



Historic England

Celebrating the 75th Anniversary of VE Day

Friday 8th May, 2020



IWM

Martin Phillips, Heritage Schools, May 2020

© IWM (CH 15165)

Events leading to D Day

By 1944 the events of the war were turning in the Allies' favour.

Victory was not quick or sudden but, by spring 1945, it did become inevitable.

- 6th June 1944 D-Day - The Allies land in Normandy, creating a bridgehead, enabling them to fight the Germans on land in Europe and start to move towards Germany
- July 1944 British defeat Japanese in Burma
- 25th Aug 1944 Paris is liberated by the Allies
- Sept 1944 (Operation Market Garden) Allied Forces land in Holland), liberating Eindhoven & Nijmegen, bringing the Allies closer to German border
- Dec 1944 Battle of the Bulge - Germany's last offensive, and final chance, to push the Allies back, through the Ardennes Forest, in Belgium, is beaten by British & American forces
- March 1945 (Operation Plunder) Allies cross the Rhine in at Wesel, bringing British and American troops into Germany
- April 1945 Russians reach Berlin and close in on Reichstag in bitter fighting
- 28th April 1945 Mussolini, the Italian dictator captured and executed by Italian partisan soldiers
- 30th April 1945 Hitler commits suicide
- 2nd May 1945 German forces in Berlin surrender to Soviet forces
- 4th May 1945 German forces across Germany, Holland and Denmark surrender to British & American forces
- 7th May 1945 Donitz offers unconditional surrender to Allies and surrender is signed by General Jodl
- 8th May 1945 Generalfeldmarschall Wilhelm Keitel signs German surrender to Soviet Forces in Berlin
- 8th May 1945 V.E. (Victory in Europe) Day

The German Surrender in Reims, 7th May 1945

“With this signature the German people and the German armed forces are, for better or worse, delivered into the victors’ hands.”



Only this text in English is authoritative

ACT OF MILITARY SURRENDER

1. We the undersigned, acting by authority of the German High Command, hereby surrender unconditionally to the Supreme Commander, Allied Expeditionary Force and simultaneously to the Soviet High Command all forces on land, sea, and in the air who are at this date under German control.

2. The German High Command will at once issue orders to all German military, naval and air authorities and to all forces under German control to cease active operations at 2301 hours Central European time on 8 May and to remain in the positions occupied at that time. No ship, vessel, or aircraft is to be scuttled, or any damage done to their hull, machinery or equipment.

3. The German High Command will at once issue to the appropriate commanders, and ensure the carrying out of any further orders issued by the Supreme Commander, Allied Expeditionary Force and by the Soviet High Command.

4. This act of military surrender is without prejudice to, and will be superseded by any general instrument of surrender imposed by, or on behalf of the United Nations and applicable to GERMANY and the German armed forces as a whole.

5. In the event of the German High Command or any of the forces under their control failing to act in accordance with this Act of Surrender, the Supreme Commander, Allied Expeditionary Force and the Soviet High Command will take such punitive or other action as they deem appropriate.

Signed at *Rheims at 0241* on the *7th* day of May, 1945.
France

On behalf of the German High Command.

Jodl

IN THE PRESENCE OF

On behalf of the Supreme Commander,
Allied Expeditionary Force.

W. B. Smith

On behalf of the Soviet
High Command.

Sousloparov

Sevez -2-

Major General, French Army
(Witness)

This instrument of surrender was signed on May 7, 1945, at Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower's headquarters in Rheims by Gen. Alfred Jodl, Chief of Staff of the German Army. At the same time, he signed three other surrender documents, one each for Great Britain, Russia, and France. Signatories: On behalf of the German High Command. JODL IN THE PRESENCE OF On behalf of the Supreme Commander, Allied Expeditionary Force. W. B. SMITH On behalf of the Soviet High Command. SOUSLOPAROV F SEVEZ Major General, French Army (Witness)

The German Surrender in Berlin, 8th May 1945



General Stumpf, Marshall Keitel and Admiral Friedeburg sign the German Instrument of Surrender at Russian headquarters in Berlin on May 8, 1945.

(Credit: Keystone-France/Gamma-Keystone via Getty Images)

Although an Allied victory had been inevitable for some time, people waited until it was finally concluded, on 8th May, before they could allow themselves a national outpouring of joy





Celebrations continued throughout Tuesday 8th May. In London, crowds assembled to hear Winston Churchill's speech at 9.00pm. In Coventry, crowds visited the Cathedral. In towns and cities across Britain, people danced; people lit bonfires; pubs ran out of beer and many people missed work on Wednesday 9th May.

THE COVENTRY EVENING TELEGRAPH, THURSDAY, MAY 10, 1945.

Sale by Auction
TO-MORROW (FRIDAY), at FOUR P.M.

JAMES A. MARTIN,
WILL SELL BY AUCTION, subject to conditions, at the HARE & SQUIRREL HOTEL, COW LANE:

Nos. 53 and 55, NORTH STREET;
Nos. 54 and 56, ARGYLE STREET;
No. 49, SHAPTESBURY ROAD, with VACANT POSSESSION;
No. 20, SAXON ROAD (VACANT);
No. 57, NORTH STREET (VACANT);
No. 100, LYTHILL'S LANE (VACANT).

Auctioneer's Office: 50, Hertford St.

Public Notices

**DAIMLER (Aero Engines)
No. 1 FACTORY**

**AIR-RAID
RELIEF FUND**

IT WAS DECIDED, at a GENERAL MEETING held on MARCH 26th, 1945, that the above FUND BE WOUND UP IMMEDIATELY.

WILL ALL MEMBERS and EX-MEMBERS or NEXT-OF-KIN, please Communicate with MR. A. E. ALLEN, the Welfare Superintendent, DAIMLER (AERO ENGINES), CAP-MARTIN ROAD, RADFORD, COVENTRY, WITHIN TWENTY- EIGHT DAYS

UNLESS

Morris 10 h.p. Car
REGISTERED NO. K.V. 7708,

At present in BEACONSFIELD ROAD GARAGES, Coventry, is claimed within Seven Days of this date by the Registered Owner, Mr. HAROLD FITZPATRICK, late of South Avenue, Stoke Park, Coventry, it will be SOLD TO DEFRAY EXPENSES.

Births, Marriages, Deaths, and In Memoriam—continued:

BIRTHS
HARRISON.—To Joe and Gladys (née Bradwell)—God's precious gift of a son for Joe (Norman John), May 8, 1945.
WILKES.—Mr. and Mrs. Wilkes, of 44, Burnaby Road, wish to announce the safe arrival of Jacqueline Victoria on May 8, a sister for Brian. No visitors please.

COMING-OF-AGE
WILLIAMS.—Mr. and Mrs. Williams are pleased to announce the coming-of-age of their son Laurence, on May 9. Best wishes from Mum, Dad, Peter, and Doreen.

ENGAGEMENTS
BEESEY-BIRCH.—The engagement is announced between Betty, eldest daughter of Mr. and Mrs. C. Birch, 61, Freburn Campsey, Canley, and Ray (Goldstream Guards), youngest son of Mr. and Mrs. Beesley, 55, Ainsbury Road, Canley, Coventry.

MINE-FREEMANTLE. The engagement has been announced between Victor (M.N.), youngest son of Mr. and Mrs. H. Hill of Penmaenog, Cornwall, and Kathleen, eldest daughter of Mr. and Mrs. F. Freemantle, 157, Three Spires Avenue, Radford, Coventry. Congratulations from both families.

MARRIAGE
SALE-HENTON.—Harold George, second son of Mr. and Mrs. F. Sale, 64, Thomas Lane, Street, Coventry, to Barbara Jean, elder daughter of Mr. and Mrs. T. Henton, 109, Rye Road, Coventry, at St. Laurence's Church, Saturday, May 5, 1945.

DEATHS
BARON.—Hannah Prudence, 16, Daimler Road, passed peacefully away, Rugby Hospital, May 9. Funeral, Radford, Saturday, 2 p.m.
BURTON.—Walter, died May 9, 1945; also his loving wife, Flo, died May 11, 1944.—Ever remembered by loving daughter Nell, son-in-law Oial, and Stanley.
CLARKE.—Richard (late of Sackville Street), passed peacefully away May 7. Funeral, at Coventry Cemetery, at 2.30, Friday, May 11.
DIPPER.—James, passed away at his home, Brandon, May 8, aged 66 years. No mourning and no flowers by request.

