

# VE and VJ Day 80: The End of the Second World War

Presentation Guidance



ROYAL BRITISH LEGION

## Purpose

This document offers you guidance on sharing the accompanying PowerPoint presentation on VE (Victory in Europe) and VJ (Victory over Japan) Day. It aims to ensure accurate and respectful delivery of this important narrative within your community.

## Target Audience

Community groups, individuals and all interested parties.

## Key Principles

- **Remembrance:** VE and VJ Day mark the end of the Second World War, and the immense sacrifices made. Approach the subject with sensitivity for all those who served and who suffered.
- **Historical Accuracy:** Please adhere to the information in the PowerPoint.
- **Inclusive Storytelling:** Acknowledge the diverse contributions of individuals from all backgrounds during the war. Highlight the roles of Commonwealth and Allied forces, as well as referencing the experiences of civilians.
- **Age Appropriateness:** Adapt your delivery to the audience. Be mindful of the graphic nature of some aspects of the war and adjust the level of detail accordingly, particularly if presenting to young people.
- **Time of Year:** While VE Day is in May and VJ Day is in August, this presentation is relevant to be delivered at any point in the year.

## Presentation Delivery Tips

- **Preparation:** Familiarise yourself with the PowerPoint content and practice your delivery beforehand.
- **Visual Aids:** Talk about the images in the presentation to enhance engagement and understanding.
- **Personal Stories:** If appropriate, incorporate personal stories or anecdotes from veterans or civilians to humanise the historical narrative. However, ensure you have permission to do so, and that the stories are accurate.
- **Engagement:** Encourage audience participation through questions and discussions and encourage the taking part in **Remembrance** to honour those who have served or are currently serving.
- **Royal British Legion:** Briefly mention the work of the Royal British Legion and the importance of the Poppy Appeal in supporting veterans and their families.
- **Two Separate Events:** Ensure that the audience understands that VE Day and VJ Day were two separate occasions, which happened months apart, and for different reasons.
- **Signposting:** Signpost to further information, such as the Royal British Legion website, local archives and historical societies.

## Handling Sensitive Issues

- **Casualties and Suffering:** Be mindful of the emotional impact if discussing casualties and suffering. Offer support and resources if needed.
- **Controversial Topics:** If sensitive or controversial topics arise, address them with sensitivity and objectivity. Avoid expressing personal opinions or taking sides.
- **Questions:** Be prepared to answer questions honestly and respectfully. If you don't know the answer, acknowledge it and offer to find out.

## Royal British Legion Support

- Contact your local Royal British Legion branch for further information, resources or support.
- Visit the Royal British Legion website for educational materials and information on upcoming events.
- We are interested in your feedback on the presentation and audience response, please contact share with us via **Remembrance@britishlegion.org.uk**

**By following these guidelines, you can help ensure that VE and VJ Day are marked appropriately, fostering a deeper understanding of this pivotal era.**

# VE and VJ Day 80 The End of the Second World War



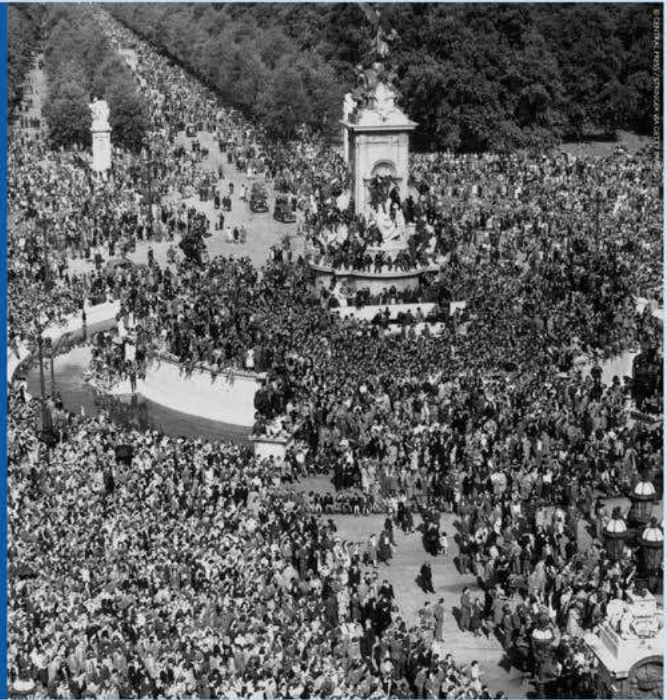
This presentation is a tribute to those who served and sacrificed during The Second World War. Approach it with respect and sensitivity, ensuring that their stories are honoured and remembered.

