



Royal Star & Garter

Care with courage

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Blitz survivor and WWII veteran celebrates 100th birthday at Royal Star & Garter

A WWII veteran who also lived through the Blitz in London has celebrated her 100th birthday.

Irene McMillen enjoyed a special party on 15 November, laid on for her by Royal Star & Garter in Surbiton, where she lives. Among the guests there were granddaughter Lisa, son Paul, and his wife Maritza, who had all travelled from Canada to celebrate the day with Irene.

Royal Star & Garter provides loving, compassionate care to veterans and their partners living with disability or dementia, and also has Homes in Solihull and High Wycombe.



Irene with her card from His Majesty The King

Irene was born in east London in 1923, within the sounds of Bow Bells, making her a genuine Cockney. By the time war broke out, she was living with her family in Shepherd's Bush, west London. Her younger twin brothers were evacuated, but Irene remained in London with her mother and grandmother, often spending nights seeking shelter from German air raids in Anderson shelters or Shepherd's Bush Underground Station.

Irene joined the Women's Auxiliary Air Force (WAAF) in 1942, aged 18. She was stationed at a fighter squadron in Duxford, Cambridgeshire, and was a shorthand typist, performing secretarial and administration duties with the Air Forces Development Unit (AFDU). Pilots would test and evaluate new bomber and combat jets, and then feedback their findings to Irene. It was there that she met her husband Robert, who was a mechanic in the same squadron. The couple married in 1944, and she left the WAAF the following year.

After raising her family, Irene worked as a PA in colleges, and studied at evening school. She went on to teach English to people coming to England to live from



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overseas. She formed close friendships with many of them, helping them intergrade into English society, and assisting them with complicated taxes and government forms. Irene still remains friends with many of the people she helped.

Now a great great-grandmother, Irene said she enjoyed her birthday party at Royal Star & Garter. Many friends joined her for the party, which included a live singer to entertain the birthday girl, residents and guests.



WWII veteran Irene served in the WAAF from 1942-45

Irene said: "I've had a wonderful day." Paul added: "I'd like to thank Royal Star & Garter for putting on such an incredible party, it's been a memorable day for us all."

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

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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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