



The Royal Star & Garter Homes

Caring for the nation's military family since 1916

British Empire Medal for Veterans Charity's Oldest Volunteer

Mrs Betty Johnson, the oldest volunteer at The Royal Star & Garter Homes, has been awarded a British Empire Medal in the 2018 New Year's Honours List for her service to charities and non-profit organisations.

Betty, who is 89, has been a volunteer throughout her life, working for the Girl Guides. She first started volunteering at The Royal Star & Garter Homes, a charity which cares for disabled veterans who live with disability or dementia, in 2000. Betty began volunteering originally at the charity's former Richmond Home after her husband, who was a resident there, passed away. Now she helps at the new Surbiton Home, taking two buses to get there and priding herself on never letting the residents down by being late.



Betty with Chief Executive Andy Cole

Over the years, Betty has assisted with a variety of roles and tasks: for five years she supported the Speech & Language Therapist on a weekly basis, helping residents who have lost their ability to speak following a stroke. Betty also supports the ecumenical services offered to residents at the Home. For many years, she regularly escorted residents on outings in the adapted coach to enable them to enjoy outings and events. Due to her own health she is no longer able to accompany residents on outings but Betty continues to provide support within the Home. She now gives her time to the Home's choir and to read to and chat with the residents. This crucial work promotes residents' well-being and enjoyment of life.

In 2016 Betty was awarded the Order of Mercy medal for her voluntary service over many years to charities in the United Kingdom and overseas.

Betty was thrilled to receive the British Empire Medal: *"It was a real shock and took some time to sink in but now I'm thrilled to bits. I feel that I get more out of my work for the Charity than I put in. It makes me feel useful. The Home is wonderful and all the residents and staff laugh together. I enjoy being part of it."*

Andy Cole, the Charity's Chief Executive, was delighted by Betty's award: *"We are very pleased that Betty's dedication and compassion towards our*





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veteran residents has been acknowledged and celebrated in this way. Betty has given her time and friendship so generously for over 17 years and absolutely deserves this prestigious award."

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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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