



We all have a lot on our minds right now and are probably finding this alternate Covid-19 reality something of a challenge. Having to spend more time at home can make us lose track of what is going on in the wider world and what has gone on in the past.

During WW2 around 75 million civilian and military personnel died, about half a million in Britain alone. In WW1, about 900,000 British service people died as a direct result of the war – more than 1 in 10 of those mobilised to fight. Nurses, doctors and carers, fighting to save life and to care for the injured and dying also risked their lives.

It is estimated that about 500 million people or **one-third of the world's population** became infected with the Spanish Flu virus. The number of deaths was estimated to be more than 50 million worldwide.

Those who died in these most terrible conflicts often died without being able to say goodbye to loved ones, their parents, brothers and sisters, wives and lovers. Those that they left behind endured their loss often for the rest of their lives. Those that returned from these obscene tragedies were left to endlessly relive their horrors.

As we now feel what is happening to us and those around us, how much more did those during WW1 and WW2. Sadness is a human condition but for most of us, this is one of the very rare times when we are unable to say our goodbyes to friends or loved ones directly.

On the 8<sup>th</sup> of May, we will be marking VE'75, the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of the second world war in Europe. It is an opportunity for us to spare just a few moments to think of those people, those individuals, caught up in the tragedy of the second world war and of their many heartbreaks and sadnesses. And, of the loss, heartbreaks and sadness of WW1. Their sacrifices of 'then' have helped to spare us from tyranny and oppression, and have endowed us with prosperity, freedom, and a way of life which we have all taken for granted for so long.

We may not be able to express our feelings collectively, as communities, in the way that we might wish to, because of the current Covid-19 restrictions on our movement and on gatherings, but, on the 8<sup>th</sup> May please spare a little time to think of all those caught up in the first and second world wars. Thank you.

For those interested, the planned events for the day include:

- VE 75 activities will take place on Friday 8<sup>th</sup> May and will include a mix of televised and online programmes and activities in which the legion will have a significant profile. Please see link to encourage supporters to join in.  
<https://www.britishlegion.org.uk/stories/ve-day-singalong>
- There will be a national moment of Remembrance at 11.00am with a two minutes silence allowing the country to remember the sacrifice and contribution of the WW2 generation whilst also reflecting on the C19 situation and those people and organisations who are doing so much to keep us and our families safe and well.
- There will be a replica broadcast of Churchill's VE Day speech to the nation at 3.00pm and also of King George VI's VE Day speech in the evening.

- In the evening there will be a 1-hour programme telling the VE Day story that will have significant input and content supplied by the legion.

**Finally**, if there is a bugler amongst you able to play the last post and reveille, and able to play in isolation on the Inkpen Memorial Playing Field, please let me know. This seems to be our only way to join in the commemoration on the day, as a village. Email [parishcouncil@inkpenvillage.co.uk](mailto:parishcouncil@inkpenvillage.co.uk).

Stay safe,

David Thomas  
Chairman, Inkpen Parish Council