Organist for setting the tone for the day.

We also thank Sophie at the NMA for all her work in helping us arrange and co-ordinate the event to make it the success it was, thank you.

Details for NAVAD 2024 will be published in the next editions of exposure.



Looking for lost pals



If you are looking to find and get in touch with long lost pals or anyone you may have served with, let us know who you are and where and when you served. We will publish your request here and will forward any replies onto you.

John Arthur Parris

Served on Christmas Island in 1957 for 1 year. He would like to get in touch with anyone else who served on the Island at that time.

David Arthur Jones

He would like to hear from anyone from 46 Field Park Company Royal Engineers, he was stationed on Christmas Island between 1958/9.

If you have any information or want to get in touch:

Call **01158 883 442**

Email **editor@exposure.press**

Or write to:

**Exposure
PO Box 8244
Castle Donington
DE74 2BY**

We cannot publish personal information in the magazine but will pass this on to anyone wishing to make contact.



I think I need help - How do I get it?

- Are you a member of the British Nuclear Test Survivor Community based in the UK?
- Do you have issues affecting your daily life?
- Struggle getting up and down stairs?
- Can't sleep properly?
- Difficulty walking to the shops
- Difficulty Bathing?

If you feel you need help but are not sure exactly what is available we have a range of assessment options to identify goods and services that can address your suffering and enhance your wellbeing. Contact us to apply via:

Email
office@thenccf.org

Telephone
01158 883 442





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A great new programme from the NCCF and the BNTVA

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Veterans thanked at event hosted by the MOD and OVA

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The Nuclear Community
Charity Fund



Making that difference

2024 Nuclear Community Convention

This year, the NCCF was approached to help keep the BNTVA movement alive. As you all know, we immediately facilitated them getting messages out to members by incorporating an independent BNTVA editorial section in Exposure Magazine.

Our two organisations remain very close. When implementing the data-sharing agreement enabling magazine distribution across the joint membership, we found that almost all the BNTVA members were also NCCF beneficiaries.

We have received many congratulatory comments from readers who welcome the expanded publication.

The move to accept a permanent editorial section in Exposure is excellent news. It saves the BNTVA some £12,000 per year. It creates a much better reader experience with related content articles from our community.

Holding a conference in 2023 was not a realistic proposition; the issues the charity faced were piling up in early 2023; there was no access to bank accounts, a regulatory investigation was underway, and an uncertain future was the outlook. The BNTVA trustees reluctantly decided to abandon attempts to hold an event.

The NCCF has now taken full responsibility for delivering this event and has decided that from 2024 onward, we will hold an annual Nuclear Community Convention!

What is a Convention?

A convention gathers individuals and organisations with common interests or bonds.

We have decided to return to the roots of the BNTVA Conferences. We will hold the event over a weekend rather than throughout the week, making attending more accessible for those with work commitments.

Date for your Diary Friday the 10th to Sunday 12th of May 2024

The 2024 Nuclear Community Annual Convention is being held at the Hilton Hotel East Midlands Airport. The hotel is accessible from all directions by a good motorway network. Also, East Midlands Parkway on the Midland mainline is only a three-mile taxi ride.

We have negotiated special discounted rates for guests and have a complete programme of presentations from the NCCF, BNTVA, CHRC, The BNTVA Collection, The University of South Wales and other OVA-funded projects.

By holding the Convention in the East Midlands, we are trying to make it as accessible as possible to the significant groupings of our community. The location adds a further bonus as it sits almost in the centre of the Community Care Check Pilot region, and part of the focus of the Outreach Facilitator will be to encourage greater local engagement.

Programme of Events

Friday afternoon/evening: Arrival and meet with old friends. Meals are available in the restaurant, and there is a well-stocked bar for casual get-togethers.

Following the included breakfast on Saturday morning, guests can enter the conference room where the presentations will take place. A buffet lunch will be provided, and refreshments will be available throughout the day.

Saturday evening, we will hold the traditional BNTVA Gala Dinner, which this year will be presided over by **Jeff Liddiatt MBE** - NCCF hon. Life President.



The package from Friday to Sunday should cost £432.00 for a couple and £324.00 for an individual. We have negotiated an excellent deal so that the total cost for a couple is £256.00 and for a single is £236.00. That's a fantastic saving of £88 per person!

You can access this great deal directly with the hotel as they are setting up a special booking line for us. We have also negotiated discounts for people who only want to stay the Saturday Evening and for day guests, which covers the Convention and Gala Dinner for only £49.00, saving almost £40 on the standard day rate.

We are also working on a Sunday morning complimentary coach trip to the National Memorial Arboretum, which is only a 40-minute ride from the hotel.

More details and booking contacts in the next edition.



Community Care Check - Public Launch

The new flagship programme from the NCCF is ready to slip its moorings and head for the high seas!

Building on the fantastic Office for Veterans Affairs grant we received this year, the NCCF has completed the initial construction phase of the Community Care Check Programme. Since we had the good news about the award in May this year, the NCCF has been working closely with our service partners to create the Community Care Check pilot programme. With great effort, we have delivered every objective within the exacting timescale. We are ready for public launch on the first working day of 2024!

Ian has been working through a series of specially tailored training courses using a mixture of online learning and vocational training overseen by a professional Learning and Development facilitator to ensure that Ian and the training process set in place are fully fit for purpose.

All beneficiaries of the NCCF and BNTVA Members within an hour or so radius of Chesterfield, Derbyshire, will receive a personal letter about the programme. The letter will explain how and when Ian Higginbottom, the Pilot's Outreach Facilitator, will contact them. In selecting the region for the pilot, we analysed the demographics of our combined beneficiary pool to ensure we could recruit a fully representative cross-section of



the various types of potential beneficiaries. This also goes for the social, domestic and geographic factors. The target region contains a vast range of environments, from isolated moorland through sleepy villages and coastal towns to the vibrant cities of the Northern Powerhouse.

We aim to recruit a cohort of at least 150 beneficiaries within the region, enabling pilot delivery in a measured, controlled manner. This is essential as we are using the pilot's progression to fully explore and develop our Community Care Check Programme for national rollout from the end of 2025.

If you live outside the pilot region, you can still receive support from the Care Wellbeing and Inclusion Fund, including access to Independent Living Assessments. We will ensure that any member of our nuclear survivor community has easy access to support should they need it. Indeed, in developing the mobile apps and processing systems for the CCC programme, we have received the bonus of free access to parts of the new systems within the CWI Fund process. This means that all applicants across the UK will benefit from a much faster lead time getting their case before a Grant Panel.



