



Royal Star & Garter

Care with courage

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Army veteran left injured after Iraq mortar attack “flies” during indoor skydive

An Army veteran says he “felt he was flying” after taking on an indoor skydive, 17 years after a mortar blast left him with severe injuries and using a wheelchair.

Stephen Vause enjoyed the indoor skydive experience at the iFly centre in Basingstoke.

The trip was arranged by military charities Royal Star & Garter, which provides specialist 24-hour care for the 36-year-old, and Help for Heroes, which paid for the experience, following a request from Stephen.



Stephen with iFly instructors in the wind tunnel

The veteran enjoyed a thrilling time soaring into the air in the wind tunnel, with assistance from iFly experts.

Stephen was just 19 when he suffered major brain injuries while serving with 4th Battalion The Rifles, in Basra in 2007. He was on his first tour of duty, and the attack left him severely disabled.

He has been a resident at Royal Star & Garter in Surbiton since 2017. The charity provides loving, compassionate care to veterans and their partners living with disability or dementia, and also has Homes in Solihull and High Wycombe. It has also launched new services reaching out into the community.

Staff from the Surbiton Home took Stephen to the iFly centre, where he was supported by instructors and his own private physiotherapist, on 6 February. He later said: “It was the most amazing, exhilarating feeling I’ve experienced in a long time. Since I suffered my injuries when I was 19, I haven’t been able to walk, but for a few moments, I was able to fly, and it felt incredible. I really did feel like I was flying.”

Help for Heroes has previously worked with Royal Star & Garter, funding a bespoke wheelchair and specialist gym equipment to support Stephen’s care. The two



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charities also teamed up last year to send Stephen to an outdoor activity centre in the Lake District.

Helena Maher is the Home Manager at Royal Star & Garter in Surbiton, where Stephen lives. She said: "I'm so happy that we were able to work with Help for Heroes and make this happen for Stephen. We want him to be doing things that people his age are doing, and I'm delighted we were able to make this wish come true. It is amazing to see how far he's come while he's been at Royal Star & Garter, and says so much about the care he receives that he was able to do something so physically challenging."



Stephen receives 24-hour care at Royal Star & Garter

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

[Ends]

Video: <https://vimeo.com/922100525>

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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
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National Care Forum