

Nuclear test veterans to receive medal as event remembers their service 70 years on

- Prime Minister announces new medal to honour the service of veterans of Britain's nuclear tests on 'plutonium anniversary'
- 22,000 veterans are expected to be eligible for the new honour, marking their service and contribution to the United Kingdom's nuclear test programme.
- Comes as veterans and their families gather at the National Memorial Arboretum today to pay tribute to nuclear heroes, who have kept the country safe for 70 years

A new medal is to honour the significant contribution of veterans and civilian staff from across the Commonwealth, who participated in Britain's nuclear testing programme, the Prime Minister will announce today.

The award comes as the country pays tribute to the veterans of the United Kingdom's nuclear test programme at the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire this morning.

The event, which takes place 70 years after the first British test of a nuclear weapon, will be attended by the Prime Minister, the Defence Secretary and Veterans' Affairs Minister Johnny Mercer.

Service personnel, veterans and their families, and representatives from military charities will also attend.

Prime Minister Rishi Sunak said:

I am incredibly proud that we are able to mark the service and dedication of our nuclear test veterans with this new medal. Their commitment and service has preserved peace for the past 70 years, and it is only right their contribution to our safety, freedom and way of life is appropriately recognised with this honour.

This medal is an enduring symbol of our country's gratitude to each and every person who played a part in this effort and their loved ones who supported them.

The veterans and civilians who participated in the United Kingdom's nuclear test programme, the first of which was known as Op Hurricane, made the UK the third nuclear power. This work contributed to achieving the nuclear deterrent – the ultimate guarantee of UK sovereignty which continues to keep us safe today, and helps guarantee international security.

Minister for Veterans' Affairs Johnny Mercer said:

This medal honours those who served far from home, at a crucial time in our nation's history.

To this day the nuclear deterrent remains the cornerstone of our defence, and that is only because of the service and contribution of the brilliant veterans and civilian personnel.

It's right that we mark this contribution today, 70 years on from Britain's first nuclear test.

Defence Secretary Ben Wallace said:

I am delighted that a commemorative medal can be given to our Nuclear Test Veterans, who have made an invaluable contribution to the safety and security of the UK, and who we recognise and value for their enduring service to our nation.

The Nuclear Test Medal will be a commemorative medal that can be worn by recipients.

The medal also recognises the contribution made by veterans and civilians from across Australia, New Zealand, Fiji and Kiribati. All service personnel and civilians under UK command, including close partners from the Commonwealth and Pacific region, who participated in, or were present at, the British or American nuclear tests at the Montebello Islands, Christmas Island, Malden Island and Maralinga & Emu Field, South Australia between 1952 and 1967 will be eligible for the medal. This also includes scientists and local employees..

It is estimated that around 22,000 veterans will be eligible for medallic recognition.

The medal can be awarded posthumously. Veterans, their families and next of kin will need to apply for the medal, which will be free of charge. It is expected that the first awards of the medals will be made in 2023.

To further recognise the contribution of veterans of Britain's nuclear tests, the government is investing £450,000 into projects which will commemorate and build further understanding of the experiences of veterans who were deployed to Australia and the Pacific.

As part of that funding, the Office for Veterans' Affairs is launching an oral history project to chronicle the voices and experiences of those who supported the UK's effort to develop a nuclear deterrent.

Due to start in April 2023 the project will run for two years, giving nuclear test veterans the opportunity to be interviewed, and contribute to an

accessible digital archive of testimonies about their time working on the tests.

[Hebburn engineering boss banned for Bounce Back Loan abuse](#)

Michael Hansen, 42, from Hebburn has been disqualified as a director for 10 years after overstating the turnover of his engineering firm to claim a £40,000 Bounce Back Loan to which his business was not entitled.

Hansen was the sole director of MH Property & Engineering Services Limited, which was incorporated in 2019 and traded as a property and engineering firm from Monkton Lane in Hebburn until it went into liquidation in November 2021.

When the company's turnover decreased during the pandemic, Hansen applied for a Bounce Back Loan to help support his business, stating the company's turnover to be £160,000.

Bounce Back Loans were a government scheme to help businesses to stay afloat during the Covid pandemic. Companies could apply for a loan of between £2,000 and £50,000, up to a maximum of 25% of their turnover. The money was to be used for the economic benefit of the company, under the rules of the scheme.

MH Property and Engineering Limited struggled to recover the custom it lost during the pandemic and went into liquidation, owing more than £42,000 and triggering an investigation by the Insolvency Service.

Investigators discovered that during the company's first year of trading, up to June 2020, MH Property and Engineering Limited's turnover was £8,294 and the company had therefore received nearly £38,000 more than it had been entitled to through the Bounce Back Loan scheme.

They also found that around £14,000 had later been withdrawn or paid out of the company's bank account, followed by a transfer of around £24,600 to Hansen himself between November 2020 and August 2021.

Hansen was unable to show investigators that the money had been used for the economic benefit of the company.

The Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy accepted a disqualification undertaking from Michael Hansen after he did not dispute that he had overstated the turnover of MH Property and Engineering Services Limited to gain more than £37,900 to which it was not entitled, and had failed to make sure the money was used for the economic benefit of the company.

His disqualification started on 11 November 2022 and lasts for 10 years. The ban prevents Hansen from directly or indirectly becoming involved in the promotion, formation or management of a company, without the permission of the court.

Mike Smith, Chief Investigator of the Insolvency Service said,

Covid Support Schemes were a lifeline to businesses across the UK protecting jobs and preserving businesses.

We will not hesitate to take action against directors who have abused Covid-19 financial support like this, and Hansen's lengthy ban should serve as a warning to others.

Michael Hansen is of Hebburn and his date of birth is November 1980.

MH Property and Engineering Limited company number 12061331.

Disqualification undertakings are the administrative equivalent of a disqualification order but do not involve court proceedings.

Persons subject to a disqualification order are bound by a [range of restrictions](#).

[Further information about the work of the Insolvency Service, and how to complain about financial misconduct](#).

You can also follow the Insolvency Service on:

[**New data shows 148 severe antibiotic-resistant infections a day in 2021**](#)

[The latest data published by the UK Health Security Agency](#) (UKHSA) reveals that the estimated total number of serious antibiotic resistant infections in England rose by 2.2% in 2021 compared to 2020 (53,985 compared to 52,842). This is the equivalent of 148 severe antibiotic resistant infections a day in 2021.

Antibiotic resistance occurs naturally, but inappropriate usage and overuse of antibiotics can accelerate this process. Antibiotic-resistant bacteria are less likely to respond to treatment, causing serious complications, including bloodstream infections, sepsis and hospitalisation. This is why it is important to take antibiotics only when they are prescribed and necessary for the condition.

The number of severe antibiotic-resistant infections remains below pre-pandemic levels (62,422 in 2019), driven by a number of factors including changes in how NHS services were delivered and how much people contacted the NHS, as well as social behaviour (reduced social mixing and enhanced hand hygiene) during the pandemic.

In England, total antibiotic use fell by 15.1% between 2017 to 2021, from 18.8 Daily Defined Doses (DDD) per 1,000 inhabitants per day to 15.9. This means that England has exceeded the government's National Action Plan goal to reduce prescribing by 15% by 2024 from a 2014 baseline. However, this downward trend may not be sustained unless we continue to use antibiotics appropriately and continue to drive down infections overall.

Professor Susan Hopkins, Chief Medical Advisor at UKHSA, said:

We are already seeing resistance emerge to our very newest antibiotics – innovation to find new treatments will only succeed if we use what we have responsibly. Overuse of antibiotics will mean they stop working against life threatening conditions such as sepsis.

Antibiotics won't help the symptoms of cold, flu or coronavirus (COVID-19) – please trust your healthcare professional, take antibiotics only as prescribed, never share with others and don't save for later. Taking antibiotics when you don't need them puts you and your loved ones at risk of having an untreatable infection in future.

