

The Day The War Ended

By Martin Gilbert

Reviewed by Allan Bacon

In planning this very readable, fascinating and richly detailed book, Martin Gilbert appealed all over the world for those who had witnessed VE-Day (May 8th, 1945) to write to him with their recollections. Many hundreds replied – combatants and civilians, young and old, POWs and partisans, the liberators and the liberated, and the defeated. Gilbert skilfully weaves these recollections into a narrative that draws on archival sources, as well as newspaper accounts, to tell the story not only of VE-Day, but also the months leading up to it and beyond. In his introductory chapter, he writes: “in the span of a single volume only a small part of the historical tapestry can be presented.” How magnificently he does so.

The end of the war in Europe came at different times, in different places, for different people, as the Allies pushed into Germany from the west and the Russians from the east. Europe was transformed into a chaos of refugees, deprivation, punishment, vengeance, a search for a new life, displaced persons, former POWs, liberated forced labourers, German civilians trying to flee from the Russians, German soldiers trying to return home, concentration camp survivors – “an immense and uncontrollable flood of humanity.” At the same time tensions were growing between the Allies and the Soviets over the future of Europe. The German surrender to the western Allies at Reims was not recognized by the Soviets until a second surrender to Marshal Zhukov took place in Berlin. As a result VE-Day in the west was May 8th and in Russia May 9th.

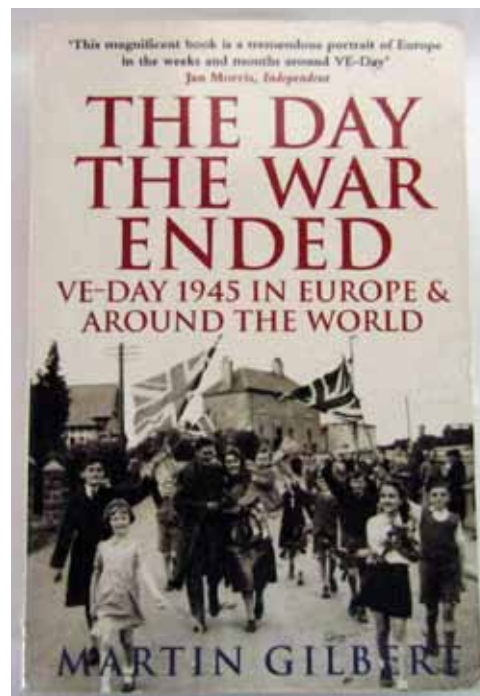
The great strength of the book is undoubtedly the plethora of recollections quoted, many of which move the reader to tears. Gilbert contrasts the

euphoria in western capitals as the war ended with the realities of life for those who had been liberated. For many it was a time of sadness and despair, especially for Jewish concentration camp survivors, as they realized that they were “not wanted anywhere” and they faced continuing antisemitism. “I had no home, no country, and no one to return to,” said one Polish Jew. As soldiers uncovered the horrors of the extermination camps they had been profoundly affected, as they “inhaled the stench of death, and the barbaric, calculated cruelty.” For those in western Allied countries who had lost loved ones there was sadness and bitterness, and many returned POWs found it difficult to adjust to freedom. For German women there was the agony of mass rape by Soviet soldiers and subsequent suicide, and the realization that “it had all been for nothing.” There was utter devastation, Berlin described as “the capital of defeat, a charred, stink-



ing broken skeleton of a city.” There was also the bitter irony that food for many a liberated prisoner was the final blow, and they perished. Descriptions of celebratory street parties and bonfires are juxtaposed with Lancasters dropping food to the starving Dutch, as fighting continued in some parts of Europe up until and including May 8th and 9th. In the Far East the bloody war against Japan continued.

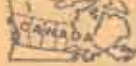
The final sections of the book examine the aftermath of VE-Day. For returned Russian POWs there was no heroes’ welcome, but years in the gulag; in Eastern Europe the imposition of puppet Communist governments; the partition of Germany; the western Allied struggle to balance revenge and magnanimity; the many in all armies for whom the postwar was a lifetime of nightmares; continued rationing and political upheaval in Britain with the defeat of Churchill at the polls; the final months of the war against Japan; and ominous future trouble spots developing around the world. The price paid for freedom, particularly by civilians, had been high, as is dramatically shown in William Hitchcock’s book “The Bitter Road to Freedom,” which I would recommend to be read in conjunction with Gilbert’s volume, an important contribution to our understanding of this watershed moment in history.



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FOR CANADIAN FORCES IN ACTION

THE MAPLE LEAF



WIRE CANADIAN PRESS NEWS SERVICE

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Tuesday, May 3, 1945

DOENITZ SURRENDERS WHOLE OF HIS FORCES

Holdout Huns Still Battle In Czech Sector

Disorder in Czechoslovakia, following the press declaration in behalf of Admiral Doenitz, yesterday summed that they would go on fighting anyway.