It is also worth noting that the support given by the NCCF under these programmes must fall within the NCCF's charitable purpose. It is impossible to make a legitimate charitable grant to a person with ample funding to self-address the issues of their suffering. That is personal enrichment and effectively taking funds directly from people who need the support of our charity. Unfortunately, some still try this on; just as in service life, the 'Barrack Room Thief' is usually caught out.

Care Wellbeing and Inclusion Fund Grants are not means tested but must pass the 'Charitable Purpose' test. We use the financial details and an applicant's social and domestic components to enable the Grant Panel to consider the situation holistically.

Only if a person has savings not ringfenced for a specific purpose above the levels that the Department for Work and Pensions sets as benefit ceilings do we consider capping the application on the grounds of excess wealth. These levels are currently £6,000 and £16,000 for persons receiving an Old Age Pension.

Applying to the CWI Fund

If you live outside the pilot region, you can still receive support from the Care Wellbeing and Inclusion Fund via:

email office@thencf.org

call **01158 883 442**

or post **NCCF, PO Box 8244**

**Castle Donington
Derby DE74 2BY**



The CCC Outreach Team

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

Nuclear test veterans recognised for contribution to UK security

Nuclear test veterans who contributed uniquely to the UK's security were thanked at a dedicated event hosted by the Ministry of Defence and Office of Veterans Affairs.

Defence Secretary Grant Shapps MP, and Veterans' Minister Johnny Mercer MP, met around fifty veterans at Admiralty House in London. Amongst attendees were veterans who marched past the Cenotaph with their Nuclear Test Medal for the first time this year.

Prime Minister Rishi Sunak announced the medal in November 2022, 70 years after the first British nuclear weapon test. It recognises military, civilian and overseas staff and personnel who participated in Britain's nuclear testing programme during the 1950s and 1960s.

Many veterans of Britain's nuclear tests will receive the new medal, recognising the contribution made by veterans and civilian staff from other nations and across the Commonwealth, including Australia, New Zealand, Fiji and Kiribati.

“

I am incredibly proud to have met veterans and heard their incredible stories, following on from the Government's fulfilled commitment to awarding the Nuclear Test Medal. The service and dedication of our nuclear test veterans is vitally important to the continued safety and security of our Nation.

It is only fitting that we recognise and value their service through this medal, an enduring symbol of the Nation's gratitude.

Defence Secretary Grant Shapps

“

Today's event has been a fantastic opportunity to mark the contributions of the veterans who worked on Britain's nuclear programme over seventy years ago.

The medal is a fitting tribute to those who worked to preserve our national security. I am pleased that so many of our veterans now have their medal.

**Minister for Veterans' Affairs
Johnny Mercer**

“

I received my medal in time for Armistice Day and Remembrance Sunday and I wear it with pride.

This reception was a wonderful gesture on behalf of the Government; they took time to recognise a wide range of our nuclear veterans, not just those of us who are often in the limelight. That was important.

**Jeffrey Liddiatt MBE, Hon. Life
President of the NCCF**



The Government has committed to commemorating the contribution of nuclear test veterans. It has dedicated funding to ensure their stories are passed on to future generations.

As part of the Government's efforts to champion nuclear test veterans' contributions, the Office for Veterans' Affairs also funds a £250,000 oral history project. Work by the University of South Wales and the University of Liverpool is underway to identify and record the life stories of 40 nuclear veterans.

Education organisation Big Ideas, also a recipient of the OVA's £200,000 Nuclear Test Community Fund, worked with four secondary schools in the Autumn term across the four nations. The students met with veterans from the UK and Fiji to hear their stories and experiences.

The NCCF has also received £75,000 of funding from the OVA to launch our Community Care Check pilot programme. It will see over 150 veterans and up to 1,000 family members contacted and engaged by specialist outreach facilitators to identify and address their well-being needs.

Minister for Veterans' Affairs Johnny Mercer recently met with nuclear test veterans in Fiji and joined Fijian nationals in celebrating their National Day on the 10th of October.

The full original press release can be read here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/nuclear-test-veterans-recognised-for-contribution-to-uk-security>

A Good Night's Sleep

Getting a good night's sleep is crucial for maintaining optimal physical and mental health.

When sleep-deprived, individuals may experience a range of adverse effects, including impaired mood, concentration, memory, and an increased susceptibility to illnesses. Fortunately, there are numerous strategies to enhance sleep habits and achieve restful sleep.

1 Establish a Consistent Sleep Schedule:

Adhering to a regular sleep-wake cycle, even on weekends, helps regulate the body's natural circadian rhythm, promoting better sleep initiation and quality.

2 Create a Relaxing Bedtime Routine:

Incorporate calming activities into your pre-sleep routine to signal your body that it's time to wind down. This could include taking a warm bath, reading a book, listening to soothing music, or practising relaxation techniques such as deep breathing or progressive muscle relaxation.

3 Optimise Your Sleep Environment:

Ensure your bedroom is conducive to sleep by maintaining darkness, quietness, and a cool temperature. Darkness promotes melatonin production, the hormone responsible for regulating sleep-wake cycles.

4 Avoid Caffeine and Alcohol Before Bed:

Caffeine, a stimulant, can interfere with sleep onset and disrupt sleep patterns. Similarly, alcohol may initially induce drowsiness but can lead to fragmented sleep later in the night.

5 Engage in Regular Exercise:

Regular physical activity can significantly improve sleep quality. However, avoid strenuous workouts close to bedtime, as they can energise the body and make it harder to fall asleep.

6 Seek Professional Help for Persistent Sleep Issues:

If sleep difficulties persist for more than a few weeks, consult a healthcare professional to rule out underlying medical conditions that may be affecting sleep.

Additional Tips for Falling Asleep Quickly:

- 1 Relax Your Muscles:** Practice progressive muscle relaxation, tensing and relaxing different muscle groups throughout your body, starting from your toes and gradually moving upwards.
- 2 Practice Deep Breathing:** Engage in deep breathing exercises to slow your heart rate and calm your mind. Inhale deeply through your nose, hold your breath for a few seconds, and exhale slowly through your mouth.
- 3 Visualisation:** Imagine yourself in a serene and relaxing environment, such as a tranquil beach, a lush forest, or a cherished childhood place.
- 4 Lavender Oil:** Utilize lavender oil, known for its sleep-promoting properties. Add a few drops to your pillow or diffuse it in your bedroom.

5 Mindfulness and Yoga:

Incorporate mindfulness practices like meditation or yoga into your routine to reduce stress and anxiety, which can hinder sleep.

Remember, consistent effort and patience are crucial to establishing healthy sleep habits and achieving the restorative sleep your body and mind require.

