

Press release: 2020 May bank holiday will be moved to mark 75th anniversary of VE Day

- Date of next year's early May bank holiday is to move to mark the 75th anniversary of VE Day on the day itself
- only the second time ever that the early May bank holiday has been moved – the first was in 1995 to mark the 50th anniversary of VE Day
- commemorative events across the country to honour the incredible sacrifice men and women made during the Second World War

The early May bank holiday in 2020 will move from Monday 4 May to Friday 8 May to mark the 75th anniversary of VE Day which takes place on 8 May, and enable people to pay tribute to those who served in one of the most significant events in our country's history, Business Secretary Greg Clark announced today.

The occasion will remember the contribution of British, Commonwealth and Allied armed forces personnel; those who contributed to the war effort and safeguarded the Home Front. As well as marking the Allies' victory in 1945, the bank holiday will serve as an opportunity to pay tribute to those who have served and continue to serve in the UK Armed Forces and their families.

Commemorative events will take place over the 3-day weekend across the country, including:

- the Nation's Toast, where over 20,000 pubs will encourage patrons to raise a glass to the Heroes of World War II
- bagpipers playing the traditional Battle's O'er at the top of the 4 highest peaks in the UK – Ben Nevis in Scotland, Scafell Pike in England, Mount Snowdon in Wales, and Slieve Donard in Northern Ireland
- bells in churches and cathedrals across the country joining forces in a special Ringing Out for Peace
- local street parties and celebrations across the 3-day weekend

Business Secretary Greg Clark said:

VE Day marked an historic moment in not only our nation's, but the world's history and it is important that we commemorate this great occasion on its 75th anniversary. Honouring those who did their duty – whether on the battlefields of Europe or through their efforts and sacrifices here at home.

Moving next year's early May bank holiday to VE Day itself is a right and fitting tribute. It will ensure as many people as possible have the opportunity to remember and honour our heroes of the Second World War and reflect on the sacrifices of a generation.

VE Day was first celebrated on 8 May 1945 when Allied Forces formally accepted Germany's surrender.

Defence Secretary Penny Mordaunt said:

As we've seen over the past week with the D-Day commemorations, the British people truly appreciate the sacrifice made by those who fought for our freedom throughout the Second World War. Moving next year's Bank Holiday will give us the opportunity to come together to remember and honour those who gave so much to secure our freedom and liberty.

Bruno Peek LVO OBE OPR, Pageant Master of [VE Day 75](#), said:

This amazing event taking place on 8-10 May 2020 provides the perfect opportunity for the United Kingdom to come together to celebrate and commemorate the 75th anniversary of the end of the war in Europe. It will involve local communities, youth and voluntary organisations, faith groups and individuals paying tribute to the millions who sacrificed so much to secure the freedom we all enjoy today.

Sir Andrew Gregory, CEO of [SSAFA](#), the Armed Forces charity said:

Acknowledging 75 years since VE Day with a commemorative bank holiday is absolutely fitting. It is our duty to keep the events of the past alive in collective memory, including future generations – this is how we ensure that such a conflict never happens again. It is our hope that the nation takes a moment to reflect on the significance of this date, as a milestone that changed the course of history for the whole world.

SSAFA, the Armed Forces charity was proud to have been there supporting men, women and families during the Second World War, and is still here now for the whole Forces community – whenever they need us. We're honoured to be the official charity partner for VE Day 75 and call on everyone to remember the men and women that fought to defend our freedom.

Early May bank holiday will move in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Bank holidays are a devolved issue in Scotland.

Moving a bank holiday is achieved by a Royal Proclamation under the Banking and Financial Dealings Act 1971.