Over the German-controlled radio station in Prague they announced that the German commander in Czechoslovakia did not recognize the high command's surrender and would continue the battle "until the Germans of the east are saved and until our way back into the homeland is assured."

Another German broadcast from Prague declared the unconditional surrender was only in the western powers and did not apply to the Soviet Union. Only a German representative would be invited to discuss the terms and it is believed Kesselring, former commander in Italy, a two-headed man, has taken command of the recalcitrant forces.

But the Germans will not fight for long. Plans, both for the east and west, had fallen to Patton's forces continuing their advance from the west on a 100-mile front, including southeast from Czech, on the northern border of Czechoslovakia, down to Linz. The American, meeting relatively light opposition, made further gains of 25 miles yesterday, and in the last area gathered in 2,000 Hungarian troops. The 10th Army Group, which entered Austria through the Brenner Pass, has advanced through Austria.

Arms of Marshal Malinovsky and General Tomoyuki are converging on Prague. Still 60 to 100 miles from the capital, they are heading off strong German counterattacks aimed at preventing them making a position. In Prague itself, help came in the past few days from unorganized forces, United Front fighters, units of the "Free Czech Legion Army" formed by the fighting Gen. Cassin from prisoners of war, have joined the Germans.

However, the enemy is still fighting and committing atrocities in the streets of Prague, according to reports last night, and German forces are still concentrated here. (Continued on Page 4, Col. 3)

Allied Comrades In Arms



Canadian and British paratroopers of the 1st British Airborne Division, which landed up with the Germans at Wombourne on May 24, are getting the medals they are owed. The little boy in the foreground is a sergeant with the 2nd Army. He is only 16 years old and has been taken into "protective custody."

Conquering Nations Proclaim Today VE-Day, Celebrations Okayed On World Wide Basis

VE-DAY HAS COME—IT'S TODAY!

In the little red school house at Rheims which is Gen. Eisenhower's headquarters, German chief of staff Col. Gen. Gustav Jodl signed the capitulation of all German armed forces at 2.41 o'clock Monday, May 7, 1945. Gen. Bodell-Smith, Gen. Eisenhower's chief of staff signed for the Western Allies and Gen. Ivan Smolozoff for the Soviet Union. Gen. Francisco Seyer signed for France, news agencies reports stated.

Germany announced the news first over the Flensburg Radio. The broadcast, quoting an address by German foreign minister Count von Kroening, stated: "The High Command of the armed forces has today at the order of Grand Admiral Doenitz declared unconditional surrender of all fighting German troops."

They'll Make It Official

The surrender had not been officially announced by the "Big Three" powers when The Maple Leaf went to press, but it was stated Prime Minister Churchill would make the official declaration on behalf of British governments, with announcements from Moscow and Washington, before the British parliament at 3 p.m. BDST today (Tuesday).

Both today and Wednesday have been declared public holidays.

Churchill's speech will be broadcast at 3 o'clock, and the King will broadcast to the British Commonwealth of Nations at 9 o'clock (BDST) tonight.

Correspondents said that Gen. Eisenhower was not present when the capitulation was signed. But immediately afterwards he received Gen. Jodl and Gen. Admiral Hans Georg Friedburg of the German high command. They were asked sternly by Eisenhower if they fully understood the surrender terms imposed on Germany and if they would be carried out by Germany. They answered "Yes."

Germany, which showed no mercy to the people she conquered, surrendered with an appeal in the victorious air force to German people and armed forces. After signing the surrender agreement Jodl was granted permission to speak.

"With this signature," he said in soft-spoken German, "the German people, far better or far worse, are delivered into the hands of the victors." He went on to appeal for mercy, and added: "In this war, which has lasted more than five years, both have achieved and suffered more than perhaps any other people in the world."

U-Boats Ordered Home

In von Kroening's radio announcement to the German people telling of the capitulation, he said: "After almost six years of struggle, we have succeeded. No one must deceive himself as to the severity of the conditions. We had to accept them."

This broadcast followed announcements by continental radio stations that the Germans in Norway had surrendered and all troops in that country would probably be interned in Sweden, also that Doenitz had ordered German U-boats into ports.

Before Britain's Ministry of Information announced that the capitulation would be proclaimed by Churchill, Truman and (Continued on Page 4, Col. 3 and 5)

Canadians Find Surrender News Almost 'Too Good To Believe'

BY CAPT. JACK GOLDING (Staff Writer, The Maple Leaf)

The small grey-haired general stepped from his staff car as if he were in front of his own headquarters. He had two staff officers with him. History was in the making for Gen. Erich Szeben, commanding all German forces in the Russian-Wilhelmshaven peninsula, was prepared to surrender some 30,000 members of the German army, navy and air force to Lt. Gen. Simonds of the First Canadian Army.