Sleep-Inducing Techniques in More Detail

Progressive Muscle Relaxation

Progressive muscle relaxation (PMR) is a mind-body technique that involves tensing and relaxing different muscle groups throughout your body. This practice can help to relieve muscle tension, reduce stress, and promote relaxation.

Here's how to do PMR:

- 1** Find a quiet and comfortable place where you won't be disturbed.
- 2** Sit comfortably, lying down or sitting with your back straight.
- 3** Close your eyes and take a few deep breaths to relax your body.
- 4** Focus on your right foot. Slowly and gently clench your toes as tightly as you can. Hold for 5 seconds, then release the tension and let your foot completely limp.
- 5** Repeat this process with your right calf, thigh, and buttock, then move to your left foot, calf, thigh, and buttock.

- 6 Next, focus on your right hand. Make a tight fist, clenching your fingers as tightly as you can. Hold for 5 seconds, then relax and let your hand go limp.
- 7 Repeat this process with your forearm, upper arm, and shoulder, then move to your left hand, forearm, upper arm, and shoulder.
- 8 Continue tensing and relaxing different muscle groups throughout your body, including your neck, chest, back, abdomen, and face.
- 9 When you've finished tensing and relaxing all of your muscle groups, take a few deep breaths and notice how your body feels. You should feel relaxed and calm.

Tips for practising PMR:

- Don't tense your muscles too hard. You should only feel a mild to moderate amount of tension.
- Focus on the feeling of tension and relaxation in each muscle group.
- If your mind wanders, gently bring it back to your body and the muscle group you focus on.
- Practice PMR regularly for best results. Aim to do it for 15-20 minutes each day.

PMR is a safe and effective technique for people of all ages. It can be helpful for a variety of conditions, including:

- Stress
- Anxiety
- Insomnia
- Chronic pain
- High blood pressure
- Headaches



Halfpoint / Shutterstock

Deep Breathing Exercises

Deep breathing exercises are a great way to relax your body and mind. They can help to reduce stress anxiety, and improve sleep. There are many different deep breathing exercises, but some of the most common include:

- **Diaphragmatic breathing:** This type of deep breathing uses your diaphragm, the muscle that separates your chest from your abdomen. To do diaphragmatic breathing, lie on your back with a pillow under your head or knees. Place one hand on your belly and the other hand on your chest. Breathe in slowly through your nose, allowing your belly to expand. Your chest should remain relatively still. Exhale slowly through your mouth, letting your belly deflate.
- **Alternate nostril breathing:** This exercise helps to calm the nervous system and promote relaxation. To do alternate nostril breathing, sit with your spine straight and your eyes closed. Place your right index finger on your right nostril and your left index finger on your left nostril. Close your right nostril and inhale slowly through your left nostril. Then, close your left nostril and exhale slowly through your right nostril. Inhale through your right nostril, then close your right nostril and exhale through your left nostril. Continue this pattern for several minutes.
- **Box breathing:** This exercise is a simple and effective way to reduce stress and anxiety. To do box breathing, inhale for 4 counts, hold your breath for 4 counts, exhale for 4 counts, and hold your breath for 4 counts. Repeat this pattern for several minutes.
- **4-7-8 Breathing:** This exercise is said to be very calming and relaxing. To do 4-7-8 breathing, exhale completely through your mouth. Then, inhale for 4 counts through your nose. Hold your breath for 7 counts. Exhale completely through your mouth for 8 counts. Repeat this pattern for several minutes.



BNTVA News Update

Keep up to date with what's happening with the organisation

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Guernsey Veterans presented with Nuclear Test Medal

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BNTVA News Update

Members of the BNTVA should be aware that the charity's legal representatives are still actively defending the organisation against an employment tribunal. As a result, we are unable to share any detailed information until the matter has been resolved and the case has run its course. We apologise for any inconvenience this may cause and appreciate your patience and understanding.



Charity Commission Regulatory Review Closed

In the previous issue, it was reported that the Charity Commission concluded its regulatory review of BNTVA on August 3rd, 2023. The review highlighted problems in the charity's financial controls and decision-making process. The commission provided us with guidance, which we implemented accordingly.

Membership Charges

Membership will remain free! The financial rescue package negotiated by the trustees and the generous provision of free editorial space in Exposure Magazine have ensured that we have enough money to cover our expenses for the year.

Shop Orders

The shop is currently closed, but we do have limited stock of certain items. Please contact shop@bntva.com for further details.

Gift Aid

We received an overwhelming response to our gift aid appeal, which enabled us to submit a significant claim. However, a minor technical issue has caused a delay in receiving the funds.

We are pleased to inform our members that the issue has been resolved, and we anticipate that the funds will be available by the time this magazine reaches them.

Future of the BNTVA

In this edition, you will learn that we have taken measures to secure the preservation of all our archives and artifacts. Our goal is to ensure that future generations in the nuclear community can access them for free. It was a great relief for the trustees to achieve this goal, as we must uphold our members' trust in us to conserve and share our community's valuable heritage and pass on our story to the coming generations.

BNTVA CONNECT

As you may have read in the article about the Community Care Check Programme in this edition, members of the BNTVA and other members of the nuclear community will participate in the NCCF flagship pilot. One of the key features of this programme is the creation of regular meeting groups under the BNTVA Connect banner. We are excited about the possibility of many people in the pilot region being able to participate and hopeful that, if successful, it will be expanded across the UK within the next couple of years.

Conference 2024?

Over the years, the Annual Meeting of the BNTVA has taken various forms. Unfortunately, due to the events of last year, preparations for the 2023 event had to be cancelled. However, we are thrilled to announce that our

Annual Meeting is back for 2024! Our movement has entered a new era with the establishment of the 2024 Nuclear Community Annual Convention, a joint event that brings together charities and organisations committed to serving the public and benefiting our Nuclear Test Veterans and their families.

This new home for our event guarantees that the BNTVA legacy will continue to thrive for many years to come.

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The BNTVA Collection

- Your Heritage, Your Trust

One of the main issues that arose from the troubles which the BNTVA Charity has experienced over the past year was the safety and security of their collection of archives artefacts and collectables. A key part of the rescue package challenge for the Trustees was to ensure that the invaluable heritage of our community was not broken up and lost.

If the charity had become insolvent these items represented some sixty percent of its physical asset wealth and would be a prime target for a bankruptcy yard sale.

We are pleased to announce that, after considerable negotiation and a significant investment from a benefactor, all the BNTVA archival collection material has been saved for future generations. Not only has this been secured but we also managed to safeguard the future development of the collection

BNTVA Members are automatically made members of the BNTVA Collection and will be consulted on major decisions with the organisation predominantly through their representatives on the Advisory Board.

