



Royal Star & Garter

Care with courage

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Veterans' Telephone Friendship Service celebrates anniversary

A service which reaches out to members of the Armed Forces community in their own homes, providing companionships and connection, has celebrated its third anniversary.

The Telephone Friendship Service (TFS) was launched by Royal Star & Garter in November 2022 to help veterans and their partners combat isolation.

People using the free-to-use service have praised the impact TFS has had on their lives, while volunteers have spoken of the benefits to them.



Kelda met her phone buddy Joy in person

Since launching, TFS has supported 84 veterans or veterans' partners and built a community of 47 trained volunteers. Together, they have enjoyed more than 5,580 hours of conversation.

Joy is 93 and started using TFS in 2023. She matched with volunteer Kelda Fasasi, who is Head of Innovation at Royal Star & Garter, and developed TFS. Their regular phone calls have continued even after Joy moved into a care home. Joy said: "Telephone Friendship Service makes my week a little bit brighter. The chats I have with Kelda really lift my spirits and I always look forward to hearing her friendly, cheerful voice. I think it's a wonderful service and I'm so happy there's so many other people who benefit from it like I do."

Kelda said: "Joy is kind, thoughtful and full of life. We would chat every Friday. Our conversations wandered from family stories to biscuits, from poetry to the curious happenings of the world around us. Through the laughter and the sharing, a true friendship grew – one built on connection, comfort and care. Joy told me she was worried our calls might stop now that she has moved into a care home but I've told her that she has me as long as she wants me."



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Their friendship recently saw Kelda visit Joy at her care home, so they were able to meet face-to-face for the very first time.

Navy veteran Paul is also a volunteer phone buddy. He received support from military charities following the amputation of his left leg. Paul is currently speaking to six veterans on a regular basis, and said: "I love our discussions, I love their stories and what I hear. They just want someone to tell their stories to. They're lovely but they're lonely, and they're all people that have problems, like you and I have. I class them as my friends and I love to care for them. I get a lot of satisfaction from this."



*Telephone Friendship Service
volunteer Paul regularly speaks to six
people*

TFS was one of a new group of services launched by Royal Star & Garter which reach into the community to support the military family. The charity has been caring for veterans and their families living with disability or dementia for over 100 years and has Homes in Solihull, Surbiton, High Wycombe and Worthing.

Anyone interested in finding more information about using TFS can go to: <https://starandgarter.org/telephone-friendship/>. Anyone interested in becoming a TFS volunteer can go to: <https://starandgarter.org/how-you-can-help/volunteer/telephone-friend/>

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Captions

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About the Royal Star & Garter group

Founded in 1916, Royal Star & Garter provides care, support and friendship for veterans and their families so that they can live well. The charity delivers nursing and dementia care through Homes in Solihull, Surbiton, High Wycombe, and now in Worthing, having recently merged with the military charity Care for Veterans. It also offers a range of services reaching into the community, including Lunch Clubs, Day Care and a national Telephone Friendship Service.

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