It meant a lot of Canadian soldiers were not going to be killed the next day. The news had been rather ambivalent. First, Szeben, of a Canadian Infantry Brigade had been approached the previous day through the medium of civilians to establish contact with Gen. Simonds. He did so to the point of travelling over a severely cratered road by motorcycle. In late conversations the two talked

over a telephone wire which with a thousand miles of communication. One late afternoon was ducked high with all paintings, mostly oil masters. Another room was furnished with furniture reported to have been used in what the chief of staff had been hastily dismantled his days.

One increased room contained a great electric power plant, which we were warned not to touch. On one section of the building were an empty furnished bedrooms containing the beds. The beds were made and the rooms ready for the use of the occupants.

Hitler's cave can be reached by three entrances, one behind which the kitchen of the castle was seen from a tunnel behind the chapel and a tunnel behind the old barracks.

(Continued on Page 4, Col. 3)

Naughty Movie is Discovered In Hitler's Bavarian Hideout

By MALCOLM MUIR

WITH BRIVENTH U.S. ARMY—(UPI)—The search about Hitler having an underground movie studio in a mountain in the Thurgau Alps are perfectly true. I know because I have been there. It is the greatest dwelling ever built of a mad man's dream.

A film in which two girls appeared in the nude was one of the discoveries we made there. In another room there was a glass setting case with a sterling silver top a gem in diameter with the letter "E" inscribed on it.

The obscene, humiliating pictures were filed with photographs of the girls of Hitler and the most beautiful of Hitler's women. They were hidden behind the mountain and a tunnel behind the old barracks.

Stolid Dutch Go Wild With Joy At The Sight Of British Troops

UTRECHT—(UPI)—The 17th, 18th and 19th British Divisions, which were completely wild when the British 49th West Riding Regiment entered Utrecht, the first big city in West Holland.

The 40-mile drive from the Jarvis front line was made through a road crowded with antisocial vehicles.

One column of British troops was held up in the suburbs while the last unit of Dutch Home was cleaned up by underground troops. (An occasional shot will ring out over the city.)

Daily Mirror

MAY 8

Tuesday, May 8, 1945
No. 12,911 ONE PENNY
Registered at G.P.O. as a Newspaper.

VE-DAY!



IT'S OVER IN THE WEST

TODAY is VE-Day—the day for which the British people have fought and endured five years, eight months and four days of war.

With unconditional surrender accepted by Germany's last remaining leaders, the war in Europe is over except for the actions of fanatical Nazis in isolated pockets, such as Prague.

The Prime Minister will make an official announcement—in accordance with arrangements between Britain, Russia and the U.S.—at 3 o'clock this afternoon. ALL TODAY AND TOMORROW ARE PUBLIC HOLIDAYS IN BRITAIN, IN CELEBRATION OF OUR VICTORY.

We also remember and salute with gratitude and pride the men and women who suffered and died to make it possible—and the men still battling in the East against another cruel enemy who is still in the field.

War winners broadcast today

You will hear the voices of the King, Field-Marshal Montgomery and Alexander, and General Eisenhower when they broadcast over the B.B.C. Home Service to-night.

After the King's speech, at 9 p.m., and separated from it by the news bulletin, comes "Victory Report," a special programme which will contain the recorded voices of Ike and Monty, and other famous personalities of the war.

Additional features of the B.B.C. Home programme, which will end at 1 a.m. tomorrow, include, at 8 p.m., an address by the Archbishop of Canterbury at a Thanksgiving Service for Victory, and at 8.28 a tribute to the King.

VE-SCENE TRAFALGAR SQUARE

It was a high old time in Trafalgar-square last night. Everybody wanted to climb something. This party of Wrens and Allied soldiers celebrated by clambering on to the lions. Army policemen present—like Nelson on his column—turned a blind eye.

London had joy night

"Daily Mirror" Reporter

PRECISELY CIRCUIT, VE-EVE. THIS is IT—and we are all going nuts! There are thousands of us in Piccadilly-circuit. The police say more than 10,000—and that's a conservative estimate.

We are dancing the Conga and the jig and "Knees up, Mother Brown," and we are singing and whistling, and blowing paper trumpets. The idea is to make a noise. We are. Even above the roar of the motors of low-flying

bombers "shooting up" the city.

We are dancing around Eros in the black-out, but there is a glow from a bonfire up Shaftesbury-avenue and a new roof cinema has lit its canopy lights for the first time in getting on for six years.

A huge V sign glares down over Leicester Square. And gangs of girls and soldiers of all the Allied nations are waving rattles and shouting and climbing lamp-posts and swarming over cars that have become bogged down in this struggling, swirling mass of

celebrating Londoners.