The Collection is supported by an Advisory Board giving guidance and advice regarding the management of the collection. The Board is modelled on the structure and function adopted so successfully within the Centre for the Health Effects of Radiological and Chemical Elements at Brunel University London.

The Board will be headed by the BNTVA Collections Head Curator Mr Wesley Perriman BA(hons), MA.

Wesley obtained a BA in Fine Art at Nottingham Trent in 2006 and spent over 12 years exhibiting as a Sculptor across the UK. He obtained his MA in Curatorial Practise at Leeds Arts University in 2019 specialising in Cold War Collections. Wesley has already been behind two successful BNTVA exhibitions.

The balance of the Board will consist of a number of experts from the Museums and Collections world, Two members appointed from the general BNTVA Membership and a place for each Affiliate Charity.

After some consideration the Community Interest Company format was selected as the best business model through which to operate the BNTVA Collection affording the resilience and revenue generation ability of corporate structure with a deep rooting in delivering the trust of our beneficiary community.

The initial aims of the organisation are to Collect, Conserve, Curate and Cultivate the Heritage of our community for the benefit of that community and future generations.

Collect - Gather documents, artefacts and ephemera relating to the British Nuclear Tests and its community of Veterans and families with associated Cold War.



Conserve - Preserve the collected items to ensure their accessibility for future generations.

Curate - Curate and Catalogue the collection to facilitate better understanding and research of all aspects of the Nuclear Tests and the human story behind them.

Cultivate - Grow and share our heritage with others through access, research, abstract and exhibition.

The BNTVA Collection will have a regular Editorial section in Exposure Magazine ensuring all our activities and unique 'finds' are shared with our community of supporters. We look forward to meeting you in our first public outing at the 2024 Nuclear Community Annual Convention where we will be mounting a mini exhibition and giving a presentation on our goals for the future.

Guernsey Veterans presented with Nuclear Test Medal

The Lieutenant-Governor of Guernsey presents islanders Gerry Robert and Henry Torode with Nuclear Test Medals for their service as part of Britain's nuclear weapons tests in the 1950s.

Lieutenant-Governor Lt General Richard Cripwell presented Gerry Robert and Henry Torode with the new Nuclear Test Medal before an audience of family and friends at Government House.

Both of the veterans have lived in Guernsey for decades after the Christmas Island Test, neither had met each other before the ceremony.

Gerry Robert was 21 when he witnessed the detonation of four atomic bombs at Christmas Island in 1957. He served as a Corporal in the Royal Army Service Corps and witnessed the first explosion from the deck of HMS Messina.

Henry Torode was posted to Christmas Island 1958 serving with the Royal Marines having enlisted in 1956. He operated a landing craft that ferried equipment between the Royal Navy aircraft carriers anchored a mile and a half offshore from the island.

Henry was present for the detonation of two atom bombs and two bigger hydrogen bombs. He said will never forget what he saw. 'I remember looking up at the sky and thinking there were two suns. The flames and the fireball were as bright as the sun, if not brighter.'



Lieutenant-Governor of Guernsey, Lt General Richard Cripwell presented Gerry Robert and Henry Torode

Gerry Roberts said it was unbelievable to be getting recognition after such a long space of time. He said

“

We have waited 66 years for this, the medals are something we never thought we would get.

The Lieutenant-Governor paid tribute to the two military veterans.

'All medal ceremonies are unique, but this one is particularly special,' 'We all owe a debt of thanks to Mr Robert, Mr Torode and others like them for the risks they unwittingly faced so long ago.'

The Nuclear Test Medal is a sovereign award, which bears an image of King Charles III. It recognises military, civilian and overseas staff and personnel who participated in Britain's nuclear testing programme during the 1950s and 1960s.

To date over 3000 medal applications have been received by the MOD.

The story can be read online at the Guernsey Press at:

<https://guernseypress.com/news/2023/12/03/lt-governor-presents-islanders-with-nuclear-test-medals/>

John George - HMS Warrior

John George – official Number: SFX 910256

Served in the Royal Navy for 12 years from 19th February 1952.



John George - 2nd from left with towel around his neck



John George - Standing

I was on-board the H.M.S Warrior heading for the Pacific Island called Malden island for the H-Bomb test, we had scientists on-board the ship.

On reaching the island, we steamed around looking for any other shipping near. The Warrior was the marker ship for dropping off the bomb after the scientist had planted their instruments in the sand on the island, the time had come for the bomb to be dropped.

I and some of the ships crew witnessed the dropping of the bomb, we had special clothing and dark glasses on, we lined the deck with our backs to the island as the Valiant Bomber was above the ship, the captain then started the countdown on the tannoy saying the bomb doors are now open.

On reaching the island the captain said the bomb has been released, after the bomb exploded, he started the countdown of 20, you got the flash first, then the immense heatwave which seemed to go right through your body, once he got to 20, we were allowed to turn around and see the mushroom forming.

After a week, the scientists collected their instruments from the sand and then we had a shooting party on the island in case any of the tropical birds were still alive. On coming back on-board, we had to go down the dirty side of the ship, have a scrub down in the shower and then we were tested for radiation on a Geiger Counter.

This year, I will be turning 90 years old and can say that these images have never left my mind and I can remember it like it was yesterday.

I have a limited ships newspaper from 1957 – The Mid Pacific News Special Souvenir Edition – BOMB GONE!

This tells you the start to finish of the bomber pilot and all the operation, probably the only one left in England.

John George

The Mid Pacific News **SPECIAL**
SOUVENIR EDITION

BOMB GONE!

H-BOMB PUTS BRITAIN ON LEVEL TERMS

Wednesday 15th May 1957

A flash, stark and blinding, high in the Pacific Sky, signalled to the world today Britain's emergence as a top-ranking power of this nuclear age.

No one saw it! No human eye could survive the hellish glare of white-hot air brought to incandescence by the fantastic heat.

But those who were present on this historic occasion, backs turned to the explosion nearly thirty miles away, could sense the brilliant intensity of the flash through closed eyelids. Even through thick clothing a flush of warmth penetrated to the body.

Ten seconds after the burst, spectators turned to see the dying explosion still threatening with the mighty powers that had been unleashed.

High above the sea, and rising rapidly, was an enormous ball of fire that changed swiftly into a bubbling cauldron of coppery-red streaked with grey. A feathery white cap spread over the top of the cloud, extending downwards to form a gigantic snowball poised on a white stem, that appeared in sections between cloud and sea.

