

Julie Hallett and Her Fortitude

Julie Cho

JULIE HALLETT



The photo of Julie Hallett

- Born in march 1926, WW2 occupied most of Hallett's teenage years.
- She was 13 and a half years old when war began in September 1939 and 19 by the time when the war ended.

To the Wrens

Application for the Wrens

- In December 1943, a newspaper article announced that the Women's Royal Naval Service, had resumed accepting volunteers for service in the 'Wrens'.
- Applicants needed to be at least 17 3/4 years old which was Hallet's exact age.
- She wrote for details and received an application form by return post.
- However, her mom was unhappy as she was lonely with her husband serving in the regular army and her daughter now 'joining up'
- Hallet's application was accepted and she received notice to report to the Mill Hill Training Centre in London on March 15th, 1944.

The image shows a historical application form for the Women's Royal Naval Service (Wrens). The form is titled "WOMENS ROYAL NAVAL SERVICE" and "Certificate of Service of". It contains various fields for personal details, service history, and a table for recording service dates and locations. The form is filled out with handwritten text, including names and dates.

Training

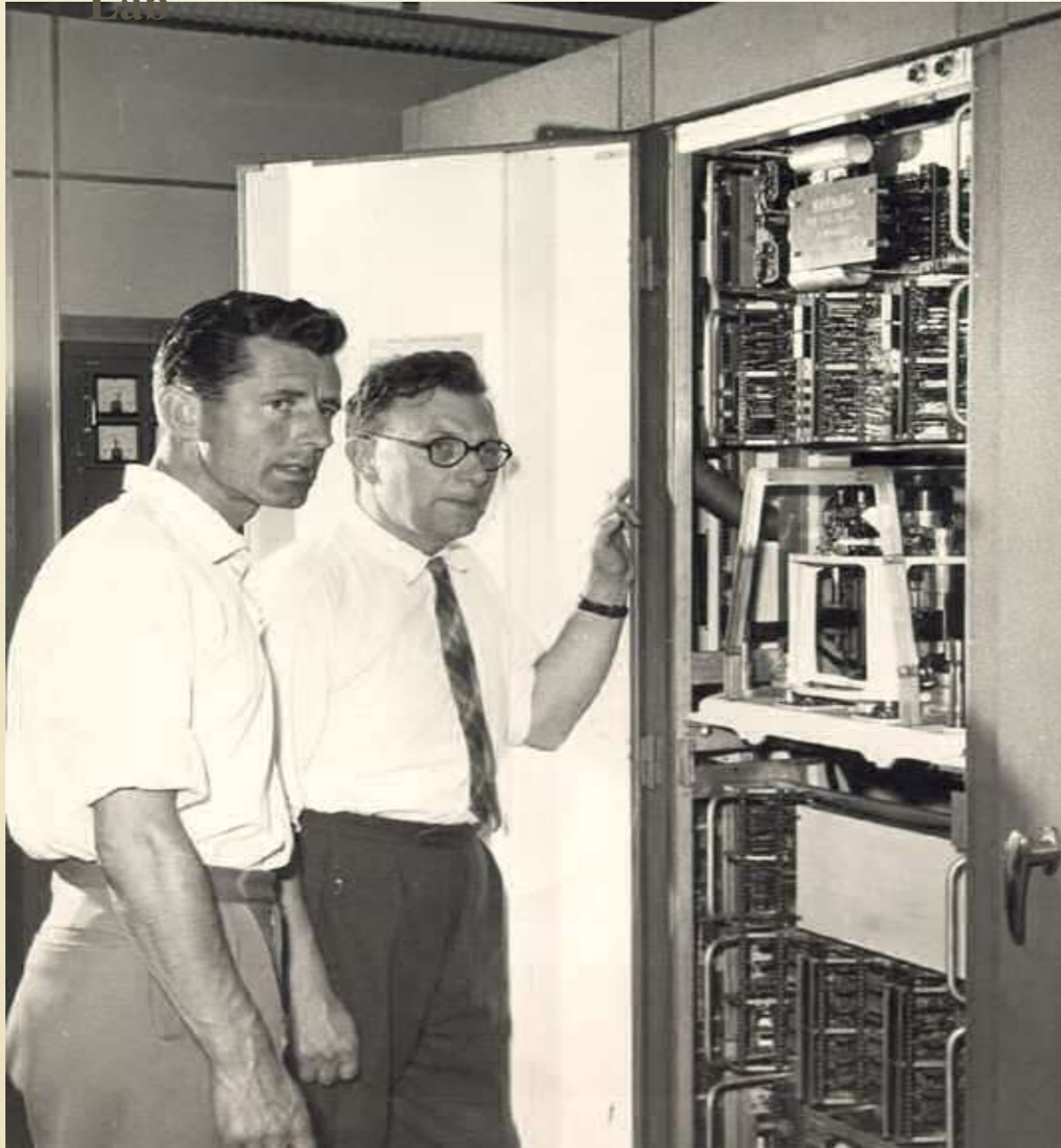


Wrens learning about different ranks

- At Mill Hill, the accepted volunteers including Hallett were introduced to life in the Senior Service.
- First, they were subjected to a medical examination and then came the inevitable injections for protection against the more debilitating diseases.
- As probationers they were required to contribute to their own welfare by performing house-cleaning tasks, or working in the galley preparing food.
- The rest of their time was spent learning the basics needed to become effective members of the service; such as becoming familiar with Naval terms they'd be using, learning to march, and how to recognize the various ranks of both Wren and Royal Navy officers and ratings and the different categories; such as medical, engineering and signals.
- At the end of the first two weeks, they were 'kitted out'.
- At the end of the third week, having been interviewed and subjected to several skill tests, the powers-that-be decided what to do with her and later, she was posted to Chelmsford, in Essex.