- Welcome the audience and thank them for attending.
- Briefly introduce the topic and its significance.
- Mention the 80th anniversary of the end of World War II.

# The Second World War

The Second World War was the most devastating conflict in history. The war spanned the globe and claimed tens of millions of lives.

**2025 marks the 80th anniversary of the end of the war.**



- Reflect on the war's devastating scale and global impact.
- Mention the 80th anniversary and the importance of remembrance.

**Image:** VJ Day Celebrations, Buckingham Palace.

## A Tribute to a Generation

This presentation is dedicated to those who served and fought for the freedoms we enjoy today.

Their stories keep the past alive and inspire the future by reminding us of their service and sacrifice.

We will always remember their courage and unwavering spirit.



"I learned that I could tackle anything that arrived, anything that arose, any problem. There was always a way to tackle it."

Dorothea Barron

**Image:** Dorothea Barron, WRNS visual signaller



- Reflect on the war's devastating scale and global impact.





## VE Day: Peace in Europe

Can you imagine the weight of the world on the shoulders of Allied soldiers, sailors and aviators?

For years, they fought against Nazi and other Axis forces, enduring unimaginable hardship. Finally, on 7th May, 1945, German forces unconditionally surrendered. The following day, 8th May, was declared Victory in Europe Day.

Spontaneous celebrations spread throughout the Allied nations. Community singing and dancing took place, along with street parties, parades and thanksgiving services. The long nightmare of war in Europe was finally over.

People celebrated from London to Moscow, Nairobi to New York. The future, once uncertain, now held the promise of peace.

Yet the transition from war to peace was not without its difficulties.

- Explain the significance of VE Day and Germany's surrender.
- Describe the spontaneous celebrations and the atmosphere of relief.

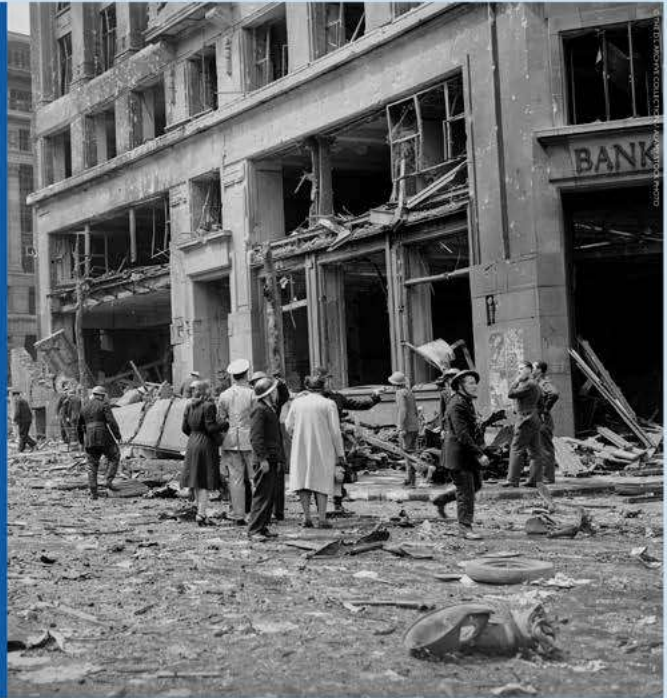
**Image:** VE Day in London 1945. Servicemen join revellers as they party for VE Day in London

## VE Day: A Step Towards Peace

Returning service personnel had to transition into civilian life, a process that was often fraught with difficulties. Thousands came back with physical and emotional injuries.

