

Aftermath

After the Second World War, **Sir Winston Churchill** served again as prime minister between the general election of October 1951 and his resignation in April 1955. On 15 January 1965, he suffered a stroke and died in London on the morning of 24 January 1965, at the age of 90.

Yankunytjatjara elder **Yami Lester** OAM died in Alice Springs on 21 July 2017, aged 75. The previous month, his daughter Karina had travelled to the United Nations to lobby 120 nations negotiating the new Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. She presented a petition from indigenous groups around Oceania, and the treaty preamble now recognises ‘the disproportionate impact of nuclear weapon activities on indigenous peoples’. The treaty, opened for signature on 20 September 2017, includes specific articles calling on state parties to support nuclear survivors.

Rinok Riklon and **Lemeyo Abon** both live in Majuro, Republic of the Marshall Islands, and continue to speak about the legacies of the Bravo test. Still ‘floating like a coconut in the sea’, they have not returned to live on their home island of Rongelap.

Matashichi Oishi, crew member of the *Daigo Fukuryu Maru (No. 5 Lucky Dragon)*, is still an active campaigner against nuclear weapons. In March 2014, he joined Marshallese survivors in Majuro to mark the 60th anniversary of the Bravo test. In late 2016, aged 83, he was campaigning for a 2-ton carved stone to be placed as a memorial to the Bravo test on the site of the Tsukiji fish market in Tokyo.

Wilfrid Oulton was replaced as Commander, Joint Task Force ‘Grapple’, by John Grandy in 1958. Oulton returned to the Royal Air Force (RAF) Coastal Command Headquarters before retiring from the Air Force. From

1982 until his death, he served as Chairman of Medsales Executive Ltd. He died in Lymington, Hampshire, on 31 October 1997. His three sons all served in the Royal Air Force and Royal Canadian Air Force.

Businessman **James Burns** died on 5 August 1969 at Bowral, New South Wales. He was survived by two children, with son David succeeding him as chairman of Burns Philp & Co.

Harold Steele died on 16 April 1979, at age 85. His obituary highlighted his quest to sail into the Grapple danger zone, noting: ‘Can we call it a wasted journey? There were those who said emphatically that it could never have produced positive results; but a man was willing to give his all in a frightening gesture for the cause he believed in.’¹

‘Supermac’, otherwise known as Maurice **Harold Macmillan**, 1st Earl of Stockton, OM, PC, FRS, served as Prime Minister of the United Kingdom until 19 October 1963. He died on 29 December 1986.

After her service with the Grapple Task Force, **Gillian Brown** continued a distinguished career with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), rising to Assistant Under-Secretary of State in 1978. She was made a Dame in 1981. Brown was just the second woman to reach Ambassadorial level in the FCO, serving as UK Ambassador to Norway between 1981–83. She died at Ravenstonedale, Cumbria, on 21 April 1999.

After working as a merchant seaman, **Paul Ah Poy** retired to live in Suva, Fiji. He still serves as President of the Fiji Nuclear Veterans Association, and has travelled to Britain, Japan and French Polynesia to support other nuclear survivors.

Adi Sivo Ganilau, daughter of the late Governor General **Ratu Sir Penaia Ganilau**, is active supporting the widows and children of Fiji’s Christmas Island veterans.

Following his contribution to Operation Totem, pilot **Geoffrey Dhenin** rose to the rank of Air Vice Marshall in the RAF, and served as Director-General of RAF Medical Services in 1974–78. He lived until the age of 93; he died on 6 May 2011. After years of ill health, Operation Grapple pilot **Eric Denson** committed suicide in 1996, leaving a wife and four children.

1 Muriel Ricketts: ‘Harold Steele’, obituary, *The Friend*, Vol. 137, 18 May 1979, p. 476.

Sir William Penney—chief scientist for the British nuclear tests in Australia and Kiribati—died in 1991 at the age of 82, suffering from liver cancer.

Roy Sefton is still active, campaigning for the rights of the New Zealand naval personnel from the *Pukaki* and *Rotoiti* who grappled with the bomb. Ill health has hampered his love of music and painting and he no longer plays the drums.

Upon his return from Christmas Island in 1959, **Tekoti Rotan** returned to Rabi and joined the Fiji Civil Service. After serving as the representative for Rabi in the parliament of the Republic of Kiribati from 1992 to 1994, Rotan was installed as chairman of the Rabi Island Council of Elders in 1996. He lives today in Suva, Fiji, and continues as a committee member for the Fiji Nuclear Veterans Association.

Professor Al Rowland retired from Massey University in 2009 and lives with wife Allison in Palmerston North, New Zealand. Two years after retiring, on the Queen's Birthday Honours list, he was invested as an Officer of the New Zealand Order of Merit (ONZM) 'for services to genetic research'.

Pita Rokoratu died of a heart attack in March 2012, just days before the Supreme Court ruling on his test case, which refused to allow the case to proceed.

Ratu Inoke Rewaqari Bainimarama of mataqali Nadamanu from Bau, Tailevu, served as the founding President of the Christmas Island Nuclear Veterans Association until his death.

His son Josaia Voreqe Bainimarama enlisted with the Fiji Navy on 26 July 1975, rising to Commander of the Fiji Military Forces in 1999. Voreqe 'Frank' Bainimarama led a military coup against the Qarase Government in December 2006. His regime ruled by decree until elections in 2014, when his FijiFirst Party won an overwhelming majority in the parliament. Today, **Rear Admiral (retired) Josaia Voreqe Bainimarama** serves as elected Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Fiji.

This text is taken from *Grappling with the Bomb: Britain's Pacific H-bomb tests*, by Nic Maclellan, published 2017 by ANU Press,
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