



VICTORY DAY IN EUROPE: CANADIANS AT HOME AND ABROAD CELEBRATED THE END OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR.

Victory Day in Europe was long awaited. Canadians at home and abroad celebrated the end of the Second World War.

During the course of the Second World War, over one million Canadians served in places like the North Atlantic Ocean, Italy, Hong Kong, the Netherlands, France, and Germany. One in eleven Canadians had participated and 42,000 were killed (2,024 in the Navy, 22,917 in the Army, and 17,101 in the Air Force). It was a long and arduous war whose end was long awaited. When Victory in Europe Day (VE-Day) was declared on May 8, 1945, excited celebrations spilled into streets and neighbourhoods throughout the world.

The surrender of Germany was not a surprise to the Allies. Early reports and rumours of Germany's surrender after Adolph Hitler's death circulated prior to the official celebrations. The news reached Canada on May 7, 1945. Prime Minister Mackenzie King, in San Francisco at the time, wrote in his diary, "this has been a good day— a happy day... one in which the burden has been greatly lightened from the knowledge that Nazi militarism has, at last, been destroyed." Not everyone was at home to celebrate. Around 200,000 members of the First Canadian Army were still in Europe at the time of VE-Day. In addition, over 35 Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) fighter and fighter-bomber squadrons as well as more than 250 Royal Canadian Navy (RCN) warships were abroad when victory in Europe was officially declared. Hundreds of those naval and air force personnel joined the revelries in Britain and France.

Many European cities, especially those in England, had been perpetually blacked out for

nearly 5 years due to the impending threat of air raids by the enemy. On VE-Day, lights were free to shine again, and this added to the enthusiastic atmosphere. Shops closed down as parades, concerts, singing, and dancing took place. George "Sparks" Shaker, a civilian volunteer with the Canadian merchant marine, found himself in London during VE-Day after spending four years as a Prisoner of War in a German camp. He was freed only weeks before and, as luck would have it, had a stopover in London while on his way back to Canada.

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He wrote in his diary, “the whole population of London was stark raving mad with happiness. Men and women were hugging and kissing everyone within reach. Every statue, every lamp post, every window was draped with people screaming and shouting.” Shaker recalls the glory of all of London’s lights ablaze and the generosity he experienced at the hands of total strangers.



Military personnel and civilians celebrating VE-Day on Sparks Street, Ottawa, May 8, 1945 (Credit: Library and Archives Canada, MIKAN no. 3193129).

Despite all the jubilation, the deaths of millions and the horrors of war tempered the spirits of many. Communities across Canada were deeply affected by the tragic loss of their young men and women. Many found themselves widowers. The small town of Sackville, New Brunswick witnessed 350 of their men enlist—ten per cent of their population—of which 33 died. For many town residents, VE-Day became a day

for remembrance and reflection rather than celebration.

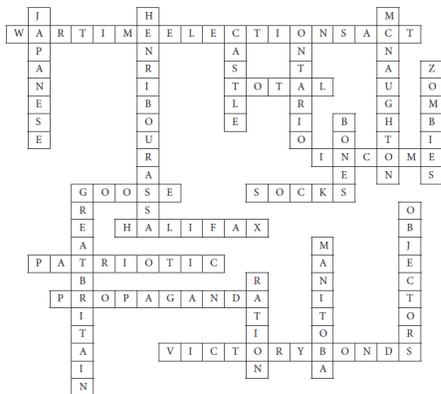
However, the Second World War was not yet over. Prime Minister Mackenzie King took to the radio to remind his fellow Canadians that although, “the Nazi beast has at last been slain . . . (the task) remains to crush Japanese militarism.” Meanwhile, the war in the Pacific continued unabated and manufacturers in Canada continued to support the Allied efforts by producing war materials to aid in the ongoing fight against the Japanese.

Canada's involvement in the Second World War was costly. In addition to the 42,000 military personnel that died, 54,000 were wounded, and of the volunteer merchant civilians, 1,600 gave their lives for the cause. For those returning home from serving abroad, the experience represented a completed chapter, both in their own lives and in the history of Canada; they relished the long-awaited opportunity to build normal, better lives for themselves, and a better nation for Canadians.



VE-Day at Parliament Hill in Ottawa, Ontario (Credit: LAC PA#134350).

