



**Royal Star
& Garter**

Care with courage

Autumn
**Connections
Newsletter**

2026





Royal Star & Garter

Care with courage

About us

We provide loving, compassionate care to veterans and their families living with disability or dementia.

Our Homes in Solihull, Surbiton, High Wycombe and Worthing offer outstanding long-term and short-break care.

We also run services reaching into the community, including Day Care, Lunch Clubs, a Telephone Friendship Service and our Veteran Friendly Framework.



Welcome to Connections...



It is my pleasure to introduce our donors and supporters to some exciting changes here at Royal Star & Garter. While our Homes and residents remain at the centre of our work, we have recently launched a strategy that supports our ambition to increase our impact tenfold (see right).

Our merger with Care for Veterans is also due to complete at the end of the year. Both developments represent our commitment to the Armed Forces community and share the same goal: to reach even more veterans and their families, wherever they need our help.

Thank you for your ongoing support, which demonstrates your commitment to the military family through our work.

Caley

Caley Eldred, Director of Fundraising

Expanding core services

Expand our Veteran Friendly Framework, Telephone Friendship Service, Day Care and Lunch Clubs.

Therapy access

Integrate occupational and physiotherapy services to provide locally delivered care.

End of life pathways

Provide care and support at the end of life and alongside existing palliative services.

Support at home

Provide home-based support and rehabilitation to aid recovery and independence.

Community connection

Provide access to services and social connections through community hubs and outreach programmes.

Advancing knowledge

Launch a new research programme focusing on dementia and acquired brain injury.

Transforming care

Our strategy from 2026

Over the next decade, we will transform how we support the Armed Forces community.

Building on our history of specialist care, we will invest in programmes to support more people.

Veterans and their families have told us what matters to them: early support, staying independent for longer, accessing the right information, and receiving **care that reflects their lives**. Our strategy is built around these needs, putting veterans at the heart of everything we do.

We will reach into communities across the country, so veterans and their partners can access the right support, at the right time and in the right place. This **flexible approach** includes home-based support, rehabilitation, therapy and local connections.

We will evolve our care homes and expand existing services. We will also launch new programmes including end-of-life care, home-based support, outreach services, therapy access and support for veterans and their partners in navigating the care sector. We will work with more partners, invest in research and grow the Veteran Friendly Framework to **raise standards across the care sector**.

To find out more, visit: www.starandgarter.org/strategy

Stories from our Homes



Homes news

Marking national events

Spring saw our Homes celebrating Dementia Action Week and Armed Forces Day.

Dementia Action Week in May was filled with joyous events, including indoor picnics, animal visits, art, music and hand massages. All of these activities were designed to support residents living with dementia, reducing anxiety and creating connection. Shirley Hall, Director of Care, explained, “Almost forty percent of our residents live with dementia and we deliver care designed to meet their needs, with love.”

Armed Forces Week in June was an opportunity for us to reflect on the Service of our military family. Residents enjoyed events, culminating in the raising of special flags. Veterans also received government-issued Armed Forces badges.



Friends reunited

Our cover story is about Army veteran Mick and his beloved dog Bo, who he gave to his daughter when he moved into High Wycombe last year.

She always brought the nine-year-old Welsh Border Collie cross to the Home when visiting her dad. Sadly, a change in circumstances meant she was unable to continue caring for the dog, prompting fears Bo would be re-homed.

When Iuliana, our Head of Dementia Services, heard of Mick's worries, she went the extra mile and adopted Bo. It means she's able to bring him to see Mick whenever she's working, so they can enjoy walkies in the gardens.

D-Day operator recalls horrors of war



A WWII switchboard operator remembers the “sound of hell.”

On the 82nd anniversary of the D-Day Landings in June, short-break resident, Marie, recalled serving with the

Women’s Royal Naval Service (WRNS) in 1944. Aged 17, she was passing coded messages between the frontline and the Allied commanders.