Essex, Chelmsford

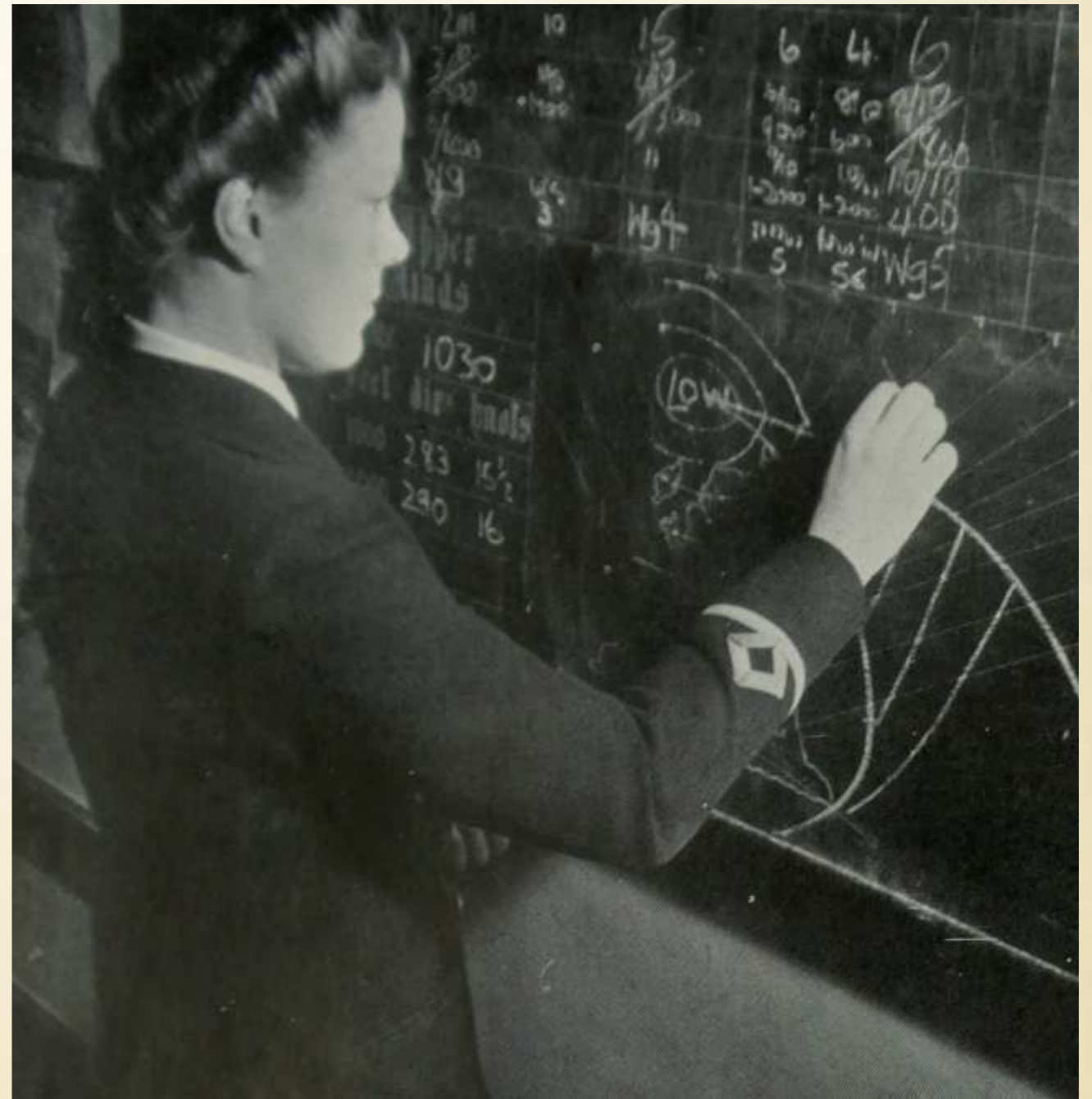
The picture of the Marconi Research
Lab



- She was sent to the Marconi Research Laboratories in Great Baddow, a village near Chelmsford.
- She had the specialized training needed for the highly secret work ahead: Ionospheric Research and its application to radio propagation which basically helped out the communication.

Work

- For her first assignment, she was working on shifts, called watches which the ‘watches’ analyzed hourly observations of the ionosphere.
- This enabled another group to recommend the radio frequencies best suited for maintaining communications.
- Also there were a number of Direction finding sites scattered across the country to identify the positions of enemy forces by taking bearings on the radio signals being transmitted



Wren calculating the ionosphere

The opportunity

- One day, one of WRENs Petty Officer was taken ill and Julie Hallett was selected to replace her temporarily.
- She was just a little over eighteen years old, faced with the prospect of training a group of young and sometimes rambunctious sailors.
- Fortunately, there were a few among them that were more caring and helped her to keep order.
- In fact, Hallett met her husband, Dennis Hallett and two got married shortly after.



The photo of Julie Hallett and her husband, Dennis



The photo of Wrens working

- Later she was assigned a day job assistant to one of the scientists. She worked nine'til five.
- Each morning she would go to a hut in a field to collect data accumulated since the previous day and then bring the records back for analysis.
- The building Hallett and other WRENs were in was so unbelievably cold on winter weekends that they sometimes worked in their outdoor coats and gloves.
- The employees had Saturday afternoons and Sunday off so they were the only occupants and the heat was turned down to conserve fuel.

Wrenneries

- They were a small group, about thirty billeted in each of two houses, commandeered for their use by government authorities.
- Wrens working nine to five stayed in one of them and those working watches were in the other.
- The second house was conveniently close to the laboratories and a Nissen hut had been built in the garden, to make it possible to accommodate all the watch-keepers.

