



Royal Star & Garter

Care with courage

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Care home staff continue popular exercise class in resident's memory

Staff are continuing to run a popular exercise class at a Surbiton care home, in tribute to the resident who originally led it.

Wellbeing Coordinators at Royal Star & Garter have continued running the Star Moves with Ken classes in memory of Ken Harris, who died shortly before Christmas, aged 88.

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



Suzie leading the Ken's Star Moves with the Wellbeing Team class

Ex-soldier Ken was a former fitness instructor who set up his class soon after moving to Royal Star & Garter in September 2021. With the help of the Home's in-house Physiotherapist, he drew on his experience as a YMCA weight instructor, teaching low-impact exercises to over-60s, to design seated-movement exercises, aimed at improving mobility and boosting mental and physical wellbeing.

Such was the success of the class, that it was soon taking place six days a week. It also relocated to a larger space in the Home due to its increasing popularity.

Wellbeing Coordinator Suzie Elliott often assisted with Ken's classes, and vowed to him that it would continue running. It is now known as Ken's Star Moves with the Wellbeing Team, and Suzie said: "When I last saw him, I made a promise to Ken that we would continue running Star Moves with Ken. He didn't say anything - he closed his eyes, smiled and nodded. It was very emotional.



Ken putting residents through their paces during a Star. Moves class at Royal Star & Garter



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"The classes meant the world to Ken. He loved them and he was so good at it. He looked forward to it and so did the residents who took part. We miss him a lot but this means his legacy will live on - I think he'd be happy to know that."

Speaking last year, Ken said he felt honoured that fellow residents attended. Choking back tears, he said: "It means a hell of a lot to me that I can do these classes, and that people trust me and are willing to come to training every day – it's a huge compliment."



Ken was a former Army veteran who lived at Royal Star & Garter in Surbiton

Star Moves regulars paid tribute to Ken, and said they were grateful his classes are carrying on. WWII veteran Phyllis, 101, said: "I think Ken would be very pleased if he knew we were still doing his classes. He was an inspiration. I'm glad they have continued in tribute to him."

And 85-year-old RAF veteran Michael, who also regularly uses the Home's Physiotherapy Room, said: "I've got a muscle condition which is deteriorating and it's vital that I do this exercise, so Ken's classes were a gift from heaven. He was brilliant - he had this deep, melodic voice, and was slightly larger than life. He was a great companion and we had the same rather warped sense of humour. I still miss him an awful lot."

Michael also praised the Home's Wellbeing Team for running the classes in Ken's memory, saying: "They could easily have not bothered, but they're continuing it, and it's in Ken's name, so we still have the privilege of doing these exercises."

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

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Video: <https://vimeo.com/810592452>

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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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