The nation faced the almost overwhelming task of rebuilding its shattered infrastructure and economy, while also coming to terms with the immense human cost of the conflict.

Despite these challenges, VE Day marked a moment of hope and renewal. The shared experience of war had fostered a strong sense of community and resilience, and there was a widespread determination to build a better future.



- Mention the challenges of transitioning from war to peace.

**Image:** LONDON - JUNE 30: On 30 June 1944, Aldwych WC2 suffered one of the deadliest V1 flying bomb attacks of the war. A fortnight after the first V1 strikes on London, the menacing drone of yet another 'Doodlebug' was heard over the capital. Aldwych was crowded with workers returning from their lunch hour or queuing at the local Post Office. At 2.07pm the V1 glided silently in over the Thames, diving down to explode on the road between the Air Ministry and the north-east wing of Bush House, home to the BBC External Services. Although the steel-framed Air Ministry absorbed much of the explosion, leaving the buildings astride the roadway largely intact, the blast wave scythed down the street. 46 people were killed and at least 200 others suffered serious injuries. Many of these were inflicted by flying glass fragments from hundreds of shattered windows. Five members of the Women's Auxiliary Air Force (WAAF) died on the upper floors of the Air Ministry. Nearby, Australia House suffered serious damage, and the foyer of the Aldwych Theatre was destroyed.





- Briefly describe the various celebrations that took place around the world.
- If possible, share additional personal anecdotes or stories related to VE Day celebrations.

**Left Image:** Children's party celebrating VE Day in South London.

**Right Image:** VE Day celebrations at Nairobi, Kenya. The band of the King's African Rifles lead a parade through the crowded streets of the Kenyan capital. The regiment was greatly expanded during World War Two and at one stage consisted of 44 battalions and several independent garrison companies.



Dorothea Barron

# Dorothea Barron

**Enlistment:** 1942 at age 18

**Branch of Service:** Women's Royal Naval Service (WRNS)

**Role:** Visual Signaller

Inspired by family tradition, Dorothea was determined to join the Navy. She trained in Leicestershire as a Visual Signaller and served at several Naval bases in Scotland and the South of England, sending and receiving messages from ships. She played a vital role in identifying friendly and enemy vessels.

**VE Day/VJ Day:** "I was on a train coming back from Scotland... suddenly, when VE Day happened, they gave us all leave to send us home, so they didn't have to worry about feeding us!"  
On VJ Day, "Andrew and I were on London Bridge on VJ Day, because I met him by then, and we were courting, as we did those days."

**Post-War:** Dorothea married Andrew and raised a family. She has continued to lead an active life and has been teaching yoga for over 50 years.



- Share details about Dorothea Barron's inspiration for joining the Navy and her role as a Visual Signaller.
- Mention her training and postings in Scotland and the Isle of Wight.
- Highlight her vital role in identifying vessels.
- Recount her memories of VE Day and VJ Day.
- Briefly describe her post-war life and family.