Marie had to relay messages via radio to troops, and could hear the devastation unfolding across the Channel: “What I heard was incessant machine gunfire, cannons and bombs. I could hear men shouting orders and screaming. And I suddenly realised that what I was listening to was the actual invasion of the beaches... the accompaniment of war.”

high stakes

Marie received the Légion d’honneur from the French Government, in recognition of her role in the liberation.

“

When they gave their radio responses to me, I couldn’t believe my ears.

Marie, short-break resident



Welcome Worthing!



New Home

In March 2025, we agreed a merger with Care for Veterans, a charity with over 100 years of experience supporting the Armed Forces community, bringing our shared expertise together.

Our Worthing Home provides long-term nursing, rehabilitation, respite and end-of-life care to veterans and their families, who live with disabilities, including acquired brain injury and degenerative neurological conditions. While our finances remain separate until full integration at the end of the year, we are working together to extend our reach to more veterans.



Meet Home Manager Vicky

"I have worked here since 2025 and I love my job! My team is so dedicated, their care, compassion and commitment shines daily. Our residents always take priority and we do everything we can to support them. I'm proud to work with Royal Star & Garter. One of our first steps

together was to launch the Day Care service, opening our doors to veterans and their partners to share a day of activities, food and therapies. It is a joy to see the improvement in their wellbeing."

To find out more, visit: www.careforveterans.org.uk



Meet resident Ron, 103

Ron was conscripted into the Army at 18, joining the Royal Engineers. Trained in clearing mines and building infrastructure, he was sent to France after the D-Day landings in June 1944. Ron came ashore at Sword Beach to dig defensive positions and machine gun posts. He recalls the constant focus on survival and difficulty of sleeping as artillery fire shook the ground.

After the war, Ron and his wife Joyce had a family. When she died in 2021, Ron moved into the Home, where he is known for his gentle humour and love of a morning coffee in the garden.

Ed's challenge

Following a stroke which left him using a wheelchair, RAF veteran Ed spent six months at our Worthing Home, where he received intensive treatment in the physiotherapy room.

Thanks to Ed's hard work and the dedicated team of physiotherapists, the 57-year-old was able to return to his home in 2024. He continues to use physiotherapy at the

life challenges

Home for his recuperation, and staff also helped him prepare for the Worthing 10K challenge.

In June, he walked the final 100 metres of the route, supported by his wife Vikki (right), who had pushed Ed in his wheelchair around the course. The couple raised money for the Home.

Ed, who was an RAF Technician in the 75th Signals Unit and served from 1988 to 1997, said afterwards: "After my stroke, I never imagined I'd be able to do something like this again."

“Care for Veterans helped me rebuild my life, and walking those last 100 metres meant everything to me.

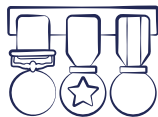
Ed, RAF veteran resident



“Watching him achieve this milestone was a privilege for all of us.

Belle, Lead Physiotherapist

Reaching more veterans



Our services

Our recently published strategy aims to increase the number of veterans and their families we support tenfold. Over three years ago, we began developing services to extend our reach and they are going from strength to strength.

Telephone Friendship Service



Our Telephone Friendship Service (TFS) reaches people in their own homes, providing support and companionship.

The service is free and very popular, with a wide regional reach so that even veterans in the most underserved areas can receive consistent support.

In 2025, we helped 85 veterans and delivered over 2,200 hours of meaningful connection, through 44 volunteers. Our report found that the TFS supports a diverse population, including those living with physical and mental health conditions or experiencing isolation. It helps reduce loneliness and improve emotional

wellbeing, while signposting to specialist services such as mental health, housing, and financial support.

Veteran Friendly Framework

Our Veteran Friendly Framework (VFF) programme has awarded VFF status to almost 400 care homes.

The programme is designed to improve care for veterans and their partners living in residential homes across England, helping to recognise their needs linked to service life.

