

Jeffrey Ronald Liddiatt

Esq. MBE · Hon. FBUL



1940 – 2026

It is with heartfelt sadness that the Nuclear Community Charity Fund records the passing of Jeffrey Ronald Liddiatt — known to all who were fortunate enough to know him simply as "Jeff" — who died peacefully at his home in Portishead on the morning of 1st April 2026, surrounded by members of his beloved family.

Jeff's life was one of extraordinary purpose. A man of quiet humility and genuine decency, he dedicated decades of tireless voluntary service to the community of British nuclear test veterans and to the many organisations that sought to support them. His legacy is not measured in titles alone — though those he received were richly deserved — but in the meaningful difference he made to the lives of thousands of men and women who had served their country in conditions they could never have anticipated.

Early Life, Military Service & Family

Jeff joined the Royal Air Force and served during the Minor Trials at Maralinga, Australia — a period that would shape the arc of his public life. On returning to civilian life, he married Annette in 1964, and together they built the family he remained immensely proud of throughout his life. Their first son, Jonathan, was born in 1965, followed by Helen in 1968 and Crispin two years later. In time, the family grew to include grandchildren and great-grandchildren, each one a testament to the warmth and stability that Jeff and Annette created together.

Compelled by ill health to retire early from full-time employment — itself a consequence of his service — Jeff refused to withdraw from public life. Characteristically, he resolved instead to redouble his contribution to the voluntary sector, channelling his formidable energy and intellect into causes that would outlast him.

Healthcare Committees • 1998–2018

Jeff's commitment to public service found early expression in healthcare governance. In 1998, he became Chairman of the Avon Ambulance Patient and Public Initiative, a role he retained when the organisation merged into the Great Western Ambulance Patient and Public Involvement committee in 2001. Those around him consistently recognised his enlightened and steady leadership: in 2014 he was appointed Public Governor for Somerset to the South West Ambulance Foundation Trust, serving two full terms until 2017.

Concurrently, Jeff sat on the OneCare health committee for North Somerset, Bristol and South Gloucestershire, and served as Chairman of the Patient Participation Group of the Harbourside Family Practice between 2013 and 2018. The chairmanships he held across these bodies reflected the deep respect his peers afforded him and the inspiring strength of his leadership, encouraging others to follow his example.

British Nuclear Test Veterans Association • 1985–2018

It is within the nuclear veterans community that Jeff's contribution was perhaps most extensively felt. When he joined the British Nuclear Test Veterans Association (BNTVA) in 1985, it was an organisation struggling to define its purpose — drifting uncertainly between the bonds of old comradeship, a desire for recognition, and the impulse to protest. Jeff saw what it could become.

It is without doubt that his most enduring achievement within the BNTVA was not any single campaign or diplomatic success, but a fundamental shift in the soul of the organisation itself. When he joined in 1985, the Association was caught between grievance and camaraderie, its energies often consumed by anger at the injustices its members had suffered — injustices that were real, and that Jeff never minimised. But he understood, with characteristic clarity, that anger alone could not reduce suffering or improve lives. With patience and quiet conviction, he steered the organisation away from blame and toward something more powerful: a culture of humility, compassion and constructive engagement. Under his guidance, the BNTVA became less a vehicle for protest and more a community of genuine care — one that listened to its members,

worked alongside rather than against institutions, and measured its success not in headlines, but in the lives it improved. It was a transformation that required courage as well as wisdom, for it meant persuading men who had every right to their anger to channel it into something more lasting. That Jeff achieved this, and that whilst the BNTVA is no longer, the sister organisation he created from this continues to serve veterans and their families in that same spirit, may be the truest measure of his legacy.

In 2009, Jeff became the BNTVA National Secretary, taking the lead in negotiations to secure formal Parliamentary recognition of the nuclear test veterans' contribution to national security. Working closely with Nigel Heaps MBE and the Rt Hon John Baron CBE, he helped deliver a campaign that culminated in a formal statement to the House of Commons by the Prime Minister on 2nd July 2014 — a moment of historic significance for every veteran and their family.

Between 2010 and 2016, Jeff forged links with international organisations, including the French Association des vétérans des essais nucléaires, and negotiated full consultative status for the BNTVA within the United Nations — a remarkable diplomatic achievement for a voluntary organisation.

In 2016, Jeff was invited by the French Veterans Association to participate in the rekindling of the eternal flame at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier beneath the Arc de Triomphe de l'Étoile in Paris. The honour was extraordinary in its significance: the only other Britons to have been accorded this distinction are Her Late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and Prime Ministers Winston Churchill, Anthony Eden, Harold Macmillan and Tony Blair. Jeff, along with the President of AVEN, Jean Luc Sans, jointly rekindled the flame in a memorable symbol of the unity between British and French veterans.

Nuclear Community Charity Fund · June 2017–May 2020

When the Nuclear Community Charity Fund (NCCF) was established to manage almost £6 million in funds on behalf of the nuclear veterans community, Jeff was appointed as its inaugural Chairman. He guided the organisation through its formative period with characteristic resourcefulness and compassion, ensuring that all the necessary structures were established to serve its beneficiaries with both efficiency and empathy.

On standing down from the chairmanship in 2019, Jeff assumed the role of Treasurer, overseeing the migration of the charity's finances to the ethical Charities Aid Foundation Bank — a move entirely in keeping with his lifelong commitment to principled and sustainable practice. He finally retired as an active trustee on 31st May 2020, whereupon the NCCF honoured him with the newly created position of Honorary Life President, recognising that his influence and counsel remained invaluable to all who served the organisation.

Centre for the Health Effects of Radiological and Chemical Agents, Brunel University London · 2017–2024

Jeff made a defining contribution to the establishment of the Centre for the Health Effects of Radiological and Chemical Agents (CHRC) at Brunel University London — from negotiating its considerable funding to shaping the ongoing direction of its academic activities. Appointed Chairman of the Advisory Board, he brought his characteristic skill to the task of blending the needs of the academic community with those of the veterans and families whose lives the Centre existed to serve.

His colleagues at Brunel held him in exceptional regard. Even after 2023, when he retired from the chairmanship, his advice and guidance continued to be sought by those who had worked alongside him. In 2024, Brunel University London conferred upon Jeff the honour of Honorary Fellowship in recognition of his outstanding services to the nuclear veterans community and to the CHRC — a fitting tribute from an institution that had come to cherish his wisdom.

Appointment to the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire · 2023

In the first New Year Honours List bestowed by His Majesty King Charles III, Jeff was appointed Member of the Civil Division of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire — his MBE recognising his decades of service to nuclear test veterans and to the community in Bristol. It was an honour that those who knew him felt he had long deserved, and one he received with the grace and modesty that defined him throughout his life.

Jeff Liddiatt gave far more than could reasonably have been asked of any one person. He did so willingly, persistently and selflessly — always placing the needs of veterans, their families and the wider community before his own comfort and health. He was a chairman, a negotiator, a diplomat and an advocate; but above all, he was a man of inspirational decency.

The NCCF extends its deepest condolences to Annette, to Jonathan, Helen and Crispin, and to Jeff's grandchildren and great-grandchildren. He is mourned by all who had the privilege of working alongside him, and by the countless individuals whose lives he quietly and substantially changed for the better.

