



Royal Star & Garter

Care with courage

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

National Grief Awareness Week: 'Being with the people who cared for my late husband helps me grieve'

A widow who is mourning the loss of her husband says 'being made to feel like family' at the care home which looked after him before his death is helping with her grief.

Romayne Instone regularly comes to the Royal Star & Garter Home in Solihull – where husband Paul spent two years before his death in 2022 – as part of its Lunch Club service. She says being with familiar and friendly faces helps her cope with her loss after 58 years of marriage.

She was speaking ahead of National Grief Awareness Week, which runs from 2-8 December.



Romayne says coming to Lunch Club at Royal Star & Garter is helping her cope with the loss of her husband Paul

Paul served in the RAF, and moved to Royal Star & Garter in 2020. The charity provides loving, compassionate care and support to veterans and their families, living with disability or dementia, through its Homes in Solihull, Surbiton, High Wycombe and Worthing. It also provides services reaching into the community, including Lunch Clubs, Day Care and a national Telephone Friendship Service.

Romayne explained how she felt when Paul died: "I used to come with our beloved black labrador Bella to visit Paul regularly, and when he died I really missed my visits to the Home. I missed the friendships I'd developed with residents and staff, I'd miss the familiar faces. Royal Star & Garter felt like family, it's as simple as that."

Romayne was encouraged by staff to stay in touch, and would return with Bella to say hello to her friends, and to visit a relative who had also become a resident.



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She was encouraged to join Lunch Club, following its launch in 2023, and has since been made a Lunch Club Host. Romaine said: "The food is really good, and I like meeting people and spending time with them. I'm a sociable person and I'm happy talking to anyone. So when someone new joins I make sure to chat to them, make them feel comfortable and make them realise there is nothing to worry about."



Romaine with Paul

Coming to the Home, making new friends and caring for others is helping Romaine come to terms with Paul's death. "Lunch Club has helped me grieve," she said. "I don't know how long grief goes on for, but I've found coming back to the Home, and being with people who knew and loved Paul, helps me greatly. I always look forward to it."



Romaine and Paul on their wedding day

Zoe Casey, Deputy Home Manager at Royal Star & Garter in Solihull, said: "Romaine's caring and outgoing nature means she instantly connects with other Lunch Club users, which makes her the perfect Lunch Club Host."

Royal Star & Garter is helping support grieving relatives through its newly developed bereavement programme, which was developed with the support of a significant grant from the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust. Each Home has a Heavenly Postbox, where relatives can write letters to their loved ones on seeded note paper, which is later planted in its gardens. They work with healthcare professionals and external organisations to help signpost relatives to effective support and offer a selection of books to those affected by loss. Some of their Homes are now also hosting in-person groups and gatherings for bereaved relatives.

Royal Star & Garter in Solihull is welcoming new residents. For more information on this, Lunch Club and other services or to work at the Home, go to www.starandgarter.org/solihull



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For further information please contact:

Press Mailbox

press@starandgarter.org

Goolistan Cooper

Communications Officer

goolistan.cooper@starandgarter.org

07391 868796

Cally Madden

Marketing & Communications Manager

cally.madden@starandgarter.org

07881 017299

About the Royal Star & Garter group

Founded in 1916, Royal Star & Garter provides care, support and friendship for veterans and their families so that they can live well. The charity delivers nursing and dementia care through Homes in Solihull, Surbiton, High Wycombe, and now in Worthing, having recently merged with the military charity Care for Veterans. It also offers a range of services reaching into the community, including Lunch Clubs, Day Care and a national Telephone Friendship Service.

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Website: www.starandgarter.org



Royal Star & Garter
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