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TRIBUTE TO COL JOHN RUSSELL OLY (1920-2020)



The extraordinary life of Colonel John Russell OLY, UIPM Medal of Honor winner, has come to an end.

Col Russell, who was presented with one of the UIPM's highest honours in February 2020, died at his home in Texas on September 30. He was 100 years, seven months and 28 days old.

The United States' oldest Olympic medallist served as a coach and mentor to generations of pentathletes from many nations, having been appointed to run the US Modern Pentathlon Training Centre at Fort Sam Houston in San Antonio, Texas in 1956.

As a show jumper he competed in his first Olympic Games at London 1948 and enjoyed one of the highlights of his distinguished career when winning bronze at Helsinki 1952 on Democrat.

He also won the Aga Khan Trophy, the Prix de Nations and the Hamburg Trophy, and in 2001 he was inducted into the Show Jumping Hall of Fame.

As a soldier he served under the legendary General George Patton - an Olympic pentathlete who

competed for the US at Stockholm 1912 - in World War II, earning a Bronze Star and Purple Heart for wounds he received at Cassino.

John Russell learned to ride on his family's dairy farm in Pennsylvania at the age of five and got his first pony at seven, embarking on a lifelong quest in equestrian sport.