



Royal Star & Garter

Care with courage

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

WWII sailor celebrates 100th birthday at Royal Star & Garter

A WWII seaman has marked his 100th birthday with his family at a care home in Solihull.

Wilson Cotton had a small party at Royal Star & Garter on his birthday on Sunday, attended by his children, grandchildren and great grandchildren.

The centenarian, who was in the Merchant Navy during WWII, moved to the Home earlier this year.



Wilson with his card from The King and Queen

Royal Star & Garter is a charity which provides loving, compassionate care and support to veterans and their families - as well as those who served in the Merchant Navy in hostile waters - 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.

Wilson was born in Sunderland on 9 August 1926. In 1943, aged 17, he followed a longstanding family tradition by joining the Merchant Navy. During WWII his vessel came under enemy fire while he was at sea – once from a U-Boat while in the Atlantic, and another by Nazi aircraft as his ship was anchored off Naples, Italy.

Wilson received The 1939-1945 Star, The Atlantic Star, The Italy Star and The War Medal 1939-45 for his work during WWII.

After leaving the Merchant Navy in 1949, Wilson trained as a structural engineer, specialising in aluminium. He eventually worked in management for Canadian mining and aluminium manufacturers Alcan.



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He wed his long-time sweetheart Doreen in 1951. The couple had three children. Doreen sadly died in 2025, and Wilson moved to Royal Star & Garter earlier this year.

Wilson said: "I enjoyed my birthday party and spending it with my family."



Wilson in uniform during his time in the Merchant Navy

His son, also named Wilson, said: "We all had a wonderful time celebrating Dad's incredible milestone together. I'd like to thank the staff at the Home for making his 100th birthday so memorable, and for the fantastic care he receives. We're lucky he's at Royal Star & Garter."

Royal Star & Garter in Solihull 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/solihull

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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 Worthing, having recently merged with the military charity Care for Veterans. It also



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offers a range of services reaching into the community, including Lunch Clubs, Day Care and a national Telephone Friendship Service.

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Royal Star & Garter
is a member of the
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