

In LONDON

LONDON—London, with the help of thousands of U.S. and Allied servicemen, blew its collective top when it heard about the German surrender.

The signal for the rejoicing was the BBC flash which interrupted a home-service radio program at 7:40 Monday to announce that Tuesday would be "Victory in Europe Day."

Hundreds of GIs were gathered at the Rainbow Corner Red Cross Club in Piccadilly when bundles of *Stars and Stripes* extras were tossed out free. The paper bore a huge banner headline "Germany Quits," and contained the official Ministry of Information announcement which all England had just heard on the air.

News of the Reich's final and complete surrender found Piccadilly, Marble Arch and other popular intersections jammed with people. At first incredulous, the cautious British worked up to a pitch of demonstrative joy that amazed the most ETO-wise GIs.

Rainbow Corner quickly became the focal point of excitement. A GI band which had been playing for a dance at the club moved out on the balcony and serenaded a mixed Allied crowd milling around Shaftsbury Avenue. Although it was practically impossible to move in any direction, jitterbugs and oldsters took the cue and danced as long as there was music. Hawkers who had miraculously obtained stocks of American, British and Russian flags made of war-scarce material did a terrific business as the price of the flags shot up from one dollar 50 cents to four dollars in an hour. Busses were stalled in the middle of Piccadilly and pubs hastily put up standing-room-only signs to ward off the deluge of celebrators.

Some of the soldiers displayed the greatest enthusiasm of the evening when a sign was hoisted in the club reading: "Upon official notice of V-E Day all Army passes or furloughs are to be extended 48 hours, irrespective of the expiration date." They were also happy to learn that food and drinks would be on the house at the club on V-E Day. Some were so happy, for one reason or another, that they insisted on shaking hands with white-helmeted MPs.

There was a serious note underlying all the merrymaking, though, as far as GIs were concerned, and that was the war with Japan.

Anglo-American relations, which hit a new high with the mutual sorrow on the death of President Roosevelt, soared even higher when news of Germany's surrender became official. That feeling was perhaps epitomized by a middle-aged British civilian who stood watching the fireworks—literal as well as figurative—on Piccadilly Circus.

"Well, it's all over as far as bombing and rockets and men dying on the Continent are concerned and it's halfway over as far as Japan is concerned," he said. "And we couldn't have done it without you Yanks. We were down, you know, when you people came through with lend-lease and then sent troops over. We English will never forget it and we won't let you down in the Far East." That sentiment seemed to be echoed throughout London.

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