PRESS RELEASE
Thursday 7 May 2015

Manchester Cathedral to light special beacon to mark the 70th anniversary of Victory in Europe Day

Manchester will celebrate the 70th anniversary of Victory in Europe Day on the evening of Friday 8 May.

At 3pm a two minute silence will be observed across the city to commemorate the anniversary, the start and end of which will be marked by the firing of a maroon from Manchester Town Hall.

Over 200 Beacons will be lit throughout the United Kingdom, Channel Islands and Isle of Man, following the lighting of the Principal Beacon outside Windsor Castle by Her Majesty The Queen. A beacon will be lit at Manchester Cathedral to mark the start of a week of celebrations, and all those who took part in the Second World War in Europe, both on the Home Front and overseas. We will light our beacon from the South Turret of Manchester Cathedral at 9.32pm having gathered for a time of prayer and vigil in the cathedral at 9pm. All are welcome to join us for both the prayer vigil service and the lighting of the beacon.

The Very Reverend Rogers Govender, Dean of Manchester said:

“Manchester Cathedral suffered damage from German bombs during the Second World War when the north east section of the Cathedral was destroyed. Photographs of the bombing are on display in the Regiment Chapel and it was this bombing that is depicted in the Fire Window in this chapel. The window is a powerful reminder of the bombing and also a testament to members of the regiment who lost their lives defending the nation. It is therefore very poignant that the beacon marking the 70th anniversary of VE Day is being lit at the Cathedral on Friday 8 May as we give thanks to God for the victory in Europe. May we continue to work for a world where justice and peace is preserved and celebrated”.

Historical background

VE Day marks the official end of hostilities in Europe for the Second World War on 8 May 1945, following the formal unconditional surrender of German Forces. It was an occasion of national celebration, yet also one of sombre reflection for those who would not return. This anniversary will celebrate the achievements of the United Kingdom, the Commonwealth and the allies in their victory overseas and on the Home Front, but will also pay tribute to the 580,406 UK and Commonwealth Forces and 67,073 UK civilians who lost their lives during six long years of conflict.
Bruno Peek LVO OBE OPR, Pageant master of the VE Day 70th Anniversary Beacons said: “VE Day on the 8 May represents a further important milestone in the history of our country. It was on this day, 70 years ago, that peace brought an end to nearly six years of war across Europe. We must not let this day pass without reflecting on the sacrifice, courage and determination of the people who saw us through this dark period.

“It is therefore fitting that we should celebrate with the veterans and their families and commemorate this historic anniversary once more through the lighting of beacons on Friday 8 May this year.

Her Majesty The Queen has graciously agreed to light the Principal and first Beacon outside Windsor Castle. This will be followed by two further Beacons being lit along the Long Walk in Windsor Great Park, just before the lighting of the other two hundred plus Beacons throughout the United Kingdom.”

ENDS

For details of VE Day celebrations across the country please visit: https://www.gov.uk/government/topical-events/ve-day-70th-anniversary