The minutes that passed while waiting for the following sound seemed eons. All eyes were fixed upon the fantastic yet familiar mushroom, bridging sea and sky like some giant waterspout. And when it came, it came as a double boom like distant gunfire.

Along with this colossal feeling, everyone felt a subconscious ripple of relaxing tension.

SOUVENIR
 EDITION

As the cloud rose up and penetrated the tropopause, it flattened off into a round disc, while the stem leaned over drunkenly, and dizzily reared.

Hours of Preparation

The 24 hours prior to the release of the bomb were tense and dramatic. Long before dawn on the day before D-Day, the first aircraft roared off the runway on a test flight; and as faint streaks of daylight showed, the ground crew of Valiant 818 and scientific teams began comprehensive preparations for bombing-up. One after another, aircraft were ordered off on their allotted duties. Shackletons of 206 and 210 Squadrons, and Canberra of 76 and 100 Squadrons broke the still morning air with the thunder of their engines as they took off from Christmas Island on weather reconnaissance - with the added duty for the Shackletons of searching vital areas to ensure they were free from shipping. Cont 12

THE BOMB..... continued

From HM Ships Narvik and Warrior, RCAF Ships Rotoiti and Pakaki, from neighbouring islands and stations farther afield, reports continued to arrive in a steady stream. Before noon, the Met Office at Christmas Island had compiled its main forecast for the next 24 hrs - and the Pre-Firing Phase had been declared. From this point, the tempo of work in the Met Office never slackened, as check after check followed at regular intervals.

Close now was the dramatic culmination of 48 hours of intense activity, directed and sustained by the Air Task Group Commander, Air Commodore Weir DFC.

By the time dawn had broken on D-Day, scientists on board ship and at the various instrument sites on Malden Island had checked and rechecked their recording apparatus designed to take photographic records and to measure the air blast pressures, and heat and nuclear radiations. Already in position were forward control ship Warrior (Flyin' the broad pennant of Commodore R B W Hicks, DCO, Commodore Coastal Squadron) and Scientific Base Ship Narvik, together with the observer frigate Alert, and the survey frigate Coik, in which scientific measurements were to be taken. Warrior's helicopters and Avenger aircraft were warming up. Health Physics teams were checking on their equipment.

Back at Christmas Island, vital traffic along the roads linking the Port, Airfield, and Operations Centre was watched anxiously by engineers of the Army Task Group. For months they had shouldered the near impossible task of maintaining road communications for this Day, overcoming topographical difficulties and ceaselessly striving to mend the ravages of tropical rain that washed away the surface quicker than it could be restored.

'All Clear'

The delicate task of stowing the bomb into the bomb-bay of the Valiant was completed. A steady stream of final reports began to flow in and, at 5 a.m., the Task Force Commander, Air Vice Marshal W. E. Dutton, CBE, DSO, DFC, confirmed that the situation was favourable for D-Day, before taking off for Malden where he was to make a final decision from the Scientific Control Ship Narvik. Throughout the previous day, scientists and members of the three Services had been withdrawn from Malden Island and embarked in H.M. Ships Narvik, Warrior

and Messine, until by dusk only a handful of scientists and R.E. personnel remained. The pressure on the Signals communications rose to a peak as messages flashed between the Task Force Commander in Narvik and the Operations Room at Christmas Island, culminating in the order to Valiant 818 to take off.

Piloted by Wing Commander K.C. Hubbard OBE, DFC, the gleaming white aircraft taxied out on to the runway. Only the knowledge of its sinister load touched a graceful take-off with suspense, so nonchalantly did she rise off the tarmac and climb in to the morning sky.

Years of planning and months of heavy labour were now being put to the final test; and Wing Commander Hubbard, holding the plane on its arrow-straight course, formed a triangle of heavy responsibility with the Task Force Commander and the Scientific Director watching from below.

'Bomb Gone!'

The pilot had begun his running commentary, his voice coming through clear and unharried. The trial run-in completed, the giant V-bomber turned northward to take position for the live approach run. In the ships, Task Force personnel and official observers from Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United States turned their backs to the point in the distant sky where the explosion was planned to take place. Then it was "Bomb Gone!" followed by the count down.

Its bomb released, the Valiant made its carefully-rehearsed evasive manoeuvre and swept away on all the power of its four jet engines.

Shortly after, a Canberra carried out the first high-level sampling run. Other aircraft which had been orbiting in the area moved at speed to their appointed tasks. Warrior's helicopters flew towards the target area and took radiation readings from sea-level up to various heights. Ships sampled the sea at their locations.

Among those who felt the greatest satisfaction at the success of the drop were the Garrison Commander, Colonel J.C. Woollett, CBE, MC, and the Officers and men of the 28th Field Engineer Regiment R.E. who had laboured for so many months in the construction of the base and 71 Pz Sqn RE who have been responsible for its maintenance.

Task Force Commander

Air Vice Marshal WB Gulton CBE, DSO, DFC, Task Force Commander, entered Cranswell at the age of eighteen. He was born in Cheshire at Macclesfield forty-six years ago, and studied Engineering at Cardiff before joining the RAF.

During the war he served mainly in Coastal Command,



During which time, while he was stationed in the Azores No 206 Sqn was one of the squadrons under his command

Since the war, Air Vice Marshal Gulton has acted as the RAF Director of the Joint Anti-Submarine School at Londonderry, has been on the Directing Staff of the Joint Services Staff College, served as Air Attache in South America, and was a student of the Imperial Defence College.

Among his interests he counts his family, music of all sorts, and sport "in a middle-aged way". He lives now at Rickmansworth with his family, and his eldest son is in the RAF - at Cranswell.

Scientific Director

Mr W H J Cook, CB, MSc, the Scientific Director, has been connected with the Services since the early days of the last war, when he was concerned with the development of air to ground rockets.

He was born at Trowbridge Wiltshire in 1905 and was educated at Trowbridge



High School. Later he read Mathematics at Bristol University.

At the end of the war he was working on guided missiles under Sir Alwyn Crow. From September 1946 until September 1954 he worked at the Admiralty, first as Director of Physical Research and later as the Chief of the Royal Naval Scientific Service, taking the place of Frederick Brindrett. In September 1954 he joined Sir William Penney to work on the H-bomb.

He lives with his wife and two children at Newbury. Interests? He has none - except his work!

THE BOMBER

The bomb was dropped by Valiant AD 818 of No 49 Squadron.

The Valiant B 1K is a long-range medium bomber powered with four Rolls-Royce RA 14 Avon engines. The four engines are each rated at 9,500 lbs static thrust. It is believed that the aircraft will cruise at speeds in excess of Mach 0.9 at altitudes up to 55,000 feet.

