



Royal Star & Garter

Care with courage

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Covid-19: Time to reflect: Families remember care home residents lost during the pandemic

Relatives of Royal Star & Garter residents who died during the first Covid-19 lockdown have spoken about their loss ahead of its first anniversary.

Pauline Dain, Karen Ellis and Margaret Clements all lost their mums at the Surbiton Home during April and May 2020.

They paid tribute to their parents, spoke about their mothers' final days, and discussed the impact the pandemic has had on their lives ahead of the National Day of Reflection, which takes place on Tuesday, 23 March - exactly one year after the first stay-at-home order was announced.

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

A cherry blossom tree will be planted in each of the charity's three Homes on the National Day of Reflection to serve as a living memorial for residents, and for staff, who have worked tirelessly throughout the pandemic to ensure residents continue to receive exceptional care.

Seven residents died at the Surbiton Home in April and May 2020. Some of these residents had Covid-19 listed on their death certificate.



Jean 'saw the good in everybody'

Karen Ellis' mother Jean Ryder died at Royal Star & Garter in May, after contracting Covid-19, aged 88. The Home had also cared for her father. Karen said her mother "loved people and she saw the good in everybody". During lockdown, mother and daughter enjoyed the Zoom sessions arranged by the Home. When Jean's health suddenly deteriorated, Karen was unable to visit due to an underlying health issue, but said: "I remember how she was in our last Zoom session [two days earlier], and that has been the biggest comfort to me." She added: "I can't



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wait until the Home is fully open again and I can go back and have my closure. I didn't see my mother in the short time when she was deteriorating, so I need to get back and say my goodbyes."

Pauline Dane said mum Betty Dawson, a WWII veteran, was known in the family as 'Supergran'. She loved scrabble and her visits from daughters, granddaughters and great grandchildren to the Surbiton Home. Betty was 97 when she died in April. Pauline was able to spend time with her mother the day before she passed away, and recalls: "You're never ready to say goodbye to your mum, and not being with her as a family when she died was incredibly hard. But I feel the Home did everything it possibly could for Mum and me. I couldn't ask for more."



Betty was known as 'Supergran'



The 'redoubtable' Cora

Cora Young died in April, aged 95. She is described as "redoubtable" by her daughter Margaret Clements, who has fond and happy memories of her mother's time at Royal Star & Garter. She was able to visit before Cora died: "I talked to Mum and stayed with her a good, long time. She was aware I was there and talked to me... I can honestly say I didn't have any regrets in the manner of her passing. She had a really happy life and died a peaceful death."

In Royal Star & Garter's Solihull Home, one resident has died after contracting Covid-19 since the start of the pandemic. No residents have tested positive for the virus in the charity's High Wycombe Home over the past 12 months.

Royal Star & Garter staff and residents will also observe a one minute's silence at midday on the National Day of Reflection.

[Ends]

Karen, Margaret and Pauline's full blogs can be viewed here:
<https://starandgarter.org/media-centre/our-blogs/>

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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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