



# Royal Star & Garter

Care with courage

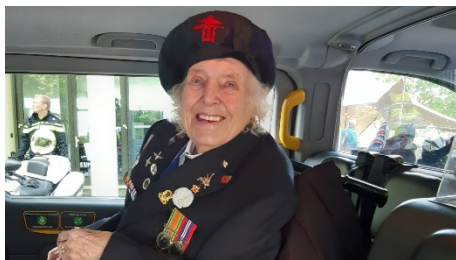
**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **WWII Wren attends Liberation Day services in the Netherlands**

A WWII veteran was a guest of honour at services in the Netherlands, marking the country's freedom from Nazi rule.

Connie visited the graves of the war dead, before taking part in the Liberation Day parade on Thursday 5 May.

The 95-year-old lives at Royal Star & Garter in Surbiton. 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.



*Proud ex-Wren Connie in the Netherlands*

Connie is living with dementia and moved to the Surbiton Home in December 2021. She made the visit to the Netherlands ahead of Dementia Action Week, which runs from 16-22 May. Royal Star & Garter supports residents to live life to the full, and staff were delighted to help Connie return to the Netherlands.

It was the former Wren's first visit to the country since the pandemic – prior to that she had been attending WWII services in the Netherlands for more than 40 years.

She was taken to the Netherlands and the Liberation Day services by the Taxi Charity for Military Veterans, who worked with Royal Star & Garter to ensure Connie was able to attend.

During the four-day visit, she paid her respects at the Oosterbeek Commonwealth War Grave Cemetery, and Grebbeberg Dutch National Cemetery, containing the graves of 800 Dutch military. On Liberation Day Connie took part in a parade in the historic town of Wageningen before attending a gala dinner.



*Connie was accompanied by her good friend Marion*



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Connie joined the Women's Royal Naval Service when she was just 17, and served as an Officer's Steward on HMS Brontosaurus, in Scotland, during WWII. Her husband Bill was one of 10,000 soldiers in Holland in 1944 who participated in an unsuccessful attempt to secure the bridge at Arnhem, and one of only 2,000 who made it home alive. Connie and Bill later attended services commemorating the Battle of Arnhem, in Holland. Connie continued going even after Bill's death, and she attended services at Arnhem for 43 consecutive years before the Covid pandemic.



*The Taxi Charity for Military Veterans took veterans to the Liberation Day services in the Netherlands*

Her granddaughter Shelly said: "This visit means the world to Nana. I'm over the moon that she was able to do it."

Surbiton Home Manager Helena Maher said: "Visits to the Netherlands to commemorate WWII have been such an important part of Connie's life for more than 40 years. I know she missed them during lockdown, so I'm delighted we were able to work with the Taxi Charity to ensure she was able to return as soon as possible. It means the world to her."

Dick Goodwin, Vice President, Taxi Charity, said: "We were delighted that Connie was able to join the other 24 veterans that we took to the Netherlands for Dutch Liberation. The veterans sit in three golf buggies and three black taxis at the head of the parade and the streets of Wageningen are lined by thousands of men, women and children who cheer, applaud, and shower their liberators with flowers. It is a truly moving and unforgettable experience and there are many tears from both the veterans and those who come to say thank you and to celebrate their freedom."

The Surbiton Home is welcoming new residents. For more information go to [www.starandgarter.org/surbiton](http://www.starandgarter.org/surbiton)

Royal Star & Garter supports Dementia Action Week, a week-long awareness campaign run by Alzheimer's Society.

**[Ends]**

**Captions:**



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**Connie 1-6:**

**Connie in Holland, with her good friend Marion.**

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## About Royal Star & Garter

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

**Twitter:** @starandgarter

**Facebook:** facebook.com/starandgarter

**Website:** [www.starandgarter.org](http://www.starandgarter.org)



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