We commissioned an independent evaluation* in 2025 which shows that the VFF significantly improves how veterans and their partners are identified, understood and supported, leading to more personalised and effective care. Staff and managers benefitted too,

describing improved confidence, teamwork, and a positive shift in the care culture.

care culture

*Care City VFF Evaluation

“

We're thrilled that our hard work has resulted in the home being VFF approved and we all enjoyed the process too. Our team has learned a huge amount about the Armed Forces, in particular, that there are more veterans out there than we had imagined.

George, Customer Manager,
Benson House team (right)



“

I think the most rewarding aspect of my role is reading the applications – they regularly move me to tears when I understand the impact the VFF has on veterans. One story stays with me, it's about Ernie (right).

Kathryn Glass, Head of VFF



Ernie's story

Ernie was a resident living with dementia who refused to let go of his cutlery and carried it everywhere. He would also 'shoot' people with stolen mops. After receiving training as a VFF Champion, a housekeeper investigated and discovered he had been a PoW, and the cutlery signified that he would be given food. With this knowledge, staff could calm him by inviting him to 'Have a cuppa in the Mess,' when he became agitated. They also gave him a supply of plastic cutlery to reassure him.

Through our range of services, we support veterans and their families as their care needs change. We remain committed to doing more to help improve their lives.

Your Will, your wishes

Legacy news

Writing a Will is one of the most important steps you can take to ensure your wishes are honoured and that the people you love are cared for.

A Will provides peace of mind, helps reduce uncertainty for loved ones and provides clarity on how you want your estate to be managed.

Our free Will service makes the process simple, accessible and reassuring. Whether you are making your first Will or updating an existing one, you may be able to complete it online, over the phone or in person with a local solicitor, depending on availability.

There is no obligation to leave a gift to Royal Star & Garter in your Will. However, after providing for family and friends, many people choose to support causes close to their heart. A legacy gift helps us continue providing specialist care to veterans and their partners



living with disability or dementia for generations to come.

For more information on gifts in Wills or our complimentary Will-writing service, contact legacies@starandgarter.org or call **020 8481 7676**



Play today!

18+



Hi, my name's Karen and I look after the Royal Star & Garter lottery.

Playing our weekly lottery helps raise funds so we can keep providing loving, compassionate care.

And for just £1 a week you could win an amazing top prize of £25,000!

To find out more information visit starandgarter.org/lottery or call **0370 050 9240**



A chat with Pat



From our residents

In this feature, Army veteran Pat from our Solihull Home tells us what matters to her.



Pat first started coming to Day Care. She has gone on to also enjoy Lunch Club and short-break care at the Home, and is now preparing to move in permanently.

“

There's so much going on here, you're never bored. It's full of life!

Pat, Army veteran

What advice would you give to your younger self?

To remember that family counts more than work. I enjoyed my work – I was Principal Assistant Librarian. It was different every day. But in the end, it's family that counts.

How can veterans today be better supported?

When I left the Army there was no support and no recognition. It wasn't until recently that the term 'veterans' was in common use. I think it's different now and there's a lot of support for people leaving the Services. But the problem is these veterans are often unaware of the help that is available to them. I think it should be made clearer what organisations there are out there, so that veterans know that there is help should they need it.

If you could change one thing, what would it be?

I think it's a bit late now but we should have paid more attention to climate change when it was being flagged years ago. I remember the King spoke about it a lot when he was Prince Charles, and he was right. If we'd acted then, we could have actually done something instead of having endless meetings and targets that were never met. A lot of irreversible damage has been done in those 50 years.

What are you passionate about, and why?

Leaving a better world, which I don't think we are doing at the moment. The whole place seems to be in a state of dangerous flux, doesn't it?

Dragonboat race



The Royal Yeomanry Regimental Association helped raise an amazing £1,100 at the recent Dragon Boat Race in Kingston.

A huge thank you to the Association members for their incredible fundraising efforts, energy and dedication on a hot and dusty day. We'd also like to thank everyone who came along to cheer on the teams and show their support.

Your generosity helps us to provide outstanding care and support to veterans and their families living with disability or dementia. We couldn't do it without you. Thank you!

Our friendly team is here to help.

020 8481 7674 (Monday to Friday 9am-4pm)

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