



Royal Star & Garter

Care with courage

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

WWII vet celebrates 100th birthday

An Army veteran who helped Alan Turing and his team crack enemy Enigma-coded messages during WWII has celebrated her 100th birthday.

Annie Downey, who has been known all her life as Nanza, lives at Royal Star & Garter in Solihull, and celebrated her landmark birthday on Monday, 13 February.

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



Nanza with daughter Linda during her birthday party with other residents at Royal Star & Garter in Solihull

Nanza celebrated her birthday with a visit from family, who spent the day with her. She also received a card from His Majesty The King, and enjoyed a party with other residents at the Solihull Home.

Nanza was born near Glasgow in Campsie Glen in 1923. In 1943, at the age of 20, she joined the Auxiliary Territorial Service (ATS), training as a Wireless Operator, and learning Morse code. She was billeted in Harrogate, and served at a nearby listening post, intercepting coded German messages. These messages were collected each morning and taken to Bletchley Park, for Turing and his team to decipher.

She said: "I didn't know at the time that the messages were going to Bletchley, I just knew they were going somewhere. It was years later that I learned they went to Bletchley. I just knew a motorcycle came and a dispatch rider took them away every morning. Without realising it we were handling extremely sensitive information."



Nanza received a birthday card from His Majesty The King



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Nanza's deeds were recognised in 2010, when she received a signed certificate from then Prime Minister David Cameron, in which he said: "The Government wishes to express to you our deepest gratitude for the vital service you performed during World War II."

She married Thomas in June 1945. They had planned to wed earlier, but were forced to postpone when Thomas, an RAF Navigator in Bomber Command's Pathfinder Force (PFF), was shot down over Germany and taken prisoner of war.



Nanza with daughter Linda, celebrating her 100th birthday at Royal Star & Garter in Solihull

Nanza later worked as an accountant for Sun Alliance in Hall Green, Birmingham, for a number of years until retirement.

Nanza's daughter Linda said: "Mum had a wonderful day, it couldn't have been better. The party in the afternoon was splendid and I'm grateful to staff at the Home for making it so special and memorable."

The Solihull Home is welcoming new residents. For more information on this, or to work for Royal Star & Garter, please go to www.starandgarter.org/solihull

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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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Care with courage

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