Ralph Ottey



# Ralph Ottey

**Enlistment:** In 1944 at age 19

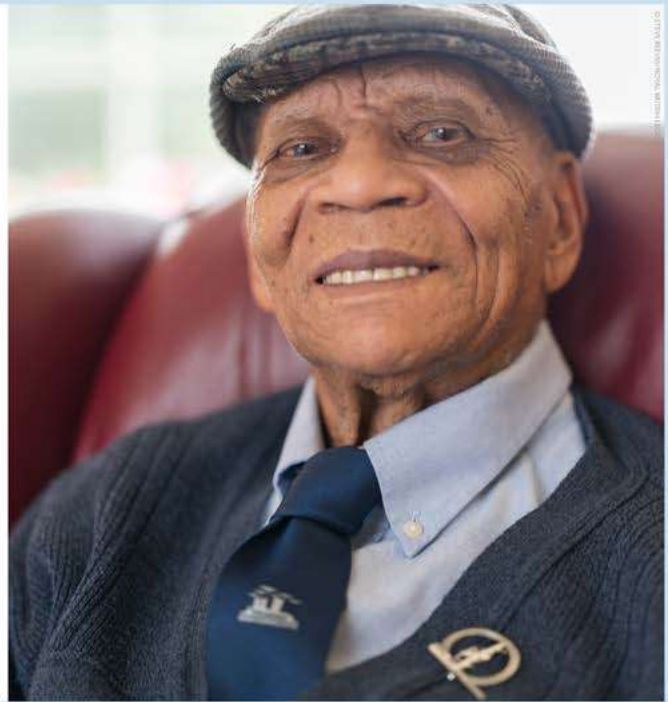
**Branch of Service:** Royal Air Force (RAF)

**Role:** Aircraftman First Class Driver

Hailing originally from Jamaica, Ralph served as a driver with RAF Woodhall Spa's 617 (Dambusters) Squadron, chauffeuring the officer responsible for clearing Lancaster bombers for flight.

**VE Day/VJ Day:** "I can remember clearly VE Day. I remember Churchill saying 'The enemy has fallen at our feet and we must take true magnanimity in victory.' A great man, Churchill. It was quite a day!" He was training to be an air gunner in Lincolnshire when news of Japan's surrender broke, so ending the fighting.

**Post-War:** Ralph used his RAF scholarship to study business, worked in Jamaica, then returned to England, married, and had a successful business career.



- Share details about Ralph Ottey's life, enlistment, and role in the RAF.
- Highlight his service with the 617 (Dambusters) Squadron.
- Recount his memories of VE Day and Churchill's speech.
- Mention his training as an air gunner and the news of Japan's surrender.
- Briefly describe his successful post-war career.

As the Allied nations rejoiced at the end of the war in Europe, fierce fighting still raged in the Far East and the Pacific.





## VJ Day: Peace at Last

For more than three months after VE Day, brutal fighting continued in the East as the Allies liberated Japanese-occupied land.

The turning point came with the Allies' use of the devastating atomic bombs on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. This hastened Japan's unconditional surrender, marked on 15th August, 1945.

Victory over Japan Day (VJ Day) in effect marked the end of the deadliest war in history.

Yet, its shadow loomed large, leaving a legacy of destruction and human loss.

- Explain the continued fighting in the Far East after VE Day.
- Discuss the impact of the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.
- Mention Japan's surrender and the significance of VJ Day.
- Reflect on the war's devastating legacy.

**Image:** On Imphal front, Sikh signaller operates walkie-talkie for British officers, listening to patrols reporting Japanese positions



## VJ Day Celebrations

- Describe the global celebrations marking the end of the war.
- Highlight the joy and relief felt by people around the world.
- If possible, share personal anecdotes or stories related to VJ Day celebrations.

**Left Image:** The jubilant crowds at Piccadilly Circus in London on hearing of the Japanese surrender on VJ Day in England, Aug. 10, 1945.

