


VE DAY - 75TH ANNIVERSARY

READERS REMEMBER DAY OF HIGH EMOTION



Isabella Ross, of Torridon, with great-granddaughter Rosa, recalls the joy of those anticipating the return of POWs

A time of great joy, but celebrations were bittersweet for those missing loved ones

**ISOBEL FETTES
(NEE ROBERTS)**
Inverurie

“There was an announcement on the radio that the war was over, and my friend Grace and I joined the crowds gathering in the Castlegate (in Aberdeen).

“The lord provost came on to the balcony of the Town Hall to address everyone. We walked up and down Union Street with everyone, then Grace and I joined in a Grand Old Duke of York the whole length of Market Street.

“That was when I noticed I had lost my mother’s gold watch that she gave me in 1941, after she died of breast cancer. I was devastated to have lost it and felt sick.

“Grace and I searched Market Street, then quite by chance I noticed it in the gutter. A soldier was about to put his heavy boot on it – I gave him quite a shock when I pushed him away.

“I was so relieved to have found it after fearing the worst. I showed it to the soldier and picked it up and, mercifully, found it was undamaged.”

ISABELLA ‘TIBBY’ ROSS
Torridon

“I was staying in the school hostel because I was from a little village called Diabaig, near Torridon.

“Although VE Day was a national holiday, the children staying in the hostel were unable to go home for the day.

“But I remember the bells chiming the night before, and everybody coming out of their houses and cheering.

“The next day we had school assembly and I remember singing the hymn Now Israel May Say. “Later that day I went

to a big party nearby in Maryburgh Hall.

“Everybody was expecting it, but people were so happy when it actually came as it meant that prisoners of war would be able to come home.

“There were many local boys who served in the Highland Divisions who were captured at St Valery because they had held the line for the Dunkirk evacuations, so they had been away from home for many years.

“On the following Sunday we attended a service at the war memorial to commemorate those who had lost their lives in the war. I especially remember a lady who lost both her husband and her two sons in the war.”

HUGH INKSTER
Ballater

“I was about 18 years old and I remember being told we had a one-in-10 chance of being sent down the mines.

“I had grown up in the countryside at Crathie – my father was the electrician at Balmoral – and I didn’t fancy that at all, so I joined the Army and did my basic training as VE Day approached.

“I was down in the south of England and we were given three days off. We travelled up from Woking to London Waterloo and there was this massive party going on.

“We joined the crowds in the streets and we were singing, dancing, celebrating in the streets and it was like the Coronation and the Diamond Jubilee in one.

“There was a group of us who finished up in an empty double-decker bus. We slept in it and I was on the top deck and we were all so excited by what was happening.

“It was innocent fun. I know that the bars were doing a roaring trade, but we didn’t need alcohol; we were young, we were soaking up the freedom and the chance to have a laugh and escape from the normal day-to-day life in the service.

“Eventually I ended up in India two months after VJ Day, and I liked being a soldier so I signed up with the Royal Artillery for seven years – and I ended up doing 42 years!

“I spent 20 years in the sergeants’ mess, then I became a commissioned officer and I went on to become a lieutenant colonel before retiring and returning to the north-east.

“I’m 93 now, but there are a couple of us who help maintain the Ballater War Memorial, which keeps us busy and attracts a lot of interest from locals and tourists.

“It’s a strange time for everybody with the restrictions because of Covid-19, but it’s important to remember those who fought for our liberty all those years ago.”

MARGARET ANDERSON
Fort William

“I was only eight on VE Day but I’ve never forgotten the look on my mother’s face when the news came through the war was over. Everybody else in the street seemed to be happy and excited. But mum was very different.

“It was just a few weeks before that we had received a letter telling us my dad, Davie, had been killed in the war in France, and the worst thing was that the letter arrived on the same day as another one from him which told us how thrilled he was at the thought of seeing us again soon after the war was finished.

“Mum always tried