Accommodation



68. Nissen Hut (WHR)

<http://rhuins.blogspot.com/2010/11/british-military-huts-and-sheds.html>



The photos of Nissen hut

- The Nissen hut was warmed by a small coal stove which was very efficient and frequently overheated the cabin.
- However, in winter, it was frequent that one might wake in the morning to frozen glasses of water by the bedsides and snow on the pillows of the upper bunks.

Make and Mend

- They had more enjoyable resources available for their amusement.
- They had three or four movie theatres in town, and the usual selection of shops and socialize with other service personnel.
- They were often invited to dances by arrangement between both of their Commanding Officer.
- At the Wrennery, there were playing cards, a dartboard, a sewing machine and piano.

The 'blackouts'



<http://www.ww2f.com/wwii-general/42979-wwii-black-out-picture-gallery.html>



<http://planetgreen.discovery.com/home-garden/blackout-curtains-save-energy.html>

The VE-day

- Although she had never been in a serious bombing raid or lost a family member, as many others had, the end of the war in Europe came as a great relief and unrecognized pressures were immediately released.
- Great Britain had endured 'blackout' conditions at night; a measure intended to avoid leading enemy bombers to their targets.

What a Transformation!

The photos of people celebrating the VE Day in
Britain



http://www.wavertree.org.uk/component/option,com_gallery2/Itemid,121/?g2_itemId=516



http://www.mediastorehouse.com/world_war_two_uk_and_commonwealth_home_front_ve_day_london_1945/print/1220277.html

- Following the announcement of the end of the fighting in Europe, everyone wanted to celebrate, and many of them were free to do so.
- They went down to the local town square, mingled with the crowds of other service people and jubilant citizens.
- Almost without exception houses along the way had their curtains thrown back, light poured out into the streets it seemed that everybody and everything had risen from a dormant state to greet the world anew.
- As Hallett described, a weight had been lifted from her shoulders, a burden she had not realized she had been carrying. Her steps became lighter and her lungs seemed to expand more with every breath she took. She was ecstatic and “walking on a cloud”.

