



Royal Star & Garter

Care with courage

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Alpacas visit veterans

Residents at Royal Star & Garter in Surbiton welcomed some unusual guests to their care home - a pair of alpacas.

Hugo and Finlay visited the Home on Tuesday 10 January, where they were stroked and fed by residents.

Royal Star & Garter is a charity which provides loving, compassionate care to veterans and their partners living with disability or dementia.



Air Force veteran Vera feeding Hugo

The 15-month-old boys were greeted by excited staff and residents in the reception area, where they were fed carrots and made a fuss of. The pair were then taken on a tour of the Home, greeting veterans in their rooms and meeting residents in the dementia care area.

Resident Amy, who served in the WAAF during WWII, said: "I never thought I'd get to my age and feed an alpaca!" And Air Force veteran Bea said after meeting the animals: "Although we didn't have alpacas, it reminded me of the days when my husband and I were farming."

Research shows stroking animals can help reduce stress, lower blood pressure and increase social interaction and physical activity. It has also been shown to help battle depression and loneliness.

Last year, residents at Royal Star & Garter in Surbiton got up close to winged wonders including an African spotted eagle owl and Harris hawk during a birds of prey presentation. Pets as therapy (PAT) dogs also regularly visit, and relatives often bring their dogs to the Home when seeing a loved



Finlay being fed by WWII Army veteran Peter



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one. And at Christmas 2019, a dozen farmyard animals came to the Home to create a living Nativity scene.

Suzie Elliott is one of the Wellbeing Coordinators at Surbiton. She said: "We love welcoming animals to the Home, and the residents love having them here. It puts them in such a happy mood, and you can see the boost it gives to their wellbeing. The residents couldn't get enough of Hugo and Finlay and they can't wait to have them back – they brought a lot of happiness to the Home."



*Hugo munches carrots from WWII Wren
Connie*

The alpacas were brought to the Home by Sam and Emily, from Mortimer Alpacas. Sam said: "It was a lovely morning. You could see how much the residents were enjoying themselves by the smiles on their faces. Hugo and Finlay enjoyed being fed a lot of carrots!"

Royal Star & Garter in Surbiton is welcoming new residents. For more information on this, or working for the charity, go to www.starandgarter.org/surbiton

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About Royal Star & Garter

Our charity provides loving, compassionate care to veterans and their partners living with disability or dementia.

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Royal Star & Garter
is a member of the
National Care Forum