

Press release – 6<sup>th</sup> May

## WW2 GENERATION'S TIPS TO HELP YOUNG THROUGH LOCKDOWN

*- SpareRoom launches a collection of morale boosting tips for younger generations, written entirely by people who lived through the Second World War -*

- On the cusp of VE Day, people who lived through WW2 offer their advice to younger generations on coping with the societal and lifestyle upheaval caused by coronavirus
- The collection of stories follows research by SpareRoom showing a third (32%) of millennials and Gen Z are turning to elderly relatives for advice on coping with the current crisis
- These tips include coping with confinement, anxiety, food shortages and being away from loved ones
- The free booklet can be downloaded from the SpareRoom [blog](#)

In the last few weeks, 100-year-old Captain (turned Colonel) Tom Moore has brought hope to the nation, one step at a time. With the UN Secretary General describing the current coronavirus crisis as the biggest challenge the world has faced since the Second World War<sup>1</sup>, Colonel Tom's generation is arguably the only one that can navigate the social and economic upheaval of coronavirus with some kind of similar experience to fall back on.

Flatsharing site [SpareRoom](#) has today launched a collection of lockdown coping tips for younger people, written entirely by those that lived through WW2, in the hope it will bring comfort and context to all of us, as we navigate lockdown and the extended social distancing that will follow.

The war generation has already lived through intense hardship, abandoned streets, national anxiety, restrictions on movement, confinement at home, the cancellation of major sporting events, food shortages and the need to live a very frugal lifestyle. It's exactly these kinds of experiences that people in their 80s and 90s reflect on in this booklet, while also passing on their advice and words of comfort.

This collection of stories is designed to give help, hope and optimism to young people during the pandemic, as they haven't experienced anything like it before. It follows research<sup>2</sup> by SpareRoom indicating that 32% of millennials and Generation Z are already turning to elderly relatives for advice. Of those, 89% have found their relatives' stories and words to be helpful, as well as this, 65% say the conversations have given them a newfound appreciation and understanding of the lives of older relatives/friends.

Among the seven contributors using their WW2 experiences to help young people through the pandemic are: **Hazel** (94, a nurse during the war) and her husband **Gordon** (97, a tank driver who fought in North Africa, Italy and Greece); **Jacques** (83, a young man in occupied

France who contracted tuberculosis and spent a year in isolation) and **Colin** (90, who experienced the Blitz in London).

**Selected extracts from SpareRoom's booklet for young people written by the WW2 generation:**

- *“Flatmates living together today need to become like a family. During the Blitz we had to look out for one another, from making sure everyone was eating enough to coping with the constant fear of bombing and the confinement at home and in air raid shelters. The rationing of food was a big issue; bread and eggs were scarce, much like how certain items might not be as readily available in shops now. But as long as we look after each other, like a family, we'll get through this” – Colin, 90*
- *“Young people today just need to keep focussing on the days ahead as this pandemic will not last forever. It is only here with us for a fraction of our lives. Make the most of being with or speaking with loved ones and cherish them. When things get tough go for a walk and listen to nature as the world is still there for our enjoyment. After the second World War, our country was bankrupt, but everyone pulled together... Young people can make Britain great again as I believe they have the enthusiasm and knowledge to do so. Have hope for better days ahead as they are just around the corner” – Ilene, 82*
- *“I was a child in France during the war, but afterwards as a young man I caught tuberculosis. At that time TB was very difficult to treat and so I ended up in a sanitarium away from my family and friends for a year. Despite the physical effects of the disease and the mental effects of my confinement I was determined to stay active in some way. Studying during this time also kept me busy and kept my mind active. Something else I found very helpful was having a daily rhythm or schedule that I could stick to – and I would very much recommend this to young people going through lockdown today” – Jacques, 83*

**Matt Hutchinson, SpareRoom director comments:** “You can't compare the horrors of a six-year global war to the current pandemic. But there are arguably some parallels in the way people's lives have been turned upside down and the generation who lived through the war are probably our best source of inspiration and comfort. As a society we often forget about the older generation and struggle to relate to their experiences. Maybe this is the perfect opportunity to learn something, to remember what their generation did for us and hopefully find the comfort we so badly need at the same time.”

**The free booklet can be downloaded from the SpareRoom blog ([here](#)).**

**- ENDS -**

For more information please contact [spareroom@cowpr.com](mailto:spareroom@cowpr.com) or call 020 7234 9150.

## **Notes to Editors**

<sup>1</sup> Research conducted by SpareRoom in 2020 with 3,507 UK flatsharers & lodgers, aged between 18 – 34

<sup>2</sup> BBC news, April 2020 - <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-52114829>

## **About SpareRoom**

SpareRoom is the UK's leading flat and house share site with nearly 10 million registered users. Founded in the UK in 2004, the company expanded into the US market in 2011 and has currently helped over a million people find a room or roommate in the US.