After the VE-day

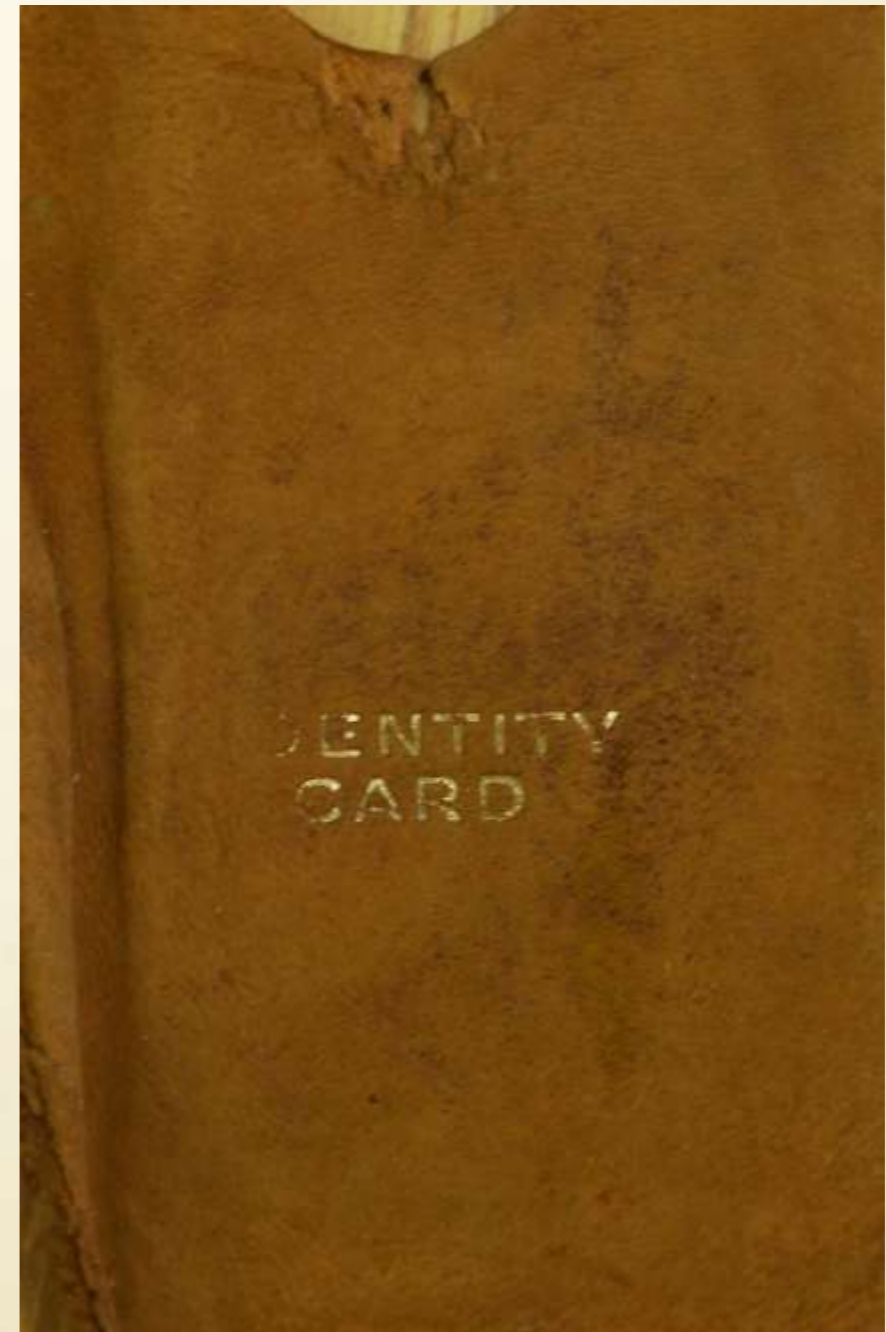
- Almost everybody continued working on the same tasks as before. There was no relaxing as the results of their efforts were still needed.
- Workbooks from German and Italian stations like theirs were brought to Baddow for their examination.
- She knew some German and Latin and was able to glean some information from those documents.

Pay

- A newly recruited Wren earned twenty four shillings per two week period.
- This was all personal spending money since food, shelter and clothing were already provided.
- In addition, one was expected to pay for any replacement clothing out of one's own pocket, but with the garments were extremely durable.

The bond of naval comradeship

- There are many associations and frequent reunions for them to attend.
- As Hallett quoted, “Even if you know no one there, you are still shipmates and receive a warm welcome. There is a wonderful feeling of family within the Naval community”.