**Right Image:** A parade of 5,000 troops was part of Nairobi's VJ Day Celebrations. Picture shows: The parade seen from the roof of a tall building in Delamere Avenue. 15 August 1945



Yavar Abbas

# Yavar Abbas

**Enlistment:** April 1942

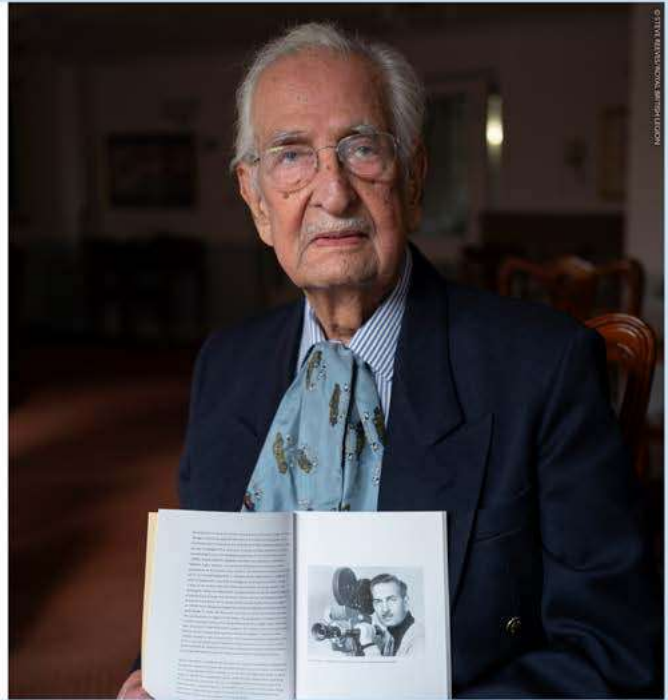
**Branch of Service:** British Indian Army

**Role:** Combat Cameraman

Yavar was in the 11th Sikh Regiment when he seized the chance to train as a combat cameraman. He captured crucial moments in the Far East campaign, such as the harrowing aftermath of the Battle of Kohima, the Battle of Mandalay and the devastation of Hiroshima.

**VE Day/VJ Day:** Yavar was in Delhi on VE and VJ Day. He felt the service and sacrifices of the Indian Army were overlooked. "The Indian Army had made a huge contribution, but it wasn't acknowledged."

**Post-War:** Yavar moved to the UK and became a renowned writer, broadcaster and filmmaker. He is a vocal advocate for peace and believes Remembrance is about learning from the past to build a better future.



- Share details about Yavar Abbas' enlistment, role as a combat cameraman, and the 11th Sikh Regiment.
- Mention his documentation of key battles in the Far East and Hiroshima.
- Discuss his perspective on the Indian Army's overlooked contributions.
- Briefly describe his post-war career as a writer, broadcaster, and filmmaker.
- Emphasise his advocacy for peace and remembrance.



The Second World War shaped the  
20th century - and continues to  
influence our world today.





## The Birth of the Welfare State

- The war showed that the support systems were insufficient for everyone's needs, which led to a demand for better safety nets for everyone.
- The Beveridge Report in 1942 laid out plans for the Welfare State, which aimed to make sure everyone had a basic standard of living, like healthcare, housing, education and social security.
- In 1948, the National Health Service was established to provide free healthcare at the point of use for everyone.

- Discuss the goals of providing healthcare, housing, education, and social security.

**Image:** Modern UK hospital ward - nurses station. Two nurses discuss patient documents with a female doctor. Male doctor walking past.



# Advances in Mental Health Treatment

- The psychological impact of the war on both service personnel and civilians highlighted the need for greater understanding and treatment of mental health issues.
- The war led to the wider recognition of 'Battle Fatigue' (now known as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, or PTSD), new treatments and a reduction in the stigma surrounding mental illness.



The Sapper Support memorial at the National Memorial Arboretum – a place for families and friends to remember those who have left us after battling with PTSD and other associated mental illnesses.

- Discuss the psychological impact of the war on service personnel and civilians.
- Explain the recognition of “Battle Fatigue” (PTSD) and new treatments.
- Emphasise the reduction in stigma surrounding mental illness.
- Briefly describe the memorial and its location at the National Memorial Arboretum.
- Explain its purpose as a place for remembering those who battled PTSD and other mental illnesses.

**Image:** The Sapper Support memorial at the National Memorial Arboretum – a place for families and friends to remember those who have left us after battling with PTSD and other associated mental illnesses.



