



Royal Star & Garter

Care with courage

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

WWII barrage balloon operator celebrates 100th birthday

An Air Force veteran who helped bring down deadly Nazi rockets and later assisted with Allied attacks on occupied territory, has celebrated her 100th birthday.

WWII veteran Amy Wein marked her centenary on Monday 13 January by having lunch with her three children, and grandsons who had come from Australia and New Zealand, at Royal Star & Garter in Surbiton, where she now lives. Staff at the care home then threw her a memorable afternoon tea party.

The previous day, Amy had celebrated her special birthday in the Home's garden room with family and friends, including her great grandchildren.



Birthday girl Amy with her grandsons Daniel and Richard, and daughter Kim

She said: "I had a lovely birthday spending it with family, and my grandsons who I don't get to see often."

Amy was born in Northumberland on 13 January 1925. WWII had started by the time she left school, and she went straight to work at a factory which manufactured bomb tails.

In 1942, at the age of 17, Amy joined the Women's Auxiliary Air Force (WAAF). She was trained to operate barrage balloons – large tethered balloons which were used to help protect targets from enemy attack from the air. Later in the war, barrage balloons were used to help bring down the notorious V1 flying bombs, better known as doodlebugs.

Amy then worked as a plotter at a station near Hastings as Allied nations gradually gained ascendancy over the enemy. She recalls: "It was a very interesting job. By then it was our planes that were going out in droves to bomb Berlin and industrial areas. We were plotting out hundreds of aircraft. And then, as so many of them struggled back, we plotted them back home."



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After raising her family, she returned to work as a solicitors' clerk.

Amy has lived at Royal Star & Garter since 2019. The Home provides loving, compassionate care to veterans and their partners living with disability or dementia, and has also launched new services reaching out into the community.



Amy in WAAF uniform in 1943

On her birthday, the Home's dedicated Wellbeing Team arranged a party with other residents, which included live entertainment from popular crooner Vic Gilder.



Figure 1 Amy cuts her cake with a little help from grandson Daniel, who flew in from the other side of the world for her 100th birthday

Daughter Kim said afterwards: "Mum really enjoyed her parties at Royal Star & Garter, and she was tapping her feet and singing along all the way through the concert. Royal Star & Garter have gone through a lot of effort to make mum's 100th special, and we're very grateful."

Royal Star & Garter is welcoming new residents. For more information on this, the new services it has launched, 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 is a charity which provides loving, compassionate care to veterans and their families living with disability or dementia, and has three Homes in Solihull, Surbiton and High Wycombe. It has also launched services reaching out into the community including Lunch Clubs, Day Care and a national Telephone Friendship Service.

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