**Eligibility Criteria for the Nuclear Test Medal**

**Introduction**

1. 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, including the preparatory and clear-up*[[1]](#footnote-1)* phases, between 1952*[[2]](#footnote-2)* and 1967 inclusive.

This includes the following named tests:

(1) Operation HURRICANE

(2) Operation TOTEM

(3) Operation MOSAIC

(4) Operation BUFFALO

(5) Operation GRAPPLE

(6) Operation ANTLER

2. The Medal is also awarded to UK personnel who served at locations where American atmospheric nuclear tests took place in 1962 under Operation DOMINIC. *[[3]](#footnote-3)*

**Operational Areas**

3. The operational areas for the medal will be defined as the territories, waters, and airspace of the following locations where the tests were conducted:

(1) Christmas Island

(2) Emu Field, Australia

(3) Malden Island, Kiribati

(4) Maralinga, Australia

(5) Montebello Islands, Australia

(6) South Australia

(7) Western Australia

**Qualifying Service**

4. The Medal is awarded for service of any length.*[[4]](#footnote-4)*

**Eligible Personnel**

5. Eligible personnel are defined as follows:

(1) UK Service and civilian*[[5]](#footnote-5)* personnel, and individuals from other

nations, who served at the locations where the UK atmospheric nuclear tests

were conducted, including the preparatory and clear-up phases, between 1952 and 1967.

(2) UK Service and civilian personnel who served at the locations where

American atmospheric nuclear tests took place in 1962 under Operation DOMINIC.

(3) Foreign nationals who served at the locations where the UK atmospheric nuclear tests were conducted, including the preparatory and clear-up phases, between 1952 and 1967.

(4) The medal can be awarded posthumously to the legal next of kin of eligible individuals who have since died.

6. UK Service and civilian personnel who contributed to the test programme remotely from the UK, or any other locations, between 1952-1967 **are not** eligible for the Medal. Eligibility is only for service completed in the operational areas defined at paragraph 3 where the atmospheric nuclear tests were conducted.

**Validation of Eligibility**

7. In considering whether an individual qualifies for the Medal, evidence must be available to show that an individual had served at the locations where the UK atmospheric nuclear tests were conducted, including the preparatory and clear-up phases, between 1952 and 1967.

8. The primary source to validate if an individual qualifies for the Medal is the Nuclear Weapons Test Participant Study (NWTPS) database, owned and maintained by the UK Health Security Agency.*[[6]](#footnote-6)* Armed Forces Service records can also be used to establish/confirm eligibility for Service personnel.

9. If an individual has an entry in the NWTPS database, or if the Armed Forces Service records reference the name of an operation or a participating ship, unit, or squadron, or that service was completed in one of the operational (geographic) areas of the tests during the qualifying period, then an individual shall be considered to qualify for the Medal.

10. Where applications need to be considered against the NWTPS database, this will be undertaken by the UK Health Security Agency in conjunction with the Ministry of Defence Medal Office, and in accordance with General Data Protection Regulations and Data Protection Act Regulations.

11. In cases where Service personnel do not feature on the NWTPS database or where evidence of service on the test programme is not recorded in Armed Forces Service records, further information will be sought from the applicant(s) and from the relevant single Service Historical Branch.

12. The Atomic Weapons Establishment will be the responsible authority for

making recommendations to the Ministry of Defence on whether applicants who were working for the Atomic Weapons Research Establishment/Atomic Energy Research Establishment are eligible for the Medal if they do not appear in the NWTPS database.

**Foreign Nationals**

13. Applications received in respect of foreign nationals will be passed to the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office for assessment in the first instance. The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office will be the responsible authority for making recommendations to the Ministry of Defence on whether individuals are eligible for the Medal. This process will be undertaken in conjunction with officials from the relevant in-country Embassy/High Commission.

14. Medals for foreign nationals will be passed to the TBC department at the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office who will arrange for despatch via the relevant in-country Embassy/High Commission.

**Elizabeth Cross**

15. Given that the Nuclear Test Medal is a commemorative medal, deaths occurring during, or believed to the linked to, the nuclear test programme **do not** fall within the eligibility for The Elizabeth Cross. This position has been endorsed by the Committee on the Grant of Honours, Decorations and Medals.

**Annexes:**

Annex A. UK Atmospheric Nuclear Test Programme – Summary of Operational Areas and Dates.

Annex B. UK Atmospheric Nuclear Tests 1952-1963.

Annex C. American Atmospheric Nuclear Tests – Operation DOMINIC – 1962.

**Annex A**

**UK Atmospheric Nuclear Test Programme**

**Summary of Operational Areas and Dates**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Location** | **Period** | **Comment** |
| Montebello Islands, Australia | April 1952-June 1956 inclusive | The first personnel of the RN Task Force for Operation HURRICANE arrived in April 1952.  The last ships of the RN Task Force for Operation MOSAIC left in June 1956. |
| Emu Field, Australia | August 1953-August 1967 inclusive | The first members of the Radiological Hazards Group arrived in August 1953.  The UK clear-up operation was completed in August 1967. |
| Maralinga Range, Australia | April 1955-August 1967 inclusive | The first scientific personnel for activities involving the dispersal of radioactive material into the environment arrived in April 1955.  The UK clear-up operation was completed in August 1967. |
| Christmas Island | June 1956-June 1964 inclusive | The first UK personnel for Operation GRAPPLE arrived in June 1956.  The final clear-up exercise finished in June 1964. |
| Malden Island, Kiribati | October 1956-June 1964 inclusive | The first UK personnel for Operation GRAPPLE arrived in October 1956.  The evacuation of Malden Island was completed by June 1964. |
| Royal Australian Air Force Pearce, Western Australia | May 1956-August 1956 inclusive | UK personnel involved with cloud sampling for Operation MOSAIC were based at Pearce during this period, including some who remained there for two months after June 1956 when the RN Task Force left the Montebello Islands. |
| Royal Australian Air Force Edinburgh Field, South Australia | August 1956-November 1960 inclusive | UK personnel involved with cloud sampling for Operation BUFFALO were based at Edinburgh Field from August 1956.  The RAF Holding Unit was withdrawn in November 1960. |

**Annex B**

**UK Atmospheric Nuclear Tests 1952-1963**

**Operation HURRICANE**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Location** |
| 3 October 1952 | Montebello Islands, Australia |

**Operation TOTEM**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Location** |
| 14 October 1953 | Emu Field, Australia |
| 26 October 1953 | Emu Field, Australia |

**Operation MOSAIC**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Location** |
| 16 May 1956 | Montebello Islands, Australia |
| 19 June 1956 | Montebello Islands, Australia |

**Operation BUFFALO**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Location** |
| 27 September 1956 | Maralinga, Australia |
| 4 October 1956 | Maralinga, Australia |
| 11 October 1956 | Maralinga, Australia |
| 22 October 1956 | Maralinga, Australia |

**Operation ANTLER**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Location** |
| 14 September 1957 | Maralinga, Australia |
| 25 September 1957 | Maralinga, Australia |
| 9 October 1957 | Maralinga, Australia |

**Operation GRAPPLE**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Locations** |
| 15 May 1957 | Malden Island, Kiribati |
| 31 May 1957 | Malden Island, Kiribati |
| 19 June 1957 | Malden Island, Kiribati |
| 8 November 1957 | Christmas Island |
| 28 April 1958 | Christmas Island |
| 22 August 1958 | Christmas Island |
| 2 September 1958 | Christmas Island |
| 11 September 1958 | Christmas Island |
| 23 September 1958 | Christmas Island |

**Minor Trials (Non-Operation Named)**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Dates** | **Locations** |
| 1953-1961 | Emu Field and Maralinga, Australia |
| 1955-1963 | Emu Field and Maralinga, Australia |
| 1956 and 1960 | Maralinga, Australia |
| 1959 and 1961 | Maralinga, Australia |
| 1960 and 1963 | Maralinga, Australia |

**Annex C**

**American Atmospheric Nuclear Tests 1962 – Operation DOMINIC**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Dates** | **Location** |
| 25 April 1962 | Christmas Island |
| 27 April 1962 | Christmas Island |
| 2 May 1962 | Christmas Island |
| 4 May 1962 | Christmas Island |
| 6 May 1962 | Christmas Island |
| 8 May 1962 | Christmas Island |
| 9 May 1962 | Christmas Island |
| 11 May 1962 | Christmas Island |
| 12 May 1962 | Christmas Island |
| 14 May 1962 | Christmas Island |
| 19 May 1962 | Christmas Island |
| 25 May 1962 | Christmas Island |
| 27 May 1962 | Christmas Island |
| 8 June 1962 | Christmas Island |
| 9 June 1962 | Christmas Island |
| 10 June 1962 | Christmas Island |
| 12 June 1962 | Christmas Island |
| 15 June 1962 | Christmas Island |
| 17 June 1962 | Christmas Island |
| 19 June 1962 | Christmas Island |
| 22 June 1962 | Christmas Island |
| 27 June 1962 | Christmas Island |
| 30 June 1962 | Christmas Island |
| 10 July 1962 | Christmas Island |
| 11 July 1962 | Christmas Island |

1. Including Operation CLEAN-UP, Operation HERCULES, and Operation BRUMBY. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. This date has been selected as the UK’s first atmospheric nuclear test took place in October 1952. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. The vast majority of American tests under Operation DOMINIC took place at British proving grounds at Christmas Island and involved British personnel. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Defined as any period of time during one day. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Considered to be predominately from the Atomic Weapons Research Establishment and the Atomic Energy Research Establishment. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. The successor Agency to the National Radiological Protection Board who compiled the NWTPS Study. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)