April 2020 Answer Key



Upcoming Events:

Due to the current pandemic - all spring/summer events have been postponed. Stay tuned for more information in the coming months.

Questions/ Comments?

We would love to hear from you! Please send any comments, questions or suggestions by emailing: contact@valourcanada.ca.

QUALITY RESOURCES FOR AT-HOME LEARNING!



Did you know that Valour Canada has a wide selection of online resources to help support you during this time of at-home learning?

While our in-museum programming is currently postponed, we continue to develop and share various educational tools, from activities in the kitchen to interactive virtual reality tours ... we have you covered.

Your support helps us develop these tools to ensure that educators and youth in Canada have access to high quality Canadian Military History education resources. They can be accessed by clicking on the titles below, or by visiting our website.

- [Canadian Military History Library](#): 200+ articles that include topics like Molly Bobak, No. 2 Construction Bn., Tommy Prince, Operation SNOWBALL, Boer War, Japanese Balloon Bombs, and many more.
- [Virtual Reality Tours](#): Awe-inspiring, immersive tours of Juno Beach, Dieppe, Walcheren Causeway, HMCS Haida, or Nanton's Lancaster Bomber.
- [Video Documentaries](#): 25+ short educational films, including our award-winning Forgotten Fallen, alongside Battle of Kapyong, Nichola Goddard, and others.
- [Classroom and At-Home Learning Resources](#): 50+ downloadable activity plans for educators, students and parents.

- [The Road to Vimy Ridge website](#): Explore Canada's experience in the Great War with a specific focus on our success at Vimy Ridge in April of 1917.
- [YouTube](#): Documentaries, guest lectures, winning scholarship entries, and moving maps. Please visit, like us, and subscribe to our channel. Each "like" and "subscribe" boosts us in the rankings and once we reach 1000 subscribers, we gain access to additional YouTube features.
- Other programs: [2020 History & Heritage Scholarship](#), the [Canadian Women of Valour Girl Guides Challenge](#), and [Ship-to-Shore](#) (CBE, RCN).

Don't forget to follow us on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram to stay up-to-date on more great resources!



DO YOU KNOW WHAT YOUR DONATION CAN DO?

\$50 =



\$50 (or ONE membership) allows three students to attend Valour Canada's in-museum program.

\$500 =



\$500 (or TEN memberships) allows one class to attend Valour Canada's in-museum program.

