

## **How did WW2 end?**



1945 Hallsham Road street party, Tooting, London

### **Germany surrenders**

On 8 May 1945, the Allies accepted Germany's surrender, about a week after **Adolf Hitler** had committed suicide.

### **VE Day - Victory in Europe Day**

VE Day – Victory in Europe celebrates the end of the Second World War on **8 May 1945**.

**8 May 1945** - Winston Churchill announced **VE Day** - Victory in Europe. This day marks the end of WW2 in Europe.

**Street parties** were held all over Britain to celebrate the end of the war

**But .....** Even though the war was officially at an end in the Far East the war raged on, claiming more lives.

**Until .....**

### **Japan surrenders**

Japan, did not surrender at the same time as Germany. It was able to hold out for another few months. Atomic bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki on August 6 and 9 respectively. After that the Imperial government sought the Emperor's personal authority to surrender which he granted. He made a personal radio address announcing the decision.

### **V-J Day** - Victory in Japan Day.

**15 August 1945** - Japan surrenders to the Allies **V-J Day** (Victory in Japan)

**2 September 1945** - Having agreed in principle to unconditional surrender on 15 August 1945, Japan formally surrenders, **ending World War II throughout the rest of the world.**

The surrender was signed on 2 Sept. 1945 aboard the battleship U.S.S. Missouri in Tokyo Bay.

Watch this short clip that explains the events that ended WW2

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OPcRfzRtM9o>

## Celebrations

As news of the surrender spread, the war-weary British began to rejoice straight away. During the previous six years, half a million homes had been destroyed, thousands of civilians had been killed and many millions of lives disrupted, in Britain alone.

The news of a surrender was what everyone needed to hear.



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People ran out on to the streets, hanging bunting and banners and dancing. People organised impromptu street parties, shared rationed food with the neighbours and listened to the wireless for updates.

## A Memorable Night

Later that evening, Princess Elizabeth and Princess Margaret slipped out of Buckingham Palace to experience the celebrations for themselves. They stood amongst the joyful crowds below the royal balcony.

HM Queen Elizabeth II recalled the event:

"... my sister and I realised we couldn't see what the crowds were enjoying ... so we asked my parents if we could go out and see for ourselves ... After crossing Green Park we stood outside and shouted, 'We want the King', and were successful in seeing my parents on the balcony. I think it was one of the most memorable nights of my life."





**Task** – this week we would like you to answer these questions about the end of WW2.

## VE Day

### What is VE Day?

VE Day stands for Victory in Europe Day, and is celebrated on the 8<sup>th</sup> May. It marked an end to the six years of suffering, misery but also endurance that defined the Second World War in Europe. Although it was not the end of the Second World War, it was the end of conflict in Europe.

### How did it happen?

Hitler was the dictator of Germany, who had instigated the Second World War. After Hitler's death on 30<sup>th</sup> April 1945, the German President of the Third Reich, Grand Admiral Donitz, ordered that General Jodl go to the American General Eisenhower's Head Quarters based in France and surrender to the Western and Russian officers, agreeing to all their demands, on the 7<sup>th</sup> May.

### The Announcement

The British people began celebrating as soon as they heard the news, although no official announcement had been made. Bell ringers in the churches around the country were put on standby ready to ring out the good news when an official notice was given.

Joseph Stalin, the leader of the Russian's Communist Party, was reluctant to announce the surrender but the British Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, did not want to give Stalin the satisfaction of holding up what everyone already knew anyway! Churchill made the following announcement at 19:40, 7<sup>th</sup> May:



**"In accordance with arrangements between three great powers, tomorrow, Tuesday, will be treated as Victory in Europe Day and will be regarded as a holiday."**



### The Effects of War

In Britain, during the war in Europe, half a million homes were destroyed, thousands of civilians killed and millions of lives had been disrupted.

**VE Day**

Although everyone was relieved that the war in Europe had ended, for many the celebrations would have been bittersweet. The loss of many loved ones, either fighting abroad, captured by the enemy or those who died in air raids, meant that many people felt a certain anti-climax after the celebrations.

**Bring on the Celebrations!**

People took to decorating the streets with banners, bunting and ribbons. They organised impromptu street parties where neighbours shared food, which was still rationed, and listened to the wireless news broadcasts.

