



BNTVA

the Charity for Atomic Veterans
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Monthly Newsletter – November 2017

Welcome to the November edition of the BNTVA Monthly newsletter. This printed version will be distributed to anyone who requests it. We will aim to take the news items from Social Media and the Newsdesk and collate them together. If you do not wish to receive this newsletter, please contact us using the above contact details.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION REGARDING MEMBERSHIP

Many of you will be receiving letters from your bank to inform you that your standing order has been cancelled because that account number no longer exists. Unfortunately, because our charity number has changed the central bank number has also had to change. The sort code has not changed but details for the new bank account is:

Sort Code 40 47 31 Account number: 94821238

Our sincere apologies to you all for the inconvenience this has caused. If you would like a new Direct Debit form, please contact s.hern@bntva.com or call Sandie on: 0208 144 3080 and one will be sent to you. Thank you all for your patience.

WOULD YOU LIKE AN ARTICLE TO GO IN THE MAGAZINE?

Would you like something to go in this coming Magazine?

If so, please email editor@bntva.com and have it in by 7th January 2018.

This is your magazine so please help us to create the magazine that you would like.

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MESSAGE FROM CHAIRMAN ALAN OWEN FOR REMEMBRANCE

The BNTVA will March in this year's remembrance parade, I have the honour of participating in this year's parade, representing the Nuclear Veterans.



Remembrance Day Isn't just about war and those we've lost, but about ideals and what we stand for, it's about respecting our past and looking hopefully forward, and more than anything thanking those who have served.

After all, as that well-known Remembrance Day quote goes by Argentine writer Jose Narosky. " In war, there are no unwounded soldiers " .

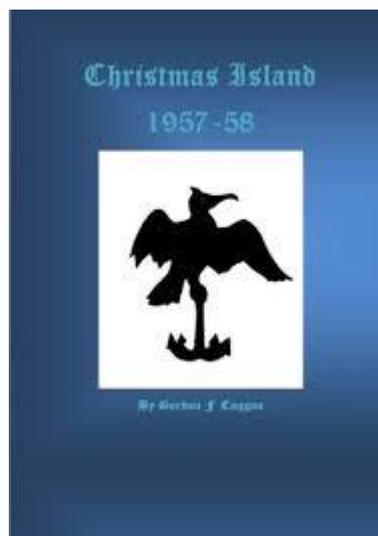
We wear Remembrance Day poppies on our lapel, let us unite against war and remember those who continue to feel the pain every day.

THIS MONTH MARKED THE 60TH ANNIVERSARY OF GRAPPLE X

On the 8th November 1957 this test took place and ensured that the British became to be a thermal nuclear power.



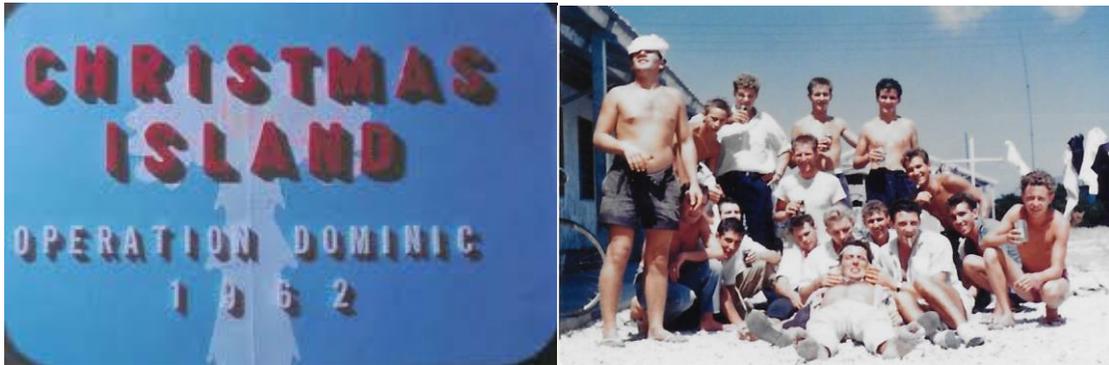
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CHRISTMAS ISLAND 1962 – OPERATION DOMINIC

“Operation Dominic” was the American series of 31 nuclear tests in the South Pacific, 24 of these were to be detonated off the South-East point of Christmas Island. Two of these tests failed but the other 22 were successful. The tests took place between 25th April and 11th July. (Just 78 days). By the time of the first test there were 3,500 British and American servicemen participating on the Island.