We have been waiting from two o'clock to celebrate. We went home at six when it seemed that the news of VE-Day would never come, but we are back now.

And on a glorious night we are making the most of it. A paper-hatted throng is trying to pull me out of this telephone box now. I hold the door light, but the din from Piccadilly Circus is drowning my voice.

It is past midnight. We are still singing. A group of men liberated from German prison

camps are yelling—"Roll out the Barrel!"

"We sang it when we went to France in 1939 and we sang it as we tried to get out in 1940," they told me. "Now we sing it for victory!"

Amid terrific cheers a New Zealand sailor climbed on the bonnet of a bus and from there is the roof.

He stood there swaying above the crowds as the American army swarmed up

Continued on Back Page

Daily Mirror TUES., MAY 8
HEAD OFFICE:
 Geraldine House, Fetter-
 lane, E.C.4. Holborn
 4221. And at
 45-48, Hardman street,
 Manchester, 2. Black-
 15123 2125.
 New Home May 11.
 MIDDY132-5.22 a.m.
 MIDDY157-4.51 p.m.

Last night's scene in Piccadilly



AND A BRASS BAND!

Continued from Page One

after him, but the police fought through the crowd and pulled them down. Traffic tried to push through the crowds but had to halt and came out with civilians, soldiers, nurses and sailors—

6,000 U.S. troops leave India, Burma

Six thousand American troops have left India and the Burma theatre for the United States by air. The remainder may go by plane or ship.

and their girls—clinging to the running boards.

Down in the East End, too, celebrations are terrific. When fireworks run out they used staves, which "popped" startlingly as they hit the ground.

That the biggest fun is in Piccadilly Circus.

There is a brass band here now. They are handing out all the songs that saw this war through—and they are even trying to sing the smoking cheers of the crowd, the song that did not see Germany to victory . . . "Deutschland Awake" . . . And the noise goes on . . .

TRUST

Dr. Schacht, once Hitler's financial wizard, found by the Allies in Italy yesterday, said: "I wouldn't believe Hitler was dead if he told me so himself."

The great new Londoners waited for had come—VE-Day had been announced. Like a sea-net, Piccadilly drew the shivering crowds. With the prospect of two whole days' holiday in front of them, people let their pent-up feelings go. Traffic stopped—axis became islands in the surging sea of happy, thankful people.

SPEND VE IN CAMP, C.O.'s SAY

Commanding officers of Army and RAF camps all over Britain told their men yesterday: "Spend VE-Day how you will, but PLEASE spend it in camp." Transferring services, concerts and later "closed time" for the canteens and sergeants' and officers' mess bars were some of the arrangements.

New York went wild

From JOHN SAMPSON
 New York, Monday.
NEW YORK went wild today over the news of Germany's unconditional surrender. Cheering thousands packed Times Square soon after 12 a.m.

Streams of paper fluted from skyscrapers and the harbour was loud with whistles.

In Washington, Congress and the people on the street waited for White House confirmation before beginning celebrations. But in New York the news set off a contagious outburst of rejoicing unquelled since armistice day, 1918.

Paper streamed down into the streets in one continuous shower with radio announcers frantically appealing to people: "Don't throw paper; it's necessary to the war."

Remember that the country was still at war with Japan till six days ago.

People collected so quickly in Times Square that many vehicles had to be abandoned by their drivers and left in the midst of the milling mass.

Outside one Broadway hotel a group of Allied Servicemen, Americans, British and Canadian, formed a spinning line while an endless queue of girls marched past to place congratulatory kisses on their lipstick-smothered faces.

'FRISCO SUCCESS IS CERTAIN, SAYS MOLOTOV

The Big Four have ended their consultations at San Francisco, and the U.S. family achieved what assure the success of the conference, M. Molotov said yesterday.

Virtually complete agreement was reached over the revision of the Dumbarton Oaks proposals.

M. Molotov, who until yesterday had not agreed to two important amendments proposed by Britain and the U.S., was understood to have told Mr. Eden and Mr. Stettinius that he would now support them.

DAVID WALKER CABLES FROM SHAEF:

I can't tell you it's over

Monday night. THROUGH no fault of the censorship, which must obey higher orders, I cannot even tell you whether the war is over or not—and coming from Supreme Headquarters tonight, I suppose that's funny.

This must be the greatest single Press fiasco of all time. While the peace news has been broadcast all over the world, British and American newspapermen's copy still lies here pending the permission of officials.

Even in their defeat, the Germans can laugh at us for our confusion, and for those who have been abroad on war stories since 1938 and 1939, this is the final humiliation.

It is a pity that Shaef lacks the courage of Lord Nelson, who put his telescope to his blind eye; the only advantage they seem to have over Nelson is that they are more at sea.

LATEST NEWS



"Get! Get! My memory. What did we say we were doing tomorrow?"