Professor Dame Jenny Harries, Chief Executive of UKHSA, said:

Antibiotic resistance is not a distant problem that we can ignore – infections caused by antibiotic resistant bacteria are killing thousands of people every year in this country and globally, as well as having a huge economic impact. As we emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic, this is a pivotal moment to maintain focus on the 'silent pandemic' of antibiotic resistance through our extensive surveillance and antibiotic stewardship activities.

While the number of severe antibiotic resistant infections has reduced during the pandemic compared to 2019, resistance to some key antibiotics remains high. Over two-fifths of E. coli bloodstream infections are resistant to co-amoxiclav, a key antibiotic used in the treatment of serious infections in hospital. UKHSA is also monitoring newer antibiotic therapies such as cefiderocol to identify resistance.

An initial assessment of cefiderocol susceptibility in E. coli and Pseudomonas spp. bloodstream isolates in England has already identified resistance. Investigating and understanding resistance to newer antibiotics is an important area of development.

Change of His Majesty's Ambassador to Romania: Giles Portman

Press release

Mr Giles Portman has been appointed His Majesty's Ambassador to Romania.



Mr Giles Portman has been appointed His Majesty's Ambassador to Romania in succession to Mr Andrew Noble LVO. Mr Portman will take up his appointment during October 2023.

Curriculum vitae

Full name: Giles Matthew Portman

Married to: Lucie Portman

Children: 2

Dates	Role
2021 to 2022	FCD0, Director Europe, Europe Directorate
2020 to 2021	FCD0, Director EU Exit, Europe Directorate
2019 to 2020	FCO, Deputy Director EU Foreign and Security Policy, Europe Directorate
2015 to 2019	European External Action Service, Brussels, Head of East Stratcom Task Force
2011 to 2015	European External Action Service, Brussels, Adviser to the High Representative/Vice President
2007 to 2011	Ankara, Deputy Head of Mission
2003 to 2006	United Kingdom Permanent Representation to the European Union, Brussels, First Secretary
2002 to 2003	FCO, Head, EU Public Diplomacy, Europe Directorate
1998 to 2001	Prague, Second Secretary

Dates	Role
1996 to 1997	United Kingdom Permanent Representation to the United Nations, New York, Adviser
1995 to 1996	FCO, New Entrant, European Union Department (Fast Stream)
1994 to 1995	Depart of Transport, New Entrant, British Rail Privatisation (Fast Stream)

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Published 21 November 2022

Seven new Social Mobility Commissioners appointed



Social Mobility Commission

- Minister for Women and Equalities, Liz Truss, appoints 7 new commissioners to Social Mobility Commission board
- The appointments will support Katharine Birbalsingh in her role as Chair of the SMC
- The new board members will advance the independent work of the SMC following this year's State of the Nation report

Dr Raghib Ali, Resham Kotecha, Matthew Goodwin, Ryan Henson, Rob Henderson*, Parminder Kohli and Rob Wilson have been appointed to the Board for a period of 4 years. They will make up a new panel of advisers from diverse ethnic backgrounds, with expertise stretching from academia to education and business.

Following the announcement of Katharine Birbalsingh and Alun Francis as the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Social Mobility Commission (SMC), the organisation released its [State of the Nation report](#) in June. The report, and accompanying [speech by the Chair](#), have set a new direction for the work of the SMC, which the newly appointed Commissioners will help to advance.

Minister for Women and Equalities, Liz Truss, said:

Everyone in the UK should have the freedom to reach their full potential. These appointments are a positive step forward for equality in this country as we strive to improve social mobility and ensure everyone has the chance to succeed.

The combined expertise and experience of the new Commissioners will help the SMC to carry out its important work to ensure a person's circumstances of birth do not determine outcomes in life.

Further Information:

These appointments were conducted in accordance with the Governance Code on Public Appointments.

The Social Mobility Commission is an independent statutory body (an organisation created by an Act of Parliament), established by The Life Chances Act 2010.

*Note: Rob Henderson has since stepped down from the Commission for personal reasons.

Published 1 September 2022

Last updated 21 November 2022 [+ show all updates](#)

1. 21 November 2022

Rob Henderson has stepped down from the Commission so I have noted this at the bottom of the press release

2. 1 September 2022

First published.