



Voices of War: VE Day

BBC reporter: 'This is the BBC Home Service. Here is the news. During the first few moments of this bulletin the war in Europe is coming to its official end.'

Patricia Fitzgerald: 'You suddenly thought that everything was going to be beautiful tomorrow. It took an awfully long time actually but there was definitely a feeling of, a lifting you know, you could start to live again.'

Winston Churchill: 'The German war is therefore at an end.'

Vera Griff: 'We fished out a Union Jack which we had, which survived the bombing, and we hung it outside. And there were bonfires outside and people dancing in the streets and cheering. The relief was unbelievable. The relief was incredible. To think that we would no longer have any bombing – there would be no more fighting in Europe.'

Samuel King: 'I took a bus to Weston-super-mare, I got off the bus and a woman ran out of a pub ... and said ... "Jamaican, come on man and drink rum, the war is over". Everybody was hopping, jumping about... and a small glass of rum was in front of me... I was glad to be alive and women were crying, they were going to see their husbands they hadn't seen for two years... It was jolly, jolly, jolly.'

Catherine Bradley: 'And everybody was shouting "We want Winnie!" It was fantastic...He came out to the balcony and he saluted to us with his cigar, and he stopped there and said something and went back in and we still fetched him out! ...And then we got to Buckingham Palace and it was "We want Liz!" ..."We want George!" Oh it was absolutely fantastic. There were people up lamp posts singing Land of Hope and Glory, there were Yanks there, there were everybody. Everybody. It was marvelous.'

Winston Seales: 'We had a ball, all over the place.... It was a wild and hectic time, and I think we had something like about two days, two days of it... Crazy people. Crazy people! I didn't sleep at all...'



BBC reporter:

'A very great crowd has collected already, thousands upon thousands of people gathered to share this historic day with the King and Queen. The entire space, the whole roadway, the whole pavement and the whole scene is one dense mass of people, people in the gayest colours, red, white and blue rosettes, red, white and blue hats, streamers, flags. (Massive cheering) 'Here they come, first Her Majesty the Queen comes into view, then the King in the uniform of an admiral of the fleet, the two princesses standing on the balcony, listen to the crowd...'' (Massive cheers merging into church bells ringing)

Barbara Hammond: 'You see everybody was just so overjoyed, it was so sad for those who had just lost perhaps only the day before one of their nearest and dearest. That was all so sad. But there was the other side that was so wonderful.'

Stephen Dale: 'It was great that the killing had come to an end in Europe but for me it was really a depressing moment, because I suddenly felt all the awful things that had happened to my family and to me, they came very much to the surface.'

Gerald Collis: 'I seemed to be on my own, relatively so, listening to the radio. And I'd managed to get something on the BBC or whatever service there was at the time. And they were sending a programme from Piccadilly or somewhere in the middle of London and the cheering - I felt rather alone and quite emotional. In fact I know I wept.'

Frances Dunnington-Jefferson:

'After all, the end of the war wasn't really the end of the war until after VJ Day. And then one realised it was over, but... VE Day you still had the feeling that there was Japan going on and it wasn't really quite over for everybody.'



Voices and copyright information

BBC radio broadcasts (BBC)
Patricia Fitzgerald, schoolgirl (IWM)
Winston Churchill, politician (BBC)
Vera Griff, schoolgirl (IWM)
Samuel King, RAF (IWM)
Catherine Bradley, British ATS (IWM)
Winston Seales, RNVR (Christopher Somerville)
Stephen Dale, SOE (IWM)
Barbara Hammond, ATS (IWM)
Gerald Collis, RAF (IWM)
Frances Dunnington-Jefferson, WLA (IWM)