



### Veterans' Charity celebrates 'topping out' milestone of third Home

**27<sup>th</sup> July 2017-** A new home caring for disabled veterans in High Wycombe reached an important construction milestone when the 'topping out' ceremony marked the building reaching its full height. The Royal Star & Garter Homes welcomed distinguished guests including The Rt Hon The Earl Howe, Minister of State for Defence, and Air Chief Marshal of the Royal Air Force, Sir Stephen Hillier, who led the ceremony.

Sir Stephen Hillier was met by the Charity's Chairman, Major General Tim Tyler, and Chairman of Wycombe Council, Councillor Suzanne Brown. Sir Stephen was invited to carry out the traditional Saxon ritual of anointing a yew tree branch attached to the last roof beam with wine, oil, corn and salt symbolising wisdom, liberty, prosperity and hospitality. The beam was then hoisted into its final position.



*Major General Tim Tyler, Air Chief Marshal Sir Stephen Hillier, Lady Hillier and Councillor Suzanne Brown at the topping out ceremony of The Royal Star & Garter Home – High Wycombe*

The Charity's governors and directors watched the ceremony with other military guests including Wing Commander Farid Khan, Officer Commanding Information Systems Wing RAF High Wycombe; plus notable figures from leading military charities including Major General Martin Rutledge, Chief Executive of The ABF Soldiers' Charity; Air Commodore Paul Hughesdon of RAF Benevolent Fund and Angela Cullimore-Todd of The Royal British Legion. Also in attendance were representatives from Stepnell, the construction company which is building the Home, including Tom Wakeford, its Managing Director.



*The Royal Star & Garter Home – High Wycombe under construction*

Defence Minister Earl Howe commented: *"Our veterans have given a huge amount to this country, and this charity is a great example of the country giving back. Charities play an important role in caring for our veterans, and I would like to extend my personal thanks to The Royal Star & Garter Homes for their ongoing support."*



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Air Chief Marshal Sir Stephen Hillier remarked, *"I'm delighted to be able to give my support to the Charity, especially in High Wycombe, which already has so many other important connections with the Royal Air Force. The Charity sets the standard in nursing and dementia care. I'm confident the High Wycombe Home will continue to deliver award-winning care as per the Charity's existing Homes, as well as drawing on new innovations and thinking."*



*Attending the ceremony were: (L-R) Major General Martin Rutledge, Chief Executive of The ABF Soldiers' Charity; The Rt Hon The Earl Howe, Minister of State for Defence; Lady Hillier; Air Chief Marshal of the Royal Air Force, Sir Stephen Hillier; Chairman of Wycombe Council, Councillor Mrs Suzanne Brown; The Royal Star & Garter Homes' Chairman, Major General Tim Tyler, Vice President Vice Admiral Sir John Dunt and Chief Executive Mr Andy Cole; Mr Tom Wakeford, Joint Managing Director of Stepnell*

*"We are delighted to be bringing our brand of specialist care to the veterans living in the Buckinghamshire area,"* said The Royal Star & Garter Homes' Chairman, Major General Tim Tyler. *"We are also extremely proud to be bringing new life to a brownfield site and to bring new jobs and sustainability to the local community, which we look forward to engaging with as the Home moves towards opening. The new Home will mean that we can provide specialist care for even more veterans in their time of need."*

Also in attendance was Mrs Jules Bendell, widow of Wing Commander Anthony 'Bugs' Bendell, who ranked amongst the RAF's most talented fighter pilots of his generation. A former resident of the Charity's Surbiton Home, Bugs was due to be one of the first to move into the High Wycombe Home so he could be closer to family. Speaking about her late husband, Mrs Bendell commented, *"Bugs would have been very proud of the care The Royal Star & Garter Homes will be providing to the military veterans living in South Buckinghamshire and the wider area."*

Further to the ground-breaking ceremony in April 2016, construction of the third Home on Hughenden Avenue continues to make good progress and is on track to welcome its first residents in Summer 2018. The Home will provide specialist nursing and therapeutic care for 74 residents and will include a specialist dementia care wing for 30 residents. The state-of-the-art Home will offer large, en-suite bed-sitting rooms, a spacious dining room, café-bar, a piano lounge, library and landscaped sensory gardens and balconies.

### **Ends**

**For further information please contact:**



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## About The Royal Star & Garter Homes:

### **The Charity provides award-winning care for veterans and their partners who live with disability or dementia.**

The Royal Star & Garter Homes is a charity founded in 1916 to care for the severely injured young men returning from the battlegrounds of the First World War. Today we provide specialist care to the whole military family in our friendly, state-of-the-art Homes. Disabled ex-Servicemen and women, and their spouses, can all benefit from our pioneering approach to nursing, dementia and therapeutic care.

We are in the process of building new Homes around the country to provide specialist nursing care for disabled ex-Service people in the best modern surroundings, including dementia care facilities to address this growing need. The Charity has award-winning Homes in Solihull, West Midlands, and Surbiton, Surrey, which also enables the Charity to offer interim care for young disabled Service personnel. Following the successes of the first two Homes, a third Home in High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire, is being built, with a planned opening in 2018.

We are proud to have enjoyed Royal patronage since our foundation, including that of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II from 1953 to the present day.

The Charity celebrated its centenary in 2016: providing specialist care for disabled veterans since 1916.

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