The cover Julie Hallett used to put her identity card in

The Importance of Oral History

- Oral history is a story told by living individuals about their past, or about the past of other people. I could say oral history is a very efficient way to preserve the stories told from the elders which would later become the 'history' of our lives to the upcoming generations and so on. Because those who can provide the information about decades ago such as the Holocaust or the WW2, are generally old people now, both their lives and their memories are at risk of being lost to time. Therefore, in order to preserve these precious information and data, young people like us should 'receive' stories from them and share with more and more people to make sure we do not lose these great deals. Since many people nowadays including myself were not involved in any of WW2 or the holocaust, we do not know how it actually was and how people felt at that time. However, by listening to stories from elders like Julie Hallett, a brave woman who volunteered to the WRENs in a young age who remember exactly how they felt, what they did to survive from that agonizing period of time and how the world was turning into; students or young people like me were able to learn about the 'actual' story of what has happened without being biased and we were also able to share both the significance of the stories and the feelings.

IMPACT MOMENTS

(00:05:47 - 00:09:00)

- Julie Hallett's bravery of joining the Wrens pretty much had a huge impact on her life. In a young age of 17, Julie Hallett decided to volunteer for service in the 'Wrens'. She wrote an applicant and she received an application form by return post. She was accepted to the Wrens and sent to the training centers for various types of training. She learnt basics like Naval terms, ranks, how to march, signals and so on. After she "kitted out" as a member of Wren, she was then sent to the Marconi Research Laboratories which she found extremely interesting. She learnt about new technologies such as radio transmissions, ionosphere, wireless communication and so on. She found them all very fascinating and believed that the authorities made a very good choice for her. The experiences Julie gained there were also proved in her post-war employment as she told. The techniques and the knowledge she gained were used very useful and as a person who loved science and math, Hallett enjoyed while learning. Though sometimes there were things that didn't turn out too well, she overcame with them and matured through. In the navy, she met her husband, Dennis and since then, they were together the whole time. As joining up, she lost a number of things, but at the same time, she gained a lot of things. Julie Hallett doesn't regret about the joining up and is proud how well the bond of naval comradeship has endured. She even told there is a wonderful feeling of family within the Naval community.
- In a young age, despite the risk, Julie bravely served for the Wrens and this decision changed her life. She gained a lot of things including her husband. Thus, I was able to listen to her interesting stories about what she did as a Wren and how she felt as being a Wren and to be the part of Britain's Naval community. By sharing her stories, I was able to put myself in her position and imagine what I would have done if I was her. As I am not a very brave person, I would not have any gut to act out and would have no opportunity to tell about amazing stories like Mrs. Hallett. As there are people like Julie Hallett who were brave enough to make a life changing decisions, young generations like me get amazing opportunities to hear and learn about the past more interesting and effectively.

Their VE Day

- By the beginning of 1944 air warfare had turned overwhelmingly in favor of the Allies, and on Monday, May 7th, unable to continue the fight, the German General Jodi signed the unconditional surrender document that formally ended the war in Europe. In Britain, a large crowds gathered outside of Buckingham Palace and shouted out for a clear official announcement about the surrender of Germans and the end of the war. Victory in Europe Day, also known as VE Day was on May 8th, 1945 was one of the most significant events in the 20th century.
- Although Julie Hallett had never been in a serious bombing raid or lost a family member, there were many occasions which beloved ones were being killed due to the boisterous war at the time. In fact, this was what happened to the huge number of people and they had to experience great losses. The end of the war in Europe came as a great relief and unrecognized pressures were immediately released. For years, since the war had been declared, Great Britain had endured 'blackout' conditions at night which was done to avoid leading enemy bombers to their targets and to fake them. Generally, all windows were hung with heavy black curtains, street lamps were shaded and shed only the minimum amount of light considered necessary for safety and car headlights were fitted with louvered covers directing the light downwards which made the street even gloomier.

- Following the official announcement that the war has been ended in Europe, most people, almost everyone gathered outside of Buckingham Palace and excitedly waited the Home Office to instruct the nation on how they could celebrate this victorious day. As a part of the brave women's naval community, Julie Hallett and her colleagues went down to the local town square mingled with the crowds. She told that her lasting memory of the night in VE Day was the walk to get there. She figured almost without an exception, houses along the way had their curtains thrown back and the light poured out into the streets. As a person who stood right on the street at VE day, Julie Hallett said that it is hard to describe her feelings of exhilaration. In fact, she said that a weight had been lifted from her shoulders, a burden she had not realized she had been carrying. Her steps became lighter and her lungs seemed to expand more with every breath she took. She was extremely ecstatic and 'walking on the cloud'. Not only her, but generally every people in Europe was celebrating hugