peace pledge union

VE (Victory in Europe) Day Information for Secondary Schools

The announcement of the end of the war in Europe in May 1945 was a huge relief for people who had endured six years of war. Many people held parties and joined VE Day celebrations. Others did not. Did you know:

- Many soldiers were posted from Europe to the Pacific and Far East after VE Day where there were further casualties.

- Throughout Europe, between 35-50 million civilians were killed during WW2.

- In February and March 1945, the RAF and the US Air Force bombed a number of cities in Germany (British bombs had already destroyed large parts of northern France). 500,000 people in Berlin were made homeless.

- There were around 40 million refugees across Europe (caused by displacement) at the end of the war.

- Around 2 million German Prisoners of War were taken captive by allied forces in Europe between May 1945 and the end of the war.

- There were also Conscientious Objectors and war resisters throughout the world who remained in prison or were away from their homes and families doing 'non-combatant' work.

- Further atrocities took place after VE Day, particularly as Soviet forces moved through Europe, including destruction of villages, rape and the massacre of civilians.

- There were tensions and disturbances in many parts of the world on VE Day. For example, civil unrest and looting in Halifax (Nova Scotia) caused over $5million worth of damage to buildings and businesses.

The atomic bombs dropped on Nagasaki and Hiroshima in Japan ended WW2 in August 1945. About a quarter of a million people died as a result of these bombs (mostly civilians) and over half a million people suffered long-term illness (radiation poisoning, cancer, psychological disorders).

Further reading:

https://www.historyextra.com/period/second-world-war/what-happened-europe-after-war-ww2-ve-day-germany/

https://www.historyextra.com/period/second-world-war/ve-day-how-did-people-celebrate-ww2-end-date-reality/