The design of the aircraft was begun by Vickers in 1947, and the first prototype flew on the 18th May 1951. Two years later drawings were sent to Christmas Island, and six years, almost to the day, from first flight to B-111.

The aircraft has a crew of five - 1st Pilot (Capt) Co-pilot, Navigator - latter

Navigator-Ladar (the bomb aimer) and Aero-Electronics Officer.

This huge aircraft is so streamlined and graceful that in the air it gives



no impression of its immense power and size, but one of its four generators could provide the Port base with its electricity supply.

In all, each aircraft has 400,000 lbs of war and half

a million rivets.

As far as striking power is concerned, Britain's present Valiant force is estimated to be six times as powerful as the Lincoln bomber force it replaced.

American observers who saw the aircraft on their way out were most surprised and impressed. It is

laped that they will be even more impressed by the performance put up by the four Valiants entered for the USA Strategic Air Command bombing competition to be held at Lockport in Colorado this August.

FERIO FERENDO



In the uncertain light of dawn, a few hours before the weapon tumbled from the gaping bomb-doors of Valiant 818, a Dakota, with the Task Force Commander aboard, swept low over Malden and landed on the narrow dusty strip.

Three hours after the burst, a second Dakota, piloted by Sqn Ldr W.J. Hurst, touched down, picked up the Task Force Commander and, rising from the island, turned its nose northwards, towards its base.

These two missions were the culmination of nine months work by the Transport Squadron based on Christmas Island. The Squadron consists of Hastings of No 24 (Commonwealth) Squadron and Dakotas of 1325 Flight.

The first Hastings to take part in the operation was stationed at Honolulu. It flew in mail and food for the Sappers who built the new airfield. It, and its solitary successor, had to bounce to a standstill on the old strip. Landing in those days was exciting - often, too exciting!

Later, the Hastings Squadron was based on Christmas Island and the number of aircraft increased.

Today they fly nearly 300 hours a month on a thrice-weekly shuttle to Hirohira and a weekly shuttle - via the "Coral Route" - to Australia.

On the day, among the aircraft circling the target area, was Hastings WD 500, piloted by Flt Lt Roll. On board were a party of observers.

The three Dakotas arrived within a few days of each other in January, after winging their way across frozen Canada and flying the lonely ocean haul from San Francisco to Honolulu.

Since their arrival they have run a daily shuttle to Malden, as well as making several supply drops to outlying islands. On 9 April 57 they successfully parachuted medical supplies to an appendix case on Fanning Island.

In all these missions the Squadron has upheld the fine traditions of Transport Command whose motto is emblazoned on their aircraft "FERIO FERENDO" - "We Strike By Carrying".



MID-PACIFIC 229

was being flashed back to the Joint Operations Centre. At 1215 hrs, the last paragraph of the report - the hottest ever to come over the Pacific air was in the hands of the Editor.

The Editor and his staff of four had stood by all morning. Some of the work had already been done. Personalities had been interviewed, illustrations prepared, headlines sketched out. Nothing else could be done until the vital signal had been received.

By 1300 hrs the front page was rolling and by 1445 hrs the first copy was issued. Copies continued to flow until late afternoon, by which time 2,500 copies had been printed. By eight o'clock in the evening every one of the 2,500 copies had gone. Issue No 229 had come - and gone. Work started on No 230 that same night.

The Mid-Pacific News printed the full story at 2345 hrs GMT on 15 May 1957. This makes it the only English paper to carry the news under a 15 day dateline.

At 1035 hrs Local Time, the officers and scientists in the Operations Room, Christmas Island, were listening intently to the voice of the Valiant. At 1036 the sensation was shattered. A click gave them the news they had all waited for - the bomb had gone.

How was that news brought to you? Only forty-five minutes later the Task Force Commander approved the eye-witness account written by the Mid-Pacific News observer on USS Warrior, and the signal

THE QUEEN VISITS



*The word has come by semaphore
That officers and crew
Await replacements from the shore
Of what is good for you.*

**GUINNESS
FOR STRENGTH**



NAVY NEWS

June, 1957

THE HOME FLEET



The Queen's Message to the Fleet

At the conclusion of Her Majesty's three-day visit to the Fleet at Comsary, the following messages were exchanged between the Flag Officer, Royal Yachts, and the Commander-in-Chief, Home Fleet:

From Flag Officer, Royal Yachts, to the Commander-in-Chief, Home Fleet: "I have been greatly impressed by

the fine bearing of the Officers and men and the smart appearance of the ships. I was particularly interested to witness the air operations from H.M.S. Ark Royal this morning which were carried out with so much skill and dash. Please convey my congratulations to all Officers and men and assure them that I and my husband have much enjoyed

our visit. Splice the Mainbrace, Elizabeth R."
From Commander-in-Chief, Home Fleet, to Flag Officer, Royal Yachts: "Please convey the following message to Her Majesty. Officers and men with humble duty, thank Her Majesty for her gracious message. It has been an honour and a pleasure."



Brian McDonald

My name is Brian McDonald, I was called up to do my National Service in May 1957. I started my service at Malvern then on to Cove No 6 for training as a Field Engineer, then on to join 38 CORP Engineer Regiment in British Army of the Rhine (BAOR) in Osnabruck Germany.

Like most of the lads with me, we were sent back to Ripen before leaving for the troop ship Dunera. While on the ship I was a Barber, and if you were aboard the ship it's more than likely I cut your hair.

When we finally arrived at Christmas Island I was posted to London port cold store as a Engine Hand.

In May I went to Honolulu for holiday which was wonderful. I went with a really nice guy from Dundee called Bill Davy and like all the guys we enjoyed it, as it was much better than being on the Island.

When I got back to the Christmas Island I was told to get my stuff together, and move to the main camp to take a trade test as an engine fitter. I passed the test and was sent to join the rest of the fitters in 73 Christmas Island squadron. The lads on the Island were a great bunch. Staff Sergeant Fell was in charge and he looked after all his lads. In this job we all worked at every site on the island, Transmitter, JOC, X-site, B-site, the air field and main camp and loads of other places.

We looked after all the generators on the island which were driven by large diesel engines, our job was to keep them in good working order. We worked in two man teams and my side kick was Cyril Grady from Doncaster, the nicest guy you could ever wish to meet, we had a lot of great times together.

Occasionally we had Jim Oxtan work us. Jim and I became life long friends. In 1968 Jim went to live in Vancouver where I was lucky enough to spend some time with him and his wife. Sadly Jim died in 2020 from Leukaemia. He worked at the SIMON Fraser university and in his spare time, he built a seagoing yacht out of steel which was a magnificent piece of engineering. We managed to spend some time on the boat off the coast of Vancouver.

