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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

VJ Day 80: Navy wife 'never doubted' Far East and D-Day veteran husband would survive WWII

A 101-year-old has recalled how she married her husband after he returned from service in the Far East during WWII.

Mary Holley was speaking ahead of the 80th anniversary of Victory over Japan (VJ) Day on 15 August, which marked the end of the war in the Pacific, and the end of WWII.

She had met Roy in 1939 and they started courting before he was called up to the Navy in 1941. The couple were apart for three years, during which time Roy was serving on an escort ship to convoys in the Indian Ocean. The only communication available to them during this time were hand-written letters, which were heavily censored by officers in the Ministry of Information.



Roy and Mary on their wedding day. Roy had returned from three years in the Far East just two days earlier

The couple married in 1944, days after Roy had returned back to England on leave, and shortly before he left again to prepare for the D-Day landings.

Roy survived D-Day and the couple enjoyed a happy life together, celebrating their 70th wedding anniversary before Roy sadly died in 2014.

Mary now lives at Royal Star & Garter in Surbiton. The Home provides loving, compassionate care to veterans and their families, living with disability or dementia.

Remembering Roy's call-up to the Navy, Mary said: "I felt very proud. Everybody was called up, so you were no different to everyone else. I knew there was a war going on and I would not see him again for a long time. But you weren't on



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your own, everybody was in the same boat. All I focussed on was that he was coming home and we were getting married."

Throughout the war, Mary's belief that Roy would safely return never wavered. She said: "We didn't fear the worst, we expected the best."

During his posting to the Far East, the couple would write to each other but letters would arrive four or five months after being posted. They were also heavily edited by censors to prevent key strategic information being leaked. Mary continued: "I remember there was one censor that used scissors. We used to write to each other on very thin paper, and they looked like Christmas decorations by the time they arrived!"



Mary now lives at Royal Star & Garter in Surbiton

In 1944, Roy came back for one week's leave following his three years away. The couple reunited at a railway station. Mary said: "The train came in and I ran down the station and we hugged. It was the happiest day of my life."

The couple wed two days later, and honeymooned in Weston-super-Mare. Within days, they were parted again, with Roy sent to prepare for the D-Day landings. Despite his ship being torpedoed, and Roy receiving instructions to abandon ship, he survived the offensive.

Looking back at WWII, the great grandmother said: "I always knew Roy would come home, there was never a shred of doubt in my mind. We enjoyed a wonderfully happy life together and produced a beautiful family."

Royal Star & Garter is a charity which also has Homes in Solihull, High Wycombe, and now in Worthing, having recently merged with the military charity Care for Veterans.

Each of its Homes will be hosting events and activities to mark and celebrate the 80th anniversary of VJ Day, which saw the Japanese surrender to Allied Forces on 15 August 1945.



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

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Video: <https://vimeo.com/1104522157>

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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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Royal Star & Garter
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