

Victory in Europe

MAY 8TH, 1945

75TH ANNIVERSARY



THE BACKGROUND

- World war two had begun nearly six years earlier in September, 1939.
- **The UK and the allies were fighting Hitler and Germany.**
- Many thousands had died, from Jews in Europe to civilians in London.
- The war affected everybody: food was rationed and blackouts compulsory.



HITLER IS DEAD

- By April 30th 1945, Adolf Hitler knew that his army was too weak and he would lose the war. He committed suicide.
- Karl Donitz became the new German president and quickly began negotiating an end to the war.
- On 7th May, General Alfred Jodl, on behalf of Germany, signed an unconditional surrender.
- The surrender came into effect on 8th May – the Allies could claim victory.



THE RADIO ANNOUNCEMENT

- In the 1940s, the radio or 'wireless' was the main source of news and entertainment.
- On the evening of 7th May, 1945, the BBC's scheduled radio programme was interrupted with a newsflash announcing that the war was over and that the following day would be a national holiday.



CELEBRATIONS BEGIN

- Celebrations began as soon as the news was broadcast on the radio on 7th May.
- People quickly put up bunting and flags in the streets.



- Bonfires were lit in the evening
- People danced and celebrated in the streets.
- Finally, years of wartime hardship were coming to an end.

A NATIONAL HOLIDAY

- The 8th May was a national holiday and was a day of celebration.
- Material was rationed but the Board of Trade allowed people to buy bunting without ration coupons.



- Many celebratory events were held across the country.
- Church services of thanksgiving were held with thousands of people attending.
- Parades and street parties were also widely held.

WINSTON CHURCHILL'S ANNOUNCEMENT

- Winston Churchill was the Prime Minister at the time and was seen by many as a hero.
- He addressed the nation at 3 pm on VE Day from 10 Downing Street.



Winston Churchill announcing Germany's unconditional surrender

THE ROYAL FAMILY

- The Royal Family were very popular during the war because they remained living at Buckingham Palace in London rather than evacuate to the safety of the country.

- King George VI (our Queen's father) along with his wife, Queen Elizabeth, toured many places that had suffered from German bombing.

- Princess Elizabeth, now our Queen, joined the Women's Auxiliary Territorial Service.



“Let us remember those who will not come back...let us remember the men in all the services, and the women in all the services, who have laid down their lives. We have come to the end of our tribulation and they are not with us at the moment of our rejoicing.” King George

- On VE Day, swathes of people gathered on The Mall.

On the day, the King and Queen along with Princesses Elizabeth and Margaret, appeared on the balcony 8 times.

It is said that the two princesses were allowed to leave the palace in the evening to secretly join the crowds outside Buckingham Palace.

- King George, like Churchill, addressed the nation with a speech.

CELEBRATIONS CONTINUED...

- Celebrations continued into the night.
- Massive crowds gathered in London with 50,000 people gathered at Piccadilly Circus by midnight.
- More bonfires were lit.



- Pubs were allowed to stay open later and dance halls stayed open until midnight.

A BITTERSWEET DAY

- VE Day was a day of sadness for many as it was a reminder of the tragic loss of lives during the war.
- Many, many people had lost loved ones during the war and many war widows did not join in with the celebrations.
- Some people did not celebrate because the struggles of living through war had left them with little energy to rejoice.



WAR STILL CONTINUED IN JAPAN

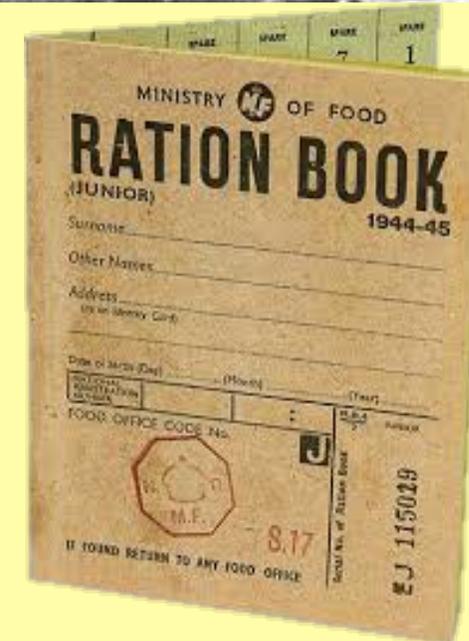
- The war was not quite yet over, as Allied forces were still in the Far East fighting some of their toughest battles against Japan.

- On the 14th August, 1945, Japan surrendered with the act of surrender being signed on 2nd September – World War Two had finally and officially ended.



AFTER THE VE & VJ DAY CELEBRATIONS

- Gradually, life began to return to some sort of normality but the effects of the war continued for several years after.
- Rationing of food and clothes continued, with food being rationed for another 9 years until 1954.
- Also, Britain had spent much of its money paying for the war so as a country, it was virtually bankrupt.



VE DAY, MAY 8TH 2020

- In June, 2019, it was announced by the government that VE Day, 2020 would be a bank holiday and would be part of a 3-day weekend of commemorative events.

- Unfortunately, we will not be able to have all the planned celebrations now. Some churches will still ring their bells as part of 'Ringing out for Peace'.

- There would have been events all over the country on May 8th and the weekend.



Take some time to reflect.



Close your eyes and think about what it must have felt like to have been alive on VE day.

Sit in silence and listen to the last post played by Eeva Salo, year 11.

When lockdown is over in Wales what plans do you have to celebrate?

