



Royal Star & Garter

Care with courage

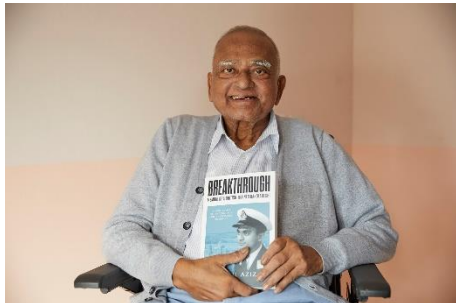
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Black History Month: Celebrating the stories of residents at Royal Star & Garter

The life stories of two residents from Royal Star & Garter are being shared as part of Black History Month.

Its theme this year is Reclaiming Narratives, which aims to shine a light on stories about black people and black culture that are often overlooked.

Black History Month takes place in October each year, and celebrates the continued achievements and contributions of black people to the UK and around the world. It also calls for action to tackle racism, reclaim black history and ensure it is represented and celebrated all year round. In recent years, it has expanded to include the stories of African, Asian and Caribbean peoples.



Suhail, with his autobiography, was forced out of the Pakistani Navy, before setting up a new life for himself and his family in England

Royal Star & Garter is a charity which provides loving, compassionate care to veterans and their partners living with disability or dementia, from Homes in Solihull, Surbiton and High Wycombe. It has also launched new services reaching out into the community.

Storytelling and learning about residents' lives play an important part in the care of Royal Star & Garter residents. Their life stories are recorded by staff to help provide person-centred care and promote friendships.

Mini-biographies are also captured and shared, so that their remarkable lives and stories are celebrated, commemorated and never forgotten.

Among the life stories captured by the charity is that of Suhail Aziz. He was born in Sylhet, in modern-day Bangladesh, in 1937. At the time, the town was still part of India and the British Empire, before becoming part of Pakistan, and then Bangladesh.



Royal Star & Garter

Care with courage

Suhail served in the Pakistani Navy and came to England in 1955 to train at Britannia Royal Naval College in Dartmouth. While there, he met local woman, Ann, at a dance, and the couple soon married. When Suhail returned to Pakistan with his wife, he was told the authorities frowned upon his 'marriage to a foreign national', and to choose between the Pakistani Navy or his wife. Suhail chose the latter, and eventually returned to England with Ann.



Black History Month Suhail 4: Suhail and Ann, dancing the night away

Suhail went on to serve in the RAF, before forging a successful career in industry, working for some of the world's biggest companies and serving on several public bodies.

Suhail captured this, as well as accounts of discrimination and prejudice he would encounter living in Britain, in his autobiography 'Breakthrough: Memoir of a British-Trained Bangladeshi'. He is now a resident at Royal Star & Garter in Surbiton.



Felicia at Royal Star & Garter

Felicia was born in the South American country of Guyana, which at the time was a British colony known as British Guiana, and is classified by some as a Caribbean region.

In 1951 she married Ernest, who was also from Guyana, and had joined the RAF in 1944. They went on to have four children, and as the family followed

Ernest on his postings around the world, including West Germany, England and Singapore, Felicia had to juggle the demands and challenges of being an RAF wife in foreign countries, and raising a young family, while her husband served.

Sadly, Ernest died in 1974, three years after demobbing, and aged just 52. As a working mum, Felicia raised her four children, with financial help and support from the RAF Benevolent Fund.

Black History Month is being celebrated in Royal Star & Garter's three Homes. In the Solihull Home, staff put on a food-tasting session, where residents got to sample cuisine popular in the Caribbean, including jerk chicken, sweetcorn fritters, curry



Royal Star & Garter

Care with courage

chickpea callaloo and coconut rice. They also had music activities, talks and documentaries on Windrush and the Windrush generation. There were also music activities at High Wycombe, as well as a talk about how Black History Month started and why it is relevant, and a quiz. In Surbiton, a display celebrating prominent black military figures, activists, singers and writers was put up in the Home's reception area.

Director of Care & Wellbeing, Shirley Hall, said: "We love learning about the lives of our residents across our Homes. Each story is special and unique and should be celebrated, and it's a privilege to share these during Black History Month. It's also great to see residents wanting to learn more about other cultures and being so eager to embrace and celebrate them. There is so much diversity among the staff within our Homes, together we are all part of the Royal Star & Garter family."



Residents Margaret and Barbara enjoyed cuisine popular in the Caribbean at a Black History Month food-tasting event put on by Royal Star & Garter in Solihull

Royal Star & Garter is welcoming new residents into its Homes. For more information on this, to work for the charity, or learn about the new services it provides, go to www.starandgarter.org

[Ends]

For further information please contact:

Goolistan Cooper
Communications Officer
goolistan.cooper@starandgarter.org
0208 481 7669 / 07391 868796

Cally Madden
Marketing & Communications Manager
cally.madden@starandgarter.org
020 8481 7692 / 07881 017299

About Royal Star & Garter

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



Royal Star & Garter

Care with courage

Twitter: @starandgarter

Facebook: facebook.com/starandgarter

Website: www.starandgarter.org



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