



Royal Star & Garter

Care with courage

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

VE Day 75: WW2 veterans recall courage, celebrations, and loss

Veterans of the Second World War, now living at Royal Star & Garter, have been remembering Victory in Europe (VE) Day, 75 years on.

The courageous men and women recalled a carnival atmosphere and street celebrations, but also reflected on the men and women who lost their lives during the 1939-1945 conflict.

They were speaking ahead of the 75th anniversary of VE Day on Friday 8 May, and before the lockdown imposed across the country by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Royal Star & Garter is a charity providing loving, compassionate care to veterans and their partners living with disability or dementia from Homes in Solihull, Surbiton and High Wycombe.

Also remembering VE Day was the wife of a Second World War sailor, and some of the men who went on to serve their country after 1945.

Flo Mahoney





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Flo was a driver in the Women's Auxiliary Air Force (WAAF) during VE Day. She said: "I was still in camp and we celebrated quite madly. We probably all had too much to drink and we had a dance at night, and said 'Thank God for that!'" VE Day was also a time for reflection and to remember those that did not survive the war. She said: "I used to drive pilots to their planes [before they set off on missions]. You would see a young chap run to their plane, and they would fly off. And sometimes they didn't come back. You'd be thinking to yourself 'Where is so-and-so?', and the next day you'd be looking for him and you'd be told, 'No, he caught it.' It was a good time and a very sad time."

Joan Sprigg



Joan left the Auxiliary Territorial Service (ATS) in April 1945. She had been serving at RAF Uxbridge and went to London: "There were unforgettable celebrations going on. Trafalgar Square was just packed with relieved and happy service people and civilians all singing and dancing. It was just wonderful."

Harry and Sue Southern



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Harry was serving in the Navy at the time. For him VE Day slipped by. He said: "I was crossing the Indian Ocean from Mombasa to Colombo. We were on four hours on and four hours off so not a great deal of celebration. It was expected." His wife Sue was a student at teaching college in Cheltenham, when staff broke the good news. She said: "They put out bread and sandwich filling and we had the day off, everybody did what they wanted. We went into town, there were jollifications and flags were going up and church bells were ringing and there was more or less a street party. It was a gloriously sunny day, and everybody was rejoicing."

Alf Cresser





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Alf, who served in the RAF after the Second World War, also recalled a street party. He said: "We had big celebrations in the road, drinking, it was fantastic. It was wonderful."

David French



David, who carried out his National Service with the RAF, cannot recall the special day itself, but has a photo of a VE Day street party, which includes Union Jack bunting and children sitting at picnic tables, and captures the prevailing bonhomie and carnival spirit.

Amy Wein



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For some women in the service, Victory in Europe was tinged with some sadness that their military careers were likely to end soon. Amy was in the WAAF on VE Day. She said: "I was stationed in Hastings, and we went on a victory parade. It was jolly good. I didn't stay [in the Forces] because I was married and my husband wanted me to come out. I think that had I been single I would have stayed in because I thought it was a good life to be a servicewoman, and still is. I think a lot of women in the services felt like that. They were losing that companionship."

Royal Star & Garter was established in 1916 to help veterans in the First World War. Seventy-five years after VE Day, the charity is still caring for generations who faced wartime difficulties with courage. Today, during another global crisis, the charity is inspired by its residents' fortitude to provide care with the same courage.

If you wish to support Royal Star & Garter this VE Day with a donation, please visit:
<https://starandgarter.org/donate/>

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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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Royal Star & Garter
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