

17th April, 2020.

Re: VE & VJ Day

Dear All,

As we approach the 75th Anniversary of VE (Victory in Europe) Day on 8th May and VJ (Victory over Japan) Day on 15th August, we have come together to share a message with Schools, Churches, Youth Clubs and Organisations across the whole Borough of Chorley.

Sadly, due to the Coronavirus, many proposed commemorations to mark these anniversaries have been postponed. However, there has been an endeavour to utilise social media to ensure that the anniversaries are acknowledged. Just as our community and country pulled together during World War Two, we are all working together now to overcome the current situation.

We had anticipated that our 'Message' (attached to this letter/email) could be printed and displayed or read out for students/congregation/members/staff, just like those issued by the Royal family in 1946 and 1995. As this may not currently be possible or practical, we would like to ask that it be issued and shared electronically to students, members and whoever you feel would like to receive it. Another suggestion is that it could be attached to existing online newsletters so that it can be read at home or shared within other community groups.

Please feel free to share this special VE/VJ Day Message far and wide and help to raise awareness of the involvement of Chorley & District in World War Two.

Yours faithfully,

Stuart



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A Message to the Borough of Chorley:

As we come to acknowledge the 75th anniversaries of VE Day (Victory in Europe) and VJ Day (Victory over Japan) it is important that we understand the impact the conflict had on us locally. Around 450 men and women from Chorley & District make up the Roll of Honour of those who made the Ultimate Sacrifice during World War Two. It is estimated that at least ten times that number will have seen active service of some description and many would have received injuries, endured imprisonment, or witnessed events and situations that would impact upon the rest of their lives. It should also be remembered that the war also directly impacted upon the civilian population. Not only did they endure rationing and shortages, but they were also directly at risk of enemy action and our borough did indeed endure and suffer from some aerial bombardment.

In 1946 King George VI issued a statement to schools across the Country:

“I know you will always feel proud to belong to a country which was capable of such supreme effort; proud, too, of parents and elder brothers and sisters who by their courage, endurance and enterprise brought victory. May these qualities be yours as you grow up and join in the common effort to establish among the nations of the world unity and peace.”

In 1995, his daughter, Queen Elizabeth II (who served during WW2) issued a similar statement:

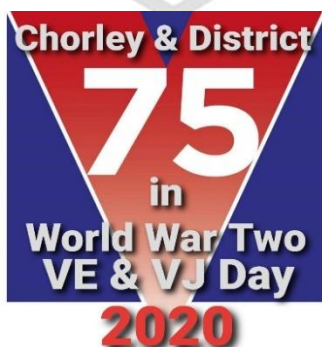
“Fifty years on, it is right that we should remember the determination and endurance of the people who fought and suffered to ensure that individuals could be free and that democracy could survive and prosper...It is actions such as theirs that made this country great, and we can do no better than to try and follow their example.”

In the Borough of Chorley, we are still fortunate to have a handful of residents amongst us who saw uniformed service during World War Two. Far from glorifying conflict, we are commemorating the service of that generation and celebrating the peace their actions brought us. It is a peace we still enjoy and it has given us a freedom of speech and lifestyle that we should not take for granted.

This final quote comes from an anonymous World War Two Soldier from Chorley and was a veteran of the D-Day landings in 1944. His message speaks on behalf of his generation and it is only fitting that they have the last word:

“Far the best memorial to those who fought and worked so hard and sacrificially is a nation which continues worthy of them in each new generation, and does not forget.”

*“They shall grow not old, as we
that are left grow old,
Age shall not weary them, nor
the years condemn.
At the going down of the sun
and in the morning,
We will remember them.”*



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*Rt. Hon. Sir Lindsay Hoyle, MP
Speaker of the House of Commons*

*Cllr. Aaron Beaver
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