



# Royal Star & Garter

Care with courage

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Nutrition & Hydration Week: The kitchen crews going the extra mile for care home veterans**

The efforts put in by catering staff at Royal Star & Garter to provide a healthy, happy and positive dining experience are being highlighted ahead of Nutrition & Hydration Week.

Enjoying nutritious meals and socialising at mealtimes is an essential part of the outstanding person-centred care delivered by the charity, which has Homes in Solihull, Surbiton and High Wycombe.

Royal Star & Garter provides loving, compassionate care to veterans and their partners living with disability or dementia.

Talented teams of chefs and caterers from Signature Dining work with care staff to understand the needs of each individual, to create appealing meals which meet residents' complex care and nutritional needs.

Royal Star & Garter's Director of Care, Pauline Shaw, said: "Mealtimes are an important part of everyone's daily routine, and they can be even more important in care home settings. A good dining experience can help with social interaction, and the consumption of healthy, appetising foods can make a big positive impact on a person's health, wellbeing and happiness."

To mark Nutrition & Hydration Week, which runs from 13-19 March, the lengths that chefs and kitchen staff at Royal Star & Garter's Homes go to for residents' benefits is being highlighted.



*Award-winning Rida Diab, Chef Manager at Royal Star & Garter in Surbiton*

Rida Diab is the award-winning Chef Manager at Royal Star & Garter in Surbiton. He often takes personal requests, and has been known to cook up delicious meals using residents' cherished family recipes. He did just that with one resident, when he made a gooseberry pie using her mother's recipe.



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The resident later said: "My mum died in 1966 and it reminded me of her."

Rida has also been known to provide a fine-dining experience for residents. When an RAF veteran requested steak, a food which didn't feature often on the menu because many struggle to eat it, Rida would cook the meal in front of the resident in the dining area. Explaining the efforts he goes to, Rida said: "It's a lot more work but I feel happy when I see them enjoying the food. They deserve to be treated like this because of what they have done for their country. We offer them everything that we can. Residents can always come to me."

In High Wycombe, Chef Manager Marcin Kosinski said he and his team make residents' birthdays that little bit more special. "We always cook the meal of their choice," he said. "Even if it's something we don't have in the kitchen, we're happy to go to the shops and buy the ingredients. The residents also tell us what cakes they like, and we'll make them their own birthday cake." Echoing Rida's sentiments, Marcin continued: "It's all about making their special day a bit more special. It means a lot to them, and it means a lot to me and my team that we can do this for the residents and make them happy."



*Marcin is the Chef Manager at Royal Star & Garter in High Wycombe*

In addition, Marcin also offers tours of the kitchen to residents, so they can see how their food is prepared, and the effort and love that goes into producing every meal.



*Pureed food is piped onto a plate by Paul Bunker, the Chef Manager at Royal Star & Garter in Solihull*

Some Royal Star & Garter residents' specific care needs mean they require texture-modified food, and the care homes' kitchens have a wide selection of pureed food for them to choose from. Paul Bunker, Chef Manager at the Solihull Home said: "There used to be a stigma attached to pureed food, it was all mixed together and blobbed onto a plate. I think this is quite uninspiring and degrading. At Royal Star & Garter, our pureed food

is deconstructed and served with dignity. We puree our peas and pipe them onto a plate carefully, so it looks like they're individual peas. Carrots are pureed and piped onto a plate to look like a carrot, with a bit of the peas added for the stalk. The



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feedback is that people living with dementia eat the carrots because they know what it is from the way it's been piped. And colours are also very important when living with dementia."

Residents could be on a pureed diet for a number of reasons. They could have a risk of choking and aspiration, or problems with swallowing, which can be brought on by dementia, or dental issues. Nearly every meal served in the Homes can be pureed, including nearly all meats, so residents on texture modified diets are often eating exactly the same food as the non-pureed meals. Paul continued: "It's the same healthy, nutritious, tasty, appealing, appetising food. By serving pureed food they way we do, the residents still maintain dignity – it still looks like a meal, it still looks like the food everyone else is eating."



*Texture-modified food being piped onto a plate*

The food served at Royal Star & Garter has been praised by residents and relatives. Derek's dad Bob served in the Army's Catering Corps, and recently became a resident. Derek said: "Coming to Royal Star & Garter was like coming home for Dad. He had a freshly cooked hot meal, one that had been cooked especially for him. That means so much to Dad, and as a struggling relative, that brought a smile to my face. I was relieved he was *home*. Not just in a care home, but *home*. That meant the world to me."

And retired GP Annet spoke of the impact food at Royal Star & Garter had on her mother Felicia, whose husband served in the RAF. She said: "Mum had a six-week stay in another care home, and I could see she was losing weight and not happy. But moving to Royal Star & Garter was like a breath of fresh air. I can see how well cared for she is. She's eating well, she's put on weight, and she's happy."

Director of Care Pauline Shaw added: "The emphasis at Royal Star & Garter is always about providing the very best care. That extends to the food we serve in the Homes. We know that food can be linked to memory, social occasions and emotions, and that it can bring enjoyment, socialisation and dignity. That's why we do everything we can to meet the needs of individuals in the dining room, and make mealtimes an enjoyable, positive experience."



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Paul Robottom, Founder/Owner Director of Signature Dining, said: "Everything that we do centres around the happiness and dignity of the residents. We are privileged to work in residents' own homes, and design our menus to meet the nutrition and hydration needs of all residents whilst being adaptable to meet their preferences and special requests."

Royal Star & Garter is welcoming new residents into 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.

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



Royal Star & Garter  
is a member of the  
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