The largest bomb in the series was “Bighorn” which had a yield of 7.7MT. two and a half times higher yield than Britain’s largest (“Grapple Y”), and about fifty times higher yield than “Little Boy” the bomb that America dropped on Hiroshima, 6th Aug. 1945.

The other tests in the series: - 5 from Johnston Island and 1 off California. It was to be the last atmospheric test series conducted by America, as the Test Ban Treaty was signed the following year.

The operation was undertaken by “Joint Task Force Eight”.



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BRUNEL UNIVERSITY

The first meeting of the advisory board to the CHRC (Brunel University) was held in November and the projects are progressing well. The test subjects for the DNA test program have been selected and their GP surgeries informed of the study. This is the first stage in process which will determine the extent of the mutations. Further details will be released by Brunel University on the launch of the centre in early 2018. When I have these dates, I will let you all know.

MEDAL RECOGNITION

During the Weston Super Mare reunion, I was tasked with writing to the government and the queen regarding a medal for the Nuclear Veterans. I have now received three responses and I am disappointed to say that they are still not willing to review the situation. This is something I will not give up on and will continue to fight, but if you can write to your local MP's we can keep the fight for recognition through a medal going. Below are the letters I received:



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Our ref: D/Min(Lords)/FH MC2017/10489e

14th November 2017

I am sorry for responding with what will no doubt be a disappointing reply, but let me assure you that none of these deliberations undermines the esteem in which all our veterans are held, nor diminishes the invaluable work they undertook while serving in the Armed Forces.

Dear Mr. Owens,

Thank you for your letter dated 4 October to the Prime Minister, The Rt Hon Theresa May MP, regarding medallic recognition for Nuclear Test Veterans (NTV). Your letter has been passed to the Ministry of Defence and I am replying as the Minister responsible for Honours and Awards.

Please let me start by saying that the Government continues to recognise and be grateful to all Servicemen who participated in the British nuclear testing programme. Their contribution ensured that the United Kingdom was equipped with an effective nuclear deterrent during the Cold War which, thankfully, we never needed to use.

As part of the Sir John Holmes' independent medal review, the Committee for the Grant of Honours, Decorations and Medals (HD Committee) considered proposals to institute a NTV's Medal. Unfortunately the HD Committee concluded that this operational duty did not meet the criteria that would normally be recognised by the award of a medal.

I can assure you that decisions on medal awards are not entered into lightly or done quickly: a great deal of scrutiny and debate is involved. However, it is primarily the responsibility of those in Command at the time to determine when, if appropriate, to request medals for campaign service. This long established practice is based on the considered view that those closest to the activities in question are those best able to judge the appropriateness or otherwise of honours and decorations. In this particular case those in command did not make a case for medallic recognition.

With regard to decisions made by New Zealand concerning their own honours and awards, it may be helpful if I explain that this is the sole responsibility of the Government concerned. New Zealand withdrew from the Imperial Honours System many years ago and have since introduced a number of medals for which there are no British equivalents.

Alan Owens FBKS CITP
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With every good wish,

Yours sincerely,



THE RT HON THE EARL HOWE PC

Chairman's Final Thoughts

I have now settled in my new home in Wales and continue to work as hard as I can to ensure that the Nuclear Veterans are not forgotten. With Christmas coming up, may I wish you all a great Christmas and a Happy New Year from all the board of trustees.

I hope that you are enjoying the newsletter and that it is keeping you informed of the work that we continue to do. If we can help you in anyway, please do get in touch.

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