\$2000 =

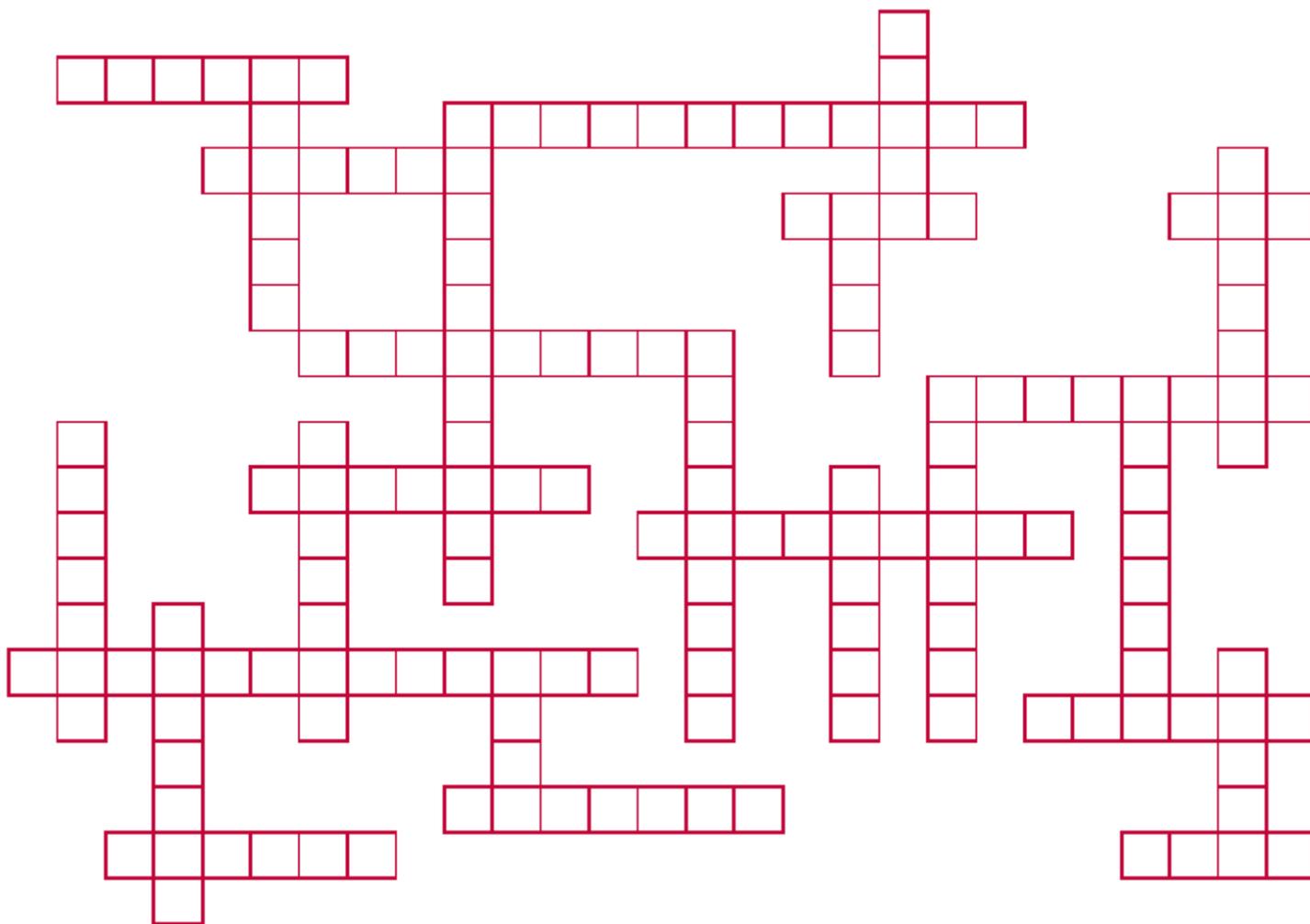


\$2000 (or FORTY memberships) allows the development of one new lesson plan and activity module for our in-museum program.

\$5000 =



\$5000 (or ONE HUNDRED memberships) allows the development of one new virtual reality module.



Can you fit these words into the puzzle?

(HINT: Start with the longest words)

3 Letter: WAR

4 Letter: AXIS, EAST, NAZI, WEST

5 Letter: REIMS, RIOTS

6 Letter: BERLIN, DONITZ, EUROPE, MEMORY, STALIN, TRUMAN

7 Letter: GERMANY, HALIFAX, MAY NINE, PACIFIC, SOVIETS, VICTORY

8 Letter: MAY EIGHT, MEMORIAL, REMEMBER

9 Letter: RATIONING, ROOSEVELT, SURRENDER

11 Letter: CELEBRATION

12 Letter: CAPITULATION

13 Letter: UNCONDITIONAL



May 2020 Jigsaw Puzzle:

The May 2020 jigsaw puzzle is up - visit [our site](#) to complete it online!

Ways to Contribute



Valour Canada Membership Form

To fill out this form online, please visit [our website](#).

*Please return completed form with payment information to:

Valour Canada, 1820 24 St. SW, Calgary AB

Contact Information:

Date: _____ Name: _____
Address: _____ City: _____
Province: _____ Postal Code: _____
Phone Number: _____ Email: _____

Membership Type (please check ONE):

- One-Time Donation (without membership) \$ _____ (please print)
- Monthly recurring donation (without membership) of \$ _____ (please print)
- Annual membership of \$50.00
- Annual membership of \$50.00 + one-time donation of \$25.00 = \$75.00
- Annual membership of \$50.00 + one-time donation of \$50.00 = \$100.00
- Annual membership of \$50.00 + one-time donation of \$100.00 = \$150.00
- Annual membership of \$50.00 + one-time donation of \$ _____ (please print)
- Annual membership of \$50.00 + recurring monthly gift of \$ _____ (please print)
- My donation is made in memory/in honour of: _____.

**All donations and memberships qualify for a charitable tax receipt.*

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I, _____, authorize Valour Canada to charge my credit card (below) in the amount of \$ _____ as a one-time amount, and/or \$ _____ as a monthly amount.

Name on card: _____ Card Number: _____

Expiry: _____ Security Code: _____