



Royal Star & Garter

Care with courage

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Remembrance 2024: Army veteran's service recognised after 65 years

An Army veteran in High Wycombe has finally received a medal in recognition of the dangerous work he undertook 65 years ago, ahead of Remembrance.

Michael Mossop received the Nuclear Test Medal after his daughter Sarah applied for it on his behalf.

Released in 2022, after years of campaigning by veterans and charities, the Nuclear Test Medal is awarded to UK service and civilian personnel, and individuals from other nations, who served at the locations where the UK atmospheric nuclear tests were conducted, between 1952 and 1967.



Michael with his Nuclear Test Medal

Michael was serving in the Royal Army Pay Corps (RAPC) and was stationed on Christmas Island in 1959, shortly after hydrogen bomb tests had taken place on the South Pacific island.

The 94-year-old lives at Royal Star & Garter in High Wycombe, a care home which provides loving, compassionate care to veterans and their partners living with disability or dementia. The charity has also launched new services to reach out into the community. Royal Star & Garter's Homes are some of the first to achieve Veteran Friendly Framework status, where the understanding and recognition of those who served in the Armed Forces is central to the care they provide.

Michael, who is now living with dementia, joined the Army in 1951, and served for 31 years, rising to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel.

In 1959, he was nominated to be Paymaster to Operation Grapple, the code name given for the controversial hydrogen bomb tests on Christmas Island, which took place in 1957 and 1958. In his



Michael, seen here on the left, on Christmas Island



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memoirs, Michael recalled: "I was never present at a nuclear explosion. However, I have stood where they had been exploded. The earth at ground zero was ash, blackened and in many places had turned into something like glass and clinker, like the interior of an old burnt-out coke stove."

Keen photographer Michael captured many images on the island, showing fellow soldiers resting and relaxing, and on a military parade.

Daughter Sarah said: "During his time on Christmas Island, he was distressed to see the impact of the tests close up, and he often spoke of his relief that no more tests were carried out there."



Some of the many photos taken by Michael while he served on Christmas Island

Sarah said that, as teenagers, she and her brother would discuss difficult and challenging issues with her dad. She said: "He said he saw his role in the Army as a peacekeeper, doing things to protect his country. He was in his teens during WWII, and people he knew died, and he was very conscious that we didn't want to live through another major war. He was part of the effort to stop that happening again, and that was a valuable contribution."

Sarah said her father was fortunate to not suffer health conditions which have affected other nuclear testing veterans, and added: "As a family, we are immensely proud of Dad. It was nice that we were able to apply for the medal and to remember and commemorate the work he did ahead of Remembrance. I think it will mean a lot to him, as the Army was a massive part of his life."

There have been growing calls for veterans who were exposed to radiation from nuclear tests, and their families, to receive compensation.

Royal Star & Garter in High Wycombe is welcoming new residents. For more information on this, the new services it has launched, or to work at the Home, go to www.starandgarter.org/hw

To support Royal Star & Garter this Remembrance, go to www.starandgarter.org/remembrance



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Video link: <https://vimeo.com/1024295597>

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About Royal Star & Garter

Our Charity provides loving, compassionate care to veterans and their partners living with disability or dementia.

About Veteran Friendly Framework

The VFF is currently a two-year programme funded by Royal Star & Garter, the Armed Forces Covenant and Royal British Legion, running to April 2025. It aims to tackle loneliness and isolation, and deliver improved health and wellbeing outcomes for over 25,000 veterans living in care homes across England. It will support the practical, emotional and social needs for the Armed Forces community by providing care homes with resources to assess and improve their offer. <https://veteranfriendlyframework.org.uk/>

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Royal Star & Garter
is a member of the
National Care Forum