



# Royal Star & Garter

Care with courage

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Remembering National Service: Royal Star & Garter veterans share their memories ahead of 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary**

Veterans who signed up to the military through National Service have been sharing their memories.

The National Servicemen who live at Royal Star & Garter were speaking as part of the 60th anniversary of the end of National Service in Great Britain.

Royal Star & Garter is a charity which provides loving, compassionate care to veterans and their partners living with disability or dementia. National Service veterans live in each of its three Homes, in Solihull, Surbiton and High Wycombe.

The post-WWII conscription was introduced in 1947 and ran until May 1963, when the last conscripts were demobbed.



*Bob, Stan and Michael are living at Royal Star & Garter following their National Service*

More than two million men were conscripted through National Service, with 395 killed. An event to mark the service and sacrifice of this generation took place at the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire on 16 May.

National Servicemen who are now cared for at Royal Star & Garter were stationed in the UK and across the globe.

Among those residents is Stan, who lives at Royal Star & Garter in Solihull. He was 18 when he joined the Army in 1949, serving in the Royal Signals. He initially signed up for 18 months, but ended up staying two years. During this time, he served in Germany, where he helped Western Allies overcome the Soviets' Berlin Blockade. Stan, who still has his National Service Enlistment Notice and Discharge Form, said: "We were in the Air Formation Signals, and we were putting lines of airfields for the Berlin Airlift." He also clearly remembers the damage WWII Allied bombings caused the country: "The first place I went to in Germany was an airfield in Uetersen, which



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was a few miles out of Hamburg. When you drove into Hamburg you saw it was flattened and full of rubble. It was terrible.”

Michael spent his two years of National Service in the RAF. The Surbiton Home resident said: “It was 22<sup>nd</sup> April 1956 that I got my call-up papers. I was 18 and a few months. I can remember being on a steam train coming out of Liverpool Street Station ready to start the next part of my life.” He was kitted out at RAF Cardington in Bedfordshire, did his square-bashing (barrack square drills) in RAF Hednesford, and went on to become a Radio Operator, serving on the Isle of Wight and later in Dover. Michael credits his National Service as “saving his days”, as he had left school at just 15. He had already started a life-long association with the Scouts where he’d learnt how to camp, endure tough conditions and look after himself. This, coupled with his time in the Armed Forces, left Michael feeling ready to face the world: “When I came out of the RAF I was a man, really.”



*Michael in his RAF uniform*

Like Stan and Michael, Bob was also 18 when he was called up in 1954. He was placed in the Catering Corps, despite having no experience in the kitchen, and soon found himself in Korea with the Northamptonshire Regiment, serving food to 200 soldiers three times a day. He also served in Hong Kong and Japan. Bob, who lives at the Surbiton Home, used the skills he learned in the Army for the rest of his life, cooking in a hospital for children and young people with Down’s syndrome. His family meals were also eagerly anticipated. Bob’s son Derek said: “I loved it when Dad cooked. He always did the Sunday roast, and it was as if half a regiment was coming round! There was always plenty of food.”



*Stan was 18 when he started his National Service*

Royal Star & Garter Chief Executive, Andy Cole, said: “National Service came so soon after the end of WWII, it is perhaps easy to forget the vital role played by these members of the Armed Forces across the world. These men made sacrifices to serve and protect their country, whether stationed here in the UK or abroad. As proud members of our nation’s military family, it is a privilege to care

for them and their partners at Royal Star & Garter.”



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Royal Star & Garter is welcoming new residents to its Homes. For more information on this, or to work for the charity, go to [www.starandgarter.org](http://www.starandgarter.org)

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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

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



Royal Star & Garter  
is a member of the  
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