



Royal Star & Garter

Care with courage

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Army veteran who dodged deadly Nazi rocket thanks to a Guinness celebrates 100th birthday

A WWII soldier who credits a pint of Guinness for saving his life from a Nazi rocket attack in Belgium when he was just a teenager has celebrated his 100th birthday.

Ken Pusey, who dodged death in 1944 while serving with the Royal Engineers, enjoyed a special party with family and friends at Royal Star & Garter in High Wycombe on his birthday on Friday, 7 August.

Ken received a card from Their Majesties The King and Queen, as well as a special box of goodies from Guinness. The life-long Wycombe Wanderers fan also received a personalised first team shirt with his name and '100' written on it from staff, which was signed by the squad.



Ken with his gifts from Guinness, his personalised and signed Wycombe Wanderers shirt and 100 birthday cake at Royal Star & Garter

Aged just 18 in December 1944, Ken was set to spend a day off at Cinema Rex in Antwerp, Belgium, but opted at the last minute for a new club which was serving pints of draught Guinness. While at the club, the cinema took a direct hit from a Nazi V2 rocket. Over 1,000 people were inside the venue, and it killed 567, including 296 Allied service personnel. It was the deadliest rocket attack of the war.

Ken lamented: "The chaps had no chance, they were annihilated. We just thanked our blessings, because but for the toss of a coin and a pint of Guinness, we'd have been dead."

Reminiscing, the centenarian said: "I'm now 100 and I can't help but look back on the moments that shaped my life, and that day in Antwerp which has lived with me forever. I have often thought about how differently my life could have turned out. It was a lucky escape that gave me the chance to come home, build a life, have a



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beautiful family and experience so many wonderful things over the years. I have never taken that gift for granted. I know life can change in an instant and that you must appreciate every day."

Ken's party was arranged by staff at the Home where he has lived since 2022. Royal Star & Garter is a charity which provides loving, compassionate care and support to veterans and their families living with disability or dementia, from Homes in Solihull, Surbiton, High Wycombe and Worthing. It also runs services reaching out into the community including Day Care, Lunch Club and a national Telephone Friendship Service.



Ken and wife Pam

The great-grandfather was born in High Wycombe in 1926. He was 13 when war was declared and left school at 14 to work at a firm which produced instruments for the Armed Forces. He joined the Army in 1944 and served in Belgium and Germany, before demobbing in 1947.

Ken went on to work on the floors of several factories. He had a son and daughter with his wife Pam, and the couple also fostered many children.



Ken in Army uniform

Among those present at Ken's party was his sister Doreen, who is also a resident at the Home. Guests included High Wycombe Mayor Imran Hussain and previous incumbent Cllr Majid Hussain, plus personnel from nearby RAF High Wycombe.

Ken said later: "I can't thank everyone at Royal Star & Garter enough for the wonderful birthday party they organised for me. Reaching 100 is very special, and the staff made it a day I will never forget. Royal Star & Garter really is my home. I love living here and feel incredibly fortunate to be surrounded by such kind, caring and dedicated people every day.



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The staff go above and beyond - not just for me, but for all the residents. I feel lucky to be here."

The charity is running a Veterans' Voice project which aims to give a platform to its residents and the people who use its services, ensuring they are not overlooked because of their disability or dementia.

Royal Star & Garter in High Wycombe is welcoming new residents. For more information on this, the other services it offers to the veterans' community or to work at the Home, go to www.starandgarter.org/hw

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VIDEO:

Ken spoke to Royal Star & Garter about his brush with death on the 80th anniversary of Nazi rocket attack.

Click here to view and download the video: <https://vimeo.com/1037805743>

Click here to read the press release: <https://starandgarter.org/press-release/guinness-saved-my-life-wwii/>

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About Royal Star & Garter

Founded in 1916, Royal Star & Garter provides care, support and friendship for veterans and their families so that they can live well. The charity delivers nursing and dementia care through Homes in Solihull, Surbiton, High Wycombe, and now in



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Worthing, having recently merged with the military charity Care for Veterans. It also offers a range of services reaching into the community, including Lunch Clubs, Day Care and a national Telephone Friendship Service.

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