When I got back to the UK I was posted to Chatham from there to Gillingham then to the West Tofts in Norfolk. While here I got to tonsillitis and ended up with Bury St Edmond light infantry. When I did get back to Gillingham I went with three Officers to Wales on a outward bound course and finally it was back to Gillingham for Demob.

After my national service I went back into engineering as a tool maker which I did till my retirement in 1997.

To those of you who are no longer with us, I salute you, and to the boys who still turn up on parade I salute you too.

God bless you all, from Brian
p.s. and please remember that,
an aspirin a day helps you work
rest and play.



Brian Boswell

This is my true story during army service.

In 1957 I landed by civilian aircraft in Christmas island. Being night time we were put in 2 man tents at the Airport and then in the morning we went to the main camp allotted tents this time a new troop '2 troop'.

The officer of this new troop was a captain, I believe a national service man and was a qualified civil Engineer hence the rank.

At the camp we were put into 6 men tents, our first job was to extend the cook house area. We also built an area for servicemen to sit and eat meals and have a drink, play chess, plus a fish and chip shop in a small hut. My tent was near the open air cinema and the Navy who were operating the radar on the island.

We put our jungle canvas beds on made up wooden platforms to get us off the coral sand floor. The Island was infected with rats and land crabs that left trails in the sand that could be seen each morning. One night the chap sleeping along side me woke up to a rat gnawing his hair he knocked it off his pillow.

After when we had finished the cook house area we went to another site called B site then onto C site then D site being the furthestest away.

In my civilian life I worked for a steel erecting company so me and two others were given the job to erect steel panels over the Scientific equipment they was used to get readings. However one of my jobs was to use a compressor along with wire brushes to shine up bolt heads to get good readings. We worked with a mobile crane driver and generator engineer working day and night as it got too hot on the steel.

The Generator Engineer was doing his National service, when his time was up he was paid full civilian wages to stay on.

On using the wire brushes to shine bolt heads I had a wire off of a brush go into my eye. I had to go to the main camp for an RAF doctor to remove it with what he termed a spud digger. Getting back to D site became a problem. After talking to a RAF Driver going to the Airport to collect the COs mail and got a lift with him. He asked me where was D site was. I said well do you know C site? Well D site is further on. All was ok until the Jeep got bogged down. He should have got off the track we were on but did not see the diversion sign. We tried and could not move the Jeep and by this time he was getting upset as he was late. I looked back saw a cloud of dust about 2 miles away and realised it was a vehicle heading towards us. It helped us tow out our Jeep and we quickly sped off for Site D. I did feel sorry for the driver, he was an hour late collecting his COs mail and I had my eye in Nelson shield.

On finishing our work at D site we returned to the main camp. We had a new man in our tent drafted in from 37 Squadron. He'd had a bit of trouble working at the Port in 37 Squadron so was put in our troop. I became very friendly with this man from South Wales, his name was Taffy Morris.

It was D day for the Grapple X H-bomb to drop. I was with the rest of our Squadron sitting along side Taffy when the bomb test took place. We were sitting under a palm tree on the beach, tannoy up in the tree above us. The speaker said in an emergency go and lie in the sea use as it as a thermo shield.

We had K.G. jungle clothing on as well as a sweat rag under our hats over sunglasses. We had our eyes closed but it was like looking at the sun. We had our backs to the bomb but it was so hot I thought that's our lot, then it died off and we were invited to look at the fire ball charging up the mushroom cloud. WALLOP it blew us down to the floor.

Later as some days past on a rumour went around that one could put in for 4 days leave in Honolulu so I did.

We landed at Hickam Airbase and was told that a new engine had to be sent from UK as we had engine trouble whilst travelling. We then had to move from Hickam to Fort DeRussy and were there for 2 weeks before we went back.

On landing back on the Island at the Airport who should I bump into but Taffy Morris. I asked him what he was doing there and he said he was to go to a specialist in Hawaii to be looked at. I asked why and he pulled down his top and showed me under his ears, around his neck there were was a lot of spots that had come up. That was the last I saw of him.

When I got back home back to the barracks at Maidstone in Kent, the CO of our regiment sent for me and another, being the only 2 left in the regiment who shared the same tent as Taffy Morris .

The CO after asking lots of different questions said that Taffys death was nothing to do with the bomb.

I'm sorry but this I do not agree. Rest in peace mate.

Brian Boswell

Suffering Under the Shadow of the Atom Bomb

K.L.Bexon

Imagine: a great flash of burning light paired with a cacophonous boom pounding the air. The perversion of nature. The terror.

The atomic bomb has been brought back into social consciousness with the release of the film 'Oppenheimer', but also, more worryingly, with the escalation of Russia's efforts in their war with Ukraine. Fears of a return to the days of bomb testing are creeping into the news, particularly now that Russia has voted to remove their ban on atomic- weapons testing.

As a descendant of a nuclear test veteran, I can firmly state that we should not trivialise nuclear testing. The destructive nature of these bombs is obvious. While many people know that radiation poisoning has consequences, not everyone fully comprehends the true reality. Not everyone lives with those consequences daily- even now.

The nuclear test veterans have had to live their lives under the shadow of the atomic bomb, just simply for doing their jobs. My grandfather, Derek Heaps, did his RAF national service in the 1950s. The Ministry of Defence positioned him at Kiritimati (also known as Christmas Island), one of the locations for Britain's nuclear tests. He, the other servicemen, and the locals could never have imagined the effects which that period would have on the rest of their lives. Nor could they imagine the lack of responsibility the Ministry of Defence would take for the impact on their health.

Between the 50s and 60s, the MOD tested 9 nuclear bombs under Operation Grapple. Servicemen and their equipment filled the island, where friendly native people still lived. During the time of the testing, no one had made it clear to any of the natives or servicemen that they could be putting their health at risk. The islanders and servicemen continued to fish and swim in the same sea that had nuclear bombs releasing their waste only 12 miles away. As part of their various duties, the servicemen washed the planes that had flown through the mushroom clouds and also collected samples from the beach without being provided with protective clothing.

During the tests themselves, my grandfather and the other servicemen were told simply to kneel and place their hands over their eyes; they were under the impression that this is all they would need to do in order to remain safe. He recounted to his family the great flash of heat and the boom of the bomb, alongside a terrifying vision of his own skeletal hands pressed against his eyeballs as the blinding light of the bomb flashed over him.

