



Royal Star & Garter

Care with courage

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Love at first sight: Resident recalls meeting husband on VE Day

A resident at Royal Star & Garter has recalled meeting her husband exactly 80 years ago, on VE Day.

Rita Harvey said it was love at first sight when she met Ken on the train as she travelled home to Twickenham from VE Day celebrations in London on 8 May, 1945.

The couple married in East Molesey in 1951, and lived happily together until Ken's death in 1993.



Rita, with her wedding photo

The 97-year-old now lives at Royal Star & Garter in Surbiton. The Home provides loving, compassionate care to veterans and their partners living with disability or dementia, as well as services reaching out into the community.

Rita, who is living with dementia, shared her story as the nation celebrates the 80th anniversary of Victory in Europe Day, and the unconditional surrender of Nazi Germany.

She met Ken, who was serving in the Army, on a train leaving Waterloo station after she and a friend had spent the day in London celebrating. Ken offered her his seat on the busy train, and on the journey they exchanged addresses to write to each other.

Rita said: "I wanted to go up to London to join in the VE Day celebrations, but I wanted some company so I asked a very good friend if she wanted to join me. I wanted to see what was happening in London."



Rita and Ken on their wedding day



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She continued: “We were drinking champagne and dancing in central London, and we had a wonderful day. Later we went to back to Waterloo to get the train home, and the carriages were packed. Then, this lovely young man offered me his seat. That lovely young man was Ken, and it was love at first sight. We hit it off and he asked if we could exchange addresses and stay in touch. It was the start of a wonderful relationship and we were devoted to each other.”

Royal Star & Garter is celebrating VE Day at each of its Homes, in Solihull, Surbiton, High Wycombe, and now in Worthing, having recently merged with the military charity Care for Veterans.



Rita, in her room at Royal Star & Garter, looking at her wedding day photo

Residents will also be attending a service of thanksgiving at Westminster Abbey on VE Day.

Royal Star & Garter in Surbiton is welcoming new residents. For more information on this, the other services it offers to the veterans' community, or to work at the Home, go to www.starandgarter.org/surbiton

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About Royal Star & Garter

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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Royal Star & Garter
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