



Royal Star & Garter

Care with courage

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Iraq veteran gets VIP treatment at Soldiering On Awards ceremony

Iraq War veteran Stephen Vause was a guest of honour at a glittering Soldiering On Awards ceremony after winning a prestigious prize.

The 35-year-old, a resident at Royal Star & Garter, won Soldiering On Awards' Inspiration category in 2021. A gala dinner was due to take place in December that year but was postponed due to Covid.

The black-tie dinner brought together the finalists and winners from the 2020 and 2021 Soldiering On Awards, as well as announcing the winners of 2022, at Park Plaza Westminster Bridge Hotel on Thursday 27 October.



Stephen Vause at the awards evening, surrounded by staff from Royal Star & Garter, his dad James, co-host Jamie Hull, and Jamie's mum Shirley Kristensen

Army veteran Stephen, who suffered traumatic head injuries in a mortar attack while serving in Basra in 2007, won the coveted Inspiration award in a public vote, after raising thousands of pounds for Help for Heroes from his room at Royal Star & Garter in Surbiton, with the support of care staff.

He attended the dinner with his father James and staff from Royal Star & Garter, a charity which provides loving, compassionate care to veterans and their partners living with disability or dementia.

The event was hosted by ITV news presenter Lucrezia Millarini and adventurer and former Army reservist Jamie Hull. Guests included House of Lords Deputy Leader and former Defence Minister The Rt Hon. Earl Howe, Minister for Veterans' Affairs Johnny Mercer MP, and Chief of Defence People, Lt Gen James Swift OBE. Former England football captain David Beckham also provided a video message praising all finalists which was played during the ceremony.

Afterwards, Stephen said: "It was a privilege to be at the Soldiering On Awards. The room was filled with people whose inspiring stories demonstrate huge courage and bravery. It felt amazing to be part of that."



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Stephen, whose injuries left him using a wheelchair and communicating using a tablet, undertook a gruelling 60-mile virtual London to Brighton cycle ride at Royal Star & Garter during the second lockdown, in early 2021.

With the help of Royal Star & Garter staff, he completed the challenge on his adapted static bike in six weeks, raising more than £5,000 for Help for Heroes.



Stephen with his Soldiering On Award

His Soldiering On Awards success was praised by the then Prime Minister Boris Johnson, who said: "Stephen has shown remarkable courage in dealing with his injuries and great fortitude in raising money for Armed Forces charities. I take my metaphorical hat off to him for his latest fundraising exploit. I am full of admiration for him."

Royal Star & Garter provides specialist care for Stephen and works closely with Help for Heroes, who also funded a bespoke wheelchair and specialist gym equipment to support him.

The Soldiering On Awards recognise the outstanding achievements of those who have served their country, and the diverse people and groups who work together in support of the Armed Forces community.

Royal Star & Garter provides loving, compassionate care to veterans and their partners living with disability or dementia, and is welcoming new residents to its Homes in Solihull, Surbiton and High Wycombe. For more information on this, or to work for the charity, please visit: 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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