It would not be long after their service that the veterans would notice issues with their health. Both they and their descendants have experienced various health issues, including genetic mutations in babies born into their families.

They have reported misshapen or enlarged body parts, a collection of rare conditions, cancer, infertility, miscarriages, missing limbs and missing reproductive organs in their babies, and much more. The effects can travel down through the family tree by several generations; currently, the veteran community has experienced 4 generations' worth of health implications from the testing in the 50s and 60s.

In my family, there have been significant signs of radiation and its effects. My grandfather had leukaemia, my mother has multiple skin and bone issues, and I require daily physiotherapy for hypermobility. This is just a snapshot of a much larger picture of suffering across this community.

Years after his service, the MOD had requested access to my grandfather's medical record. He was told that this was supposed to be kept a secret from him, which his doctor felt uneasy about; this made my grandfather suspicious about how much the MOD had understood about the health risks before sending the men to the tests. After, he read a notice in the newspaper. It requested any ex-servicemen who had found their medical record investigated by the MOD to contact the writer of the notice. The veterans met and took action.

This group laid the groundwork for the British Nuclear Test Veterans Association (BNTVA), along with the Nuclear Community Charity Fund, and still helps nuclear test veterans and their families with healthcare, legal aid, and accommodations.

Naturally, the veterans have sought compensation several times over the years, but each time they have hit a brick wall. Conclusively proving that all these different health issues are tied together is difficult, but collecting evidence from a secretive body like the Ministry of Defence is even more challenging. The MOD would need to accept responsibility for these health concerns in order for compensation to be granted. Many veterans feel that this will never happen, as it would mean the MOD would have to admit they were aware of the risks to veteran health, to begin with.

And there's the big question. Were they aware?

I had always found this a confusing question when I was growing up. The consequences of radiation poisoning have been known for years. Tesla burned his fingers under an X-ray in 1892. Hermann Joseph Meller understood the mutagenic effects of radiation in 1927. Madame Curie died of aplastic pernicious anaemia that developed because of radiation poisoning in 1934. My grandfather had seen men wearing hazmat suits and holding Geiger counters in their hands during Operation Grapple in the 50s. Surely, it was obvious.

But apparently, it is not. At least, not to those who control the discourse around legal acceptance of responsibility for risk and damage to both the lives of their veterans and family members.



Derek Heaps

For a significant number of years, there have been documents in the public domain that show that the Americans warned the British Government of potential health issues. And yet they went on with the brief of “testing the effects of the British Nuclear deterrent on men and equipment”.

These individuals, who made the decisions that affected so many people and others unborn, are all long since passed. They took the shame of not doing the right thing by their charges to their graves, leaving modern day politicians to deal with the issues that were caused. Unfortunately, the faceless cadre behind the MOD and British arms industry is one of the most powerful lobbies in the UK; they continue to compound the damage and hurt by those initially responsible.

In more recent times, politicians like Rishi Sunak have acknowledged our community's suffering. They held a special event at the National Memorial Arboretum and distributed commemorative Nuclear Test medals. Note that these are commemorative only.

They do not acknowledge the risk and rigour, heartache and suffering, which would leave the faceless cadre open to compensation claims.

The NCCF has benefited from government grants that provide help directly to our community. Much more can be done, and the door is open to discuss and work with government departments to improve the lives of our nuclear survivor community.

Let's return to Oppenheimer. Many people think of the planet-destroying capability of nuclear weapons when they hear, “Now I am become Death, the destroyer of worlds”. But I think the ‘worlds’ being destroyed are the personal worlds in which the veterans and their families live, worlds that have been, and continue to be, destroyed.

Will the faceless cadre behind the MOD release their inhuman, hurtful stranglehold upon these innocent people and allow the Government to step up and support them?

I don't think so.

Marian Blackburn

1931–2023 Aged 92



Exposure Magazine has learned of the sad passing of Marian Blackburn. Marian was a well-known figure in the nuclear community for many years. She encouraged her son Martin to become active and supported him through his time with the BNTVA and NCCF. We extend our sincere condolences to Martin and the family on this sad occasion.

Marian Blackburn 1931–2023 Aged 92

Marian lived in Tyldesley, Greater Manchester and was Married to Norman Blackburn. He was a Nuclear Test veteran who served on Christmas Island from 1957 to 1958. Norman sadly passed away in April 1984.

Following his passing, Marian took up the fight for justice. She attended all the BNTVA Annual General meetings, taking her son Martin with her until the slow deterioration of her health prevented her from making the journeys.

Marian spent eight weeks in hospital following a fall at her home. She leaves four children, seven grandchildren and four great-grandchildren. She passed away peacefully on the 18th of November with her family at her bedside. Marian is sadly missed by all her family.



Nuclear Test medal

We have seen comments on social media and recieved phone calls regarding the Nuclear Test medal, specifically engraving and Medal Bar pins.

I know of 2 veterans who have used Award Medals to get their medals mounted
<https://www.awardmedals.com/>
I have also been told of the company Worcester Medals which will also mount medals
<https://worcmedals.com/>

Award Medals said they will not engrave original commemorative medals, the reason being if a mistake is made during the process they will have ruined an irreplaceable medal.

I would assume this would be the same for Worcester medals.

I was informed by Award that they will be selling small and full-size replicas of the Nuclear Test Medal at some point in the near future. They will be able to engrave and mount the full-size replica if purchased from them. I would deduce that Worcester Medals will also offer the same service as they also sell official MOD replica medals.



Gov.uk

Work is currently being undertaken on the Kings Coronation Medal replicas, which may indicate that the Nuclear Test Medal Replicas will be available soon.

Exposure Magazine and the NCCF do not endorse either of the two companies mentioned. If you decide to use them for their services it is entirely your decision to do so.

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Dates for Your Diary 2024



Nuclear Community Convention 2024

Hilton Hotel East Midlands Airport. Full details on booking will be published soon.



All Tests Reunion 2024

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

For details call **0203 286 3988**
or visit: www.labrats.international/atr



National Atomic Veterans Awareness Day (NAVAD) 2024

National Memorial Arboretum (NMA) Alrewas.
Full details will be in the next edition of exposure.



National Service of Remembrance 2024

Cenotaph, Whitehall, London. Full details will be in the next edition of exposure.

If you have an event planned in 2024 and would like to let the readership know about it, contact us on **0115 888 3442** and leave a message or email editor@exposure.press



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.

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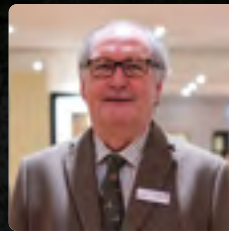
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