

What is VE Day?

(George Durrant)

VE day is the day when World War II ended, it is actually called Victory in Europe day but we call it VE day for short. The war ended on 8th May 1945, after six long years. It is a very important day and this year is the 75th anniversary of VE day so we're having a bank holiday to celebrate.

On 1st September 1939 Adolf Hitler (head of German army) invaded Poland. After the UK and France heard that Nazi Germany had invaded Poland they declared war on Germany. During those six years, Germany invaded many more countries, including France. Some 75 million people died in World War II, including about 20 million military personnel and 40 million civilians. 384,000 British soldiers died and 70,000 civilians died, nearly half of those civilians died in London because of the German bombing raids, the Blitz. Families, homes and entire cities had been destroyed.

On May the 7th 1945, Europe and other countries like USA, Canada and Soviet join forces and attacked Nazi Germany all at the same time! Germany were forced to surrender. When Hitler committed suicide in 1945, the Nazis knew they could no longer win the war.

The next day on 8th May, people went to London to celebrate the end of the war. Crowds gathered around Buckingham Palace to see Winston Churchill (the Prime Minister of Britain), King George VI and the rest of the Royal Family. At 3pm Mr Churchill gave a speech to the nation, where he praised the British spirit throughout the war. Although he reminded people that the war still continued outside Europe, Europe itself was entitled to "take a night off today". There was still a war going on in Japan between Japan and USA, which ended on 15th August 1945. After Churchill's speech, King George VI, Queen Elizabeth and the two princesses, Margaret and Elizabeth, appeared on the balcony. That evening, the two princesses slipped out of Buckingham Palace and, in secret, joined the crowds outside, witnessing the scenes of celebration and joy.

The whole of Britain had a very noisy, loud party to celebrate, there was loud music, people dancing and bonfires burning.