King George VI and the Queen appeared eight times on the balcony of Buckingham Palace, and their two daughters, Princess Margaret and Princess Elizabeth – who is now Her Majesty the Queen – mingled amongst the crowds! Churchill told the crowds, "This is your victory!"

Churchill attended a celebratory lunch with King George VI then addressed the nation, reminding them that although Japan still had to be defeated, Great Britain "May allow ourselves a brief period of rejoicing. God Save the King!"

**The End of the VE Day**

At 21:00, King George VI made a final broadcast to the nation. Buckingham Palace was lit up in floodlights for the first time since the start of the war, and two searchlights formed a V, the sign of victory, above St Paul's Cathedral in London.

All the illuminations were turned off the next day.

**A Special Celebration**

To celebrate 75 years since the original VE Day, the May Day bank Holiday has been moved for the second time in history. Although it's usually on a Monday, this year, the May Day Bank holiday will be on Friday 8<sup>th</sup> May to coincide with the anniversary of VE Day.



**VE Day**

Buglers have been invited to play The Last Post and Reveille from their homes at 2:55 p.m. This will be followed by a 'Nation's Toast to the Heroes of World War II' at 3:00 p.m. Here, people at home can raise a drink of their choice and say the following:

**"To those who gave so much, we thank you."**

The thought is that as a nation, the UK will toast their remembrance, together.

**Bugler:** Someone that plays the bugle – a horn-like instrument used by soldiers to send signals and orders.



# Questions

1. What date is VE Day?

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2. Tick the boxes to say whether the statements below are **true** or **false**.

Sentence	True	False
VE day marked the end of the Second World War.		
The British people began celebrating before the official announcement.		
General Jodl ordered Grand Admiral Donitz to surrender.		
VE Day stands for Victory in Europe Day.		

3. Who were put on standby?

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4. What prompted the German surrender, and why do you think this was?

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5. What word has been used that means 'unplanned', and how does it relate to the sentence it is used in?

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6. What three things happened at 21:00 on VE Day?

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7. What time is the Nation's Toast to the Heroes of World War II? Tick **one**.

- ☐ 2:55 p.m.
- ☐ 3:55 p.m.
- ☐ 2:00 p.m.
- ☐ 3:00 p.m.

8. What two things did Churchill do on VE Day?

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9. Why were the celebrations bittersweet for some?

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10. How do you think people felt on 9<sup>th</sup> May? Explain your thoughts.

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# Answers

1. What date is VE Day?

**8<sup>th</sup> May**

2. Tick the boxes to say whether the statements below are **true** or **false**.

Sentence	True	False
VE day marked the end of the Second World War.		✓
The British people began celebrating before the official announcement.	✓	
General Jodl ordered Grand Admiral Donitz to surrender.		✓
VE Day stands for Victory in Europe Day.	✓	

3. Who were put on standby?

**The Bell ringers in the churches were put on standby to announce the good news.**

4. What prompted the German surrender, and why do you think this was?

**The Germans surrendered because Hitler had died. He was the leader of the Germans and had started the Second World War. Once he had died I think they knew they would not win so they had to surrender.**

5. What word has been used that means 'unplanned', and how does it relate to the sentence it is used in?

**The word 'impromptu' means 'unplanned'. It relates to the sentence it has been used in because people were not expecting VE Day so the parties would have been unexpected and unplanned.**

6. What three things happened at 21:00 on VE Day?

**King George VI made a final broadcast to the nation, Buckingham Palace was lit up in floodlights and two search lights formed the sign of victory above St Paul's Cathedral in London.**

7. What time is the Nation's Toast to the Heroes of World War II? Tick **one**.

- ☐ 2:55 p.m.  
☐ 3:55 p.m.  
☐ 2:00 p.m.  
☒ **3:00 p.m.**



8. What two things did Churchill do on VE Day?

**On VE day, Churchill had a celebratory lunch with King George VI and talked to the nation, reminding them that the war wasn't over, but for that one day, the British people could allow themselves a "brief period of rejoicing".**

9. Why were the celebrations bittersweet for some?

**The celebrations would have been bittersweet for some, because their families or friends may have been killed during the war, so although they were happy to hear the fighting in Europe was over, they might also feel sad that it hadn't ended sooner so their friends or family were still alive.**

10. How do you think people felt on 9<sup>th</sup> May? Explain your thoughts.

**Answers will vary**