## Changes in Gender Roles

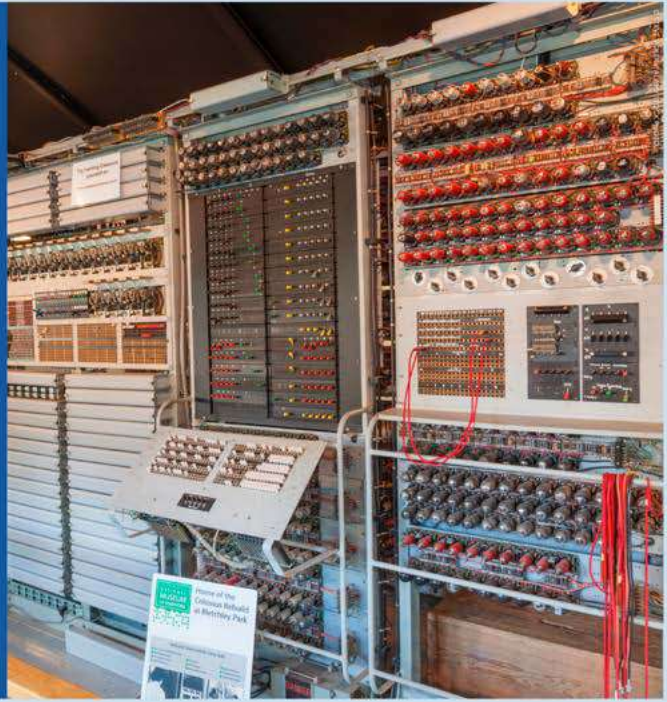
- In Britain, women were called up for war work in industry or one of the auxiliary services. The war changed how people viewed traditional gender roles. Women had started doing jobs that men usually did, showing they were just as capable.
- Despite the men who returned from the war taking up those jobs that women had been employed in, the precedent had been set. The postwar reconstruction effort needed increased labour and women began working far more in areas such as medicine, science, technology, engineering, transport and communications. The new welfare state also created jobs for women.
- The war accelerated the independence of dozens of countries, and women gained more rights, including the right to vote.
- The women of the Second World War were trailblazers and provided a powerful example to the next generation in the pursuit of equal opportunities and rights.

- Discuss how women's roles changed during the war.
- Highlight their capabilities and contributions in various fields.
- Mention the impact on women's rights and societal roles.

**Image:** Female Soldier, King's Troop, Royal Horse Artillery. The King's Troop, Royal Horse Artillery is a ceremonial unit of the British Army, quartered at Woolwich. It is a mounted unit and all of its soldiers are trained to care for and drive teams of six horses pulling each of six First World War-era 13-pounder field guns used today to fire salutes on state occasions. Its duties include the firing of royal salutes on royal anniversaries and state occasions, and providing a gun carriage and team of black horses for state and military funerals. The unit is most often seen providing gun salutes on state occasions in Hyde Park, and Green Park.

# Technological Advancements

- The war accelerated the development of new technologies in areas like aviation, medicine and nuclear science.
- Developments in radar and microwave generation contributed to the Allies' victory but had postwar applications from weather forecasting to the kitchen.
- The urgency for mass production of penicillin in the war revolutionised how infections were treated. Similarly, there were major advances in skin grafts, plastic surgery and prosthetics.
- Pioneering British developments in computers for code-breaking laid the groundwork for the modern computing revolution.
- The use of atomic bombs to end the war remains controversial, but the technology ushered in peacetime uses in power generation and medicine. However, it also began a global nuclear arms race.



- Discuss the war's role in accelerating technological development.
- Provide examples of advancements in aviation, medicine, and nuclear science.
- Mention the development of radar, penicillin, skin grafts, prosthetics, and computers.
- Briefly discuss the controversial use of atomic bombs and their peacetime applications.

