



## VE Day (Victory in Europe) - 8<sup>th</sup> May 1945

This year (2020) it is the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of VE Day. To commemorate the event, the early May bank holiday (usually a Monday) has been moved so that the bank holiday is the same day as VE Day - Friday 8<sup>th</sup> May. There will be special events taking place on that day and across that weekend when everyone will give thanks to those who served in the war and to remember all those who lost their lives.

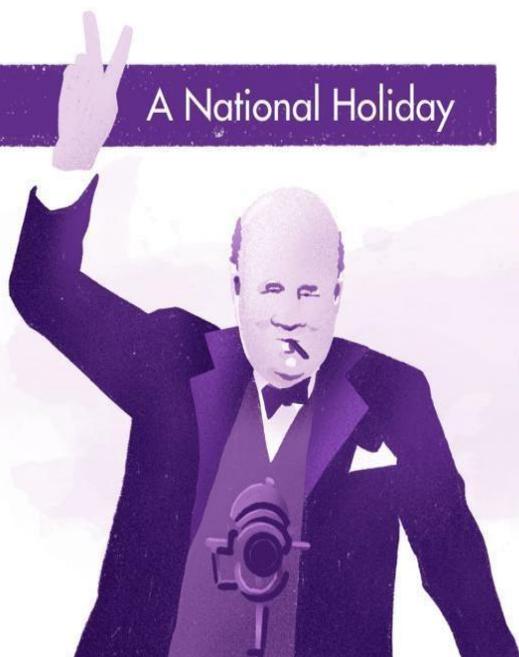
### What is VE Day?

On 7 May 1945 the formal act of military surrender was signed by Germany, ending the war in Europe. The next day celebrations broke out all over the world to mark Victory in Europe or VE Day.

VE Day or Victory in Europe Day marked the end of fighting in Europe during the Second World War - which had lasted nearly 6 years. On 7<sup>th</sup> May 1945, Winston Churchill made an announcement on the radio that Germany had officially surrendered.



### A National Holiday



“Hostilities will end officially at one minute after midnight tonight, but in the interests of saving lives the “Cease fire” began yesterday to be sounded all along the front, and our dear Channel Islands are also to be freed today.”

Winston Churchill

In Britain, Churchill marked the occasion by declaring 8 May a public holiday. People held **parties, danced and sang in the streets**. Huge crowds gathered in London, both on Whitehall to hear Churchill speak and outside Buckingham Palace where King George VI and the Royal Family appeared on the balcony.

**World War II - 1939-1945** World War II was fought between the Axis Powers (Germany, Italy, Japan) and the Allied Powers (Britain, United States, Soviet Union, France). Most of the countries in the world were involved in some way. It was the deadliest war in all of human history with around 70 million people killed.

World War II started in 1939 when Germany invaded Poland. Great Britain and France responded by declaring war on Germany. The war in Europe ended with Germany's surrender on May 7, 1945. The war in the Pacific ended when Japan surrendered on September 2, 1945.

**Where was it?** World War II started in Europe, but spread throughout the world. Much of the fighting took place in Europe and in Southeast Asia (Pacific).

Want a short overview on WW2? You can watch the Simple History Clip:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HUqy-OQvVtI>

**What was the war like for the people in Britain?** Adolf Hitler who had been the leader of Germany had created destruction in Europe. Many people had suffered as a result of bombings known as the Blitz. People in Britain had evacuated their children from the cities to the countryside. The people of Whitland and St Clears took children into their homes, looking after them and keeping them safe from the bombing raids in places like Swansea, London and Coventry. People had to follow government advice as part of their everyday lives, which is something we are having to do now. People in the Second World War had to follow orders given such as food rationing, where people had ration books for food and campaigns such as Dr Carrot and Potato Pete, encouraging people to 'Dig for Victory' and grow their own food. carried on with normal life as far as possible. What can you see in these pictures to show that?

Want to know more about the Blitz - could can watch: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1VwY\\_UxXkYU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1VwY_UxXkYU) (Simple History)





were evacuated from towns and cities to the countryside where it would be safer. They were sent with their teachers by train and they lived with other families.

Want to know more - you can watch this short clip:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E4mC4HdjJwQ>



Give them a chance of greater safety and health

**Rationing:** As soon as the war started - the government limited how much of different types of food people could buy.

They were issued with cards to show what they could buy at the shops

Want to know more about rationing in Britain during WW2? Watch this Simple History clip on the Home Front (Britain at home during the war)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7e5oygzUrs4>



**VE Day:**

Winston Churchill the Prime Minister gave a speech on 7<sup>th</sup> May 1945- you can listen to an extract:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZNVu4fMOJLw>



The 8<sup>th</sup> May was made into a Bank Holiday. People celebrated in London. Churchill addresses the crowd from the Ministry of Health Balcony.



People danced in the streets

People had street parties

### Food for thought:

- The end of the war in Europe meant that many of the troops that had fought in Europe against the Nazis started coming home.
- The war against the Japanese continued though until August 1945.
- Prisoners of war started to be freed
- Rationing continued
- Children who had been evacuated could return home



“ 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 end of our tribulation and they are not with us at the moment of our rejoicing.”

King George VI

## Many people hadn't returned home yet

There were 40 million refugees scattered across Europe



**Refugees:** people who have been forced to leave their country due to war, violence, conflict or persecution.

## Millions of people lost their lives

18,000,000

18 million service personnel killed

45,000,000

45 million civilians killed

67,000

67 thousand killed in air raids in the UK



**Civilian:** a person who served on the Home Front



**Service personnel:** people serving in the armed forces