The Coventry Evening Telegraph

Largest Circulation of any Newspaper in the District.

Proprietors:
Coventry Newspapers, Ltd.
Head Office:
Hertford Street, Coventry.
Tel. 5011.

Editorial:
10A, Priory row, Coventry.
Tel. 5386.

Thursday, May 10, 1945

THE NATIONS REJOICE

AND now after two days of thanksgiving and rejoicing the people of these islands apply themselves again to the daily round. Back to work with the consciousness that the war is not yet over, but with the confidence that, come what may in war or after, it will not be the goodwill and the energy of the people of these islands which will be unequal to the task.

These two days have been a tonic and a revelation. Lifted out of the

Midnight Prayers on VE-day



Large crowds of people went to Coventry Cathedral at midnight on VE-Day, and the Provost (the Very Rev. R. T. Howard) conducted a short service of prayers.

CITIZENS PRAISED FOR TROUBLE-FREE DAYS OF REJOICING

TRIBUTES to the manner in which Coventry citizens

Cathedral Ruins Visited by Thousands

Coventry Cathedral was

Street party in Ladywood
Many such parties were probably held on the 9th May.



A bonfire in Billesley



Not everyone rejoiced...

- For many, VE Day was not a day for rejoicing.
- Many families had lost fathers, sons and brothers, who they would *not* 'meet again'. For these families, the end of the war was met with quiet relief, rather than celebration.
- Similarly, many families still had loved ones in the Far East. The war with Japan continued for another 3 months. Many British servicemen were still incarcerated in Japanese PoW camps, in terrible conditions.
- Victory in Europe did not end the Second World War. On 6th August, the US dropped the first atomic bomb on Hiroshima and the Japanese surrendered on 15th August, finally bringing an end to the war.

Some Activity Suggestions for Home Learning (KS1-KS3)

- **Create your own bunting** using scraps of fabric - or other recycled materials - to capture the spirit of 'Make Do and Mend'. Older children could add an appliqué 'V' or dedicate their piece of bunting to a local civilian casualty
- **Plan a tea / garden party at home** – try eggless sponge cakes and consider what your menu may be, considering rationing (see web links). Like in 1945, you may have to be flexible and creative with your ingredients. Don't forget to **take a black and white photo** to capture the occasion
- **Get some Christmas decorations up** – for some people, these were the only form of decoration to hand so many made hasty use of these on VE Day
- **Visit your local war memorial** with an adult family member, adhering to current Government guidelines
- **Prepare painted stones or make colourful 'thankful' wreaths or flags** using biodegradable materials and ready to be placed on local war graves/war memorial
- **Look at your local news paper online or local history group websites** to find photos of local celebrations on VE Day
- **Research local casualties** using CWGC website (see separate PPT)
- **Map where local people who served** or became casualties lived
- **Create a local timeline of the war** in your area
- **Create a memorial wall display** using your local roll of honour
- **Design a memorial to local civilian casualties** e.g. a sculpture or garden of remembrance
- **Prepare a drama script based** on a family whose with a son / brother at war. Devise a script based on what you think the family may feel and say at the news of VE Day. This may depend on whether they know whether he is currently alive and safe.

Activities in preparation for easing of lockdown restrictions

- **Identify the nearest Second World War graves** that you could visit (once current restrictions allow) (see separate PPT)
- **Make colourful ‘thankful’ wreaths**, flags using biodegradable materials or **paint stones** ready to be placed on your local war graves/war memorial – or appropriate local Second World War sites
- **Prepare elements for a school assembly**. This could include popular WW2 songs, your own musical compositions, a recount of how your area was affected by the war, diary entries, poems, a roll call of the names on your local war memorial, speeches
- **Research local servicemen and women** who achieved significant feats in the war and local factories who were important to war production

And, when you can get out without restrictions:

- **Visit local war graves of local servicemen/women and civilians**
- **Carry out a condition survey of your local war memorial** that has a dedication and/or names of Second World War service personnel using www.warmemorialsonline.org.uk

Not everything ended on 8th May

- The Channel Islands were not all formally 'liberated' until over a week after VE Day
- Not all German officers complied with the surrender and some pockets of Nazi soldiers continued to fight for a few days
- In a remote Norwegian weather station, German soldiers had lost radio contact in May 1945 and so did not surrender until September
- the end of the conflict prompted new conflicts to emerge and this led to revenge against those who had collaborated with the Nazis, civil wars, ethnic conflicts, empire break ups and national divisions
- Soldiers and displaced civilians were slowly repatriated
- Those Jewish and other prisoners, who had survived the concentration and death camps, once liberated, still faced a long struggle to recover their health and their lives
- The Cold War began

<https://www.historyextra.com/period/second-world-war/what-happened-europe-after-war-ww2-ve-day-germany/>

<https://www.iwm.org.uk/history/what-happened-after-ve-day>

<https://www.jersey.com/guides-features/discover-jerseys-occupation-story>



Historic England

Historic England Resource

Follow the link to download a full PPT you can use for developing use of images and gaining a broader view of the event and why we celebrate it

Heritage Schools

Teaching Activities

Images by Theme

Educational Images

Case Studies

Archive Education Resources

Classroom Resources

Glossary

Work Experience

Careers in Heritage

How and Why Should We Celebrate VE Day 75?

This resource could be used as an assembly for commemorating the 75th anniversary of VE Day (8 May 2020) or as a starting point of a wider study of the Second World War.



<https://historicengland.org.uk/services-skills/education/teaching-activities/celebrating-ve-day/>

Some Further Useful Information, Pupil Activity Packs & Links

(These are suggestions – Historic England is not responsible for, and cannot guarantee accuracy of, any content)

- <https://www.iwm.org.uk/history/what-you-need-to-know-about-ve-day>
- <https://www.iwm.org.uk/history/10-photos-of-ve-day-celebrations>
- <https://www.britishlegion.org.uk/get-involved/remembrance/remembrance-events/ve-day-75>
- <https://bletchleypark.org.uk/learn/resources/ve-day-learning-resources>
- <https://www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/inspire-me/ve-day/>
- <https://www.history.com/news/v-e-day-around-the-world>
- <https://www.tes.com/teaching-resource/ve-day-home-learning-12296920>
- <https://www.goodtoknow.co.uk/family/ve-day-celebrations-in-lockdown-540015>
- (Food) <https://the1940sexperiment.com/100-war-time-recipes/>
- (Rationing) <https://www.historic-uk.com/CultureUK/Rationing-in-World-War-Two/>
- <https://www.primarytreasurechest.com/teachingresources/category/world-war-two-teaching-resources.html>
- <http://www.thenma.org.uk/>
- <https://historicengland.org.uk/whats-new/features/second-world-war-and-blitz/>

BBC – Activities, Programmes & Making Bunting

- <https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/class-clips-video/history-ks2-ve-day/z7xtmfr>
- https://www.bbc.co.uk/history/ww2peopleswar/about/lzone_school_endofwar.shtml
- <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/articles/4TrqYDyf4PMdLypxzyTwGDg/great-british-bunting>
- <https://www.bbc.co.uk/mediacentre/latestnews/2020/75-anniversary-ve-day>

Significant Second World War Dates Coming Up in 2020

- **26th May and 4th June 1940 - 80th Anniversary of the Evacuation of Dunkirk**
- **10th July - 31st October 1940 - 80th Anniversary of the Battle of Britain**
- **7th September - 80th Anniversary of the start of the Blitz**
- **80th Anniversary of significant nights of bombing in the West Midlands:**
 - 9th August – First air raid on Birmingham (Erdington)
 - 13th August - Air raid on Spitfire Factory, Castle Bromwich
 - 14th November – Coventry heavily bombed and Cathedral badly damaged
 - 19th - 28th November – Period of heavy bombing in Birmingham: BSA & Lucas factories hit, 800 people killed, 20,000 made homeless



Historic England