**Image:** England, Buckinghamshire, Bletchley, Bletchley Park, Colossus Computer



## Redefining the UK's Global Position

- The war had a profound impact on Britain's position on the world stage.
- The war's legacy of the twin superpowers of the United States and the Soviet Union led to a reassessment of Britain's role in international affairs.
- The formation of the United Nations and NATO reflected Britain's commitment to a shared goal of the prevention of future conflicts.

- Explain how the war impacted Britain's global standing.
- Mention the emergence of the US and the Soviet Union as superpowers.
- Discuss the formation of the United Nations and NATO.
- Highlight Britain's commitment to preventing future conflicts.

**Image:** A NATO flag flies at Cardiff Castle during the NATO summit which was held in Newport.



## The Commonwealth of Nations

- Almost all Commonwealth countries supported Britain during the war. Millions of men and women volunteered to serve, and a huge level of resources were diverted to the war effort.
- Contribution to the war and changes in society and politics in these countries hastened decolonisation. Dozens of countries became independent in the post war years.
- The relationship between Britain and its former colonies was reshaped.
- Today, the Commonwealth continues to evolve, adapting to the changing global landscape while upholding its shared values of democracy, human rights and the rule of law.



- Discuss the contributions of Commonwealth countries to the war effort.
- Explain how the war influenced decolonisation and independence movements.
- Mention the reshaped relationship between Britain and its former colonies.
- Highlight the Commonwealth's continued evolution and shared values.

**Image:** A wounded West African soldier is carried on a stretcher by soldiers after fighting in Burma during the Second World War.



## Keeping Their Memory Alive

Remembrance is often personal. You can share stories, visit a local war memorial, support veterans, participate in Acts of Remembrance, or simply take a moment to reflect on the service and sacrifices of others.

There is no right or wrong way to remember. By remembering, we keep the memories of those who served, or are currently serving, alive for generations to come.

To see how you can take part in Remembrance scan the QR Code:



- Encourage personal reflection and participation in remembrance activities.
- Explain the symbolism of the poppy and its connection to remembrance and hope.

**Image:** Joe Cattini - A World War Two Veteran at The Royal British Legion annual March Past The Cenotaph on Remembrance Sunday, 2022.



# The Poppy

- The RBL red poppy is a symbol of both Remembrance and hope for a peaceful future.
- Poppies are worn to show support for the Armed Forces community.
- Each poppy sold funds our vital work supporting the Armed Forces community.
- Wearing a poppy is a personal choice. It is never compulsory to wear a poppy, but is greatly appreciated by those it supports.

To learn more about the Poppy  
visit our website here:



- Explain the symbolism of the poppy and its connection to remembrance and hope.
- Mention the poppy's role in supporting the Armed Forces community.
- Clarify that wearing a poppy is a personal choice.



## Supporting the Royal British Legion

The Royal British Legion is dedicated to supporting the Armed Forces community.

By donating, or volunteering, you can help ensure that our veterans, serving personnel and their families receive the support they deserve.

Visit the Royal British Legion website to learn more about how you can become involved.



Explain how this support benefits veterans, serving personnel, and their families.

**Top Image:** Brian Garner and Claire Moorhouse, Admiral Nurse. Bill has had a long career in the army. He joined at the age of 19 and was in the Army Cadets prior to that. He served in the Royal Signals for 36 years, retiring at the age of 55, at which point he was a Regimental Sergeant Major. He was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease in 2021.

**Bottom Left Image:** Sara Howarth and Alexandra McClellan from Team UK competing in Indoor Rowing at the Invictus Games, Vancouver, Canada on Sunday 16 February 2025.

**Bottom Right Image:** Captain Myles, British Army, Katie Myles and Son, volunteer collectors at London Poppy Day on 31 October 2024.

Thank you



- Express gratitude to the audience for their time and attention.
- Reiterate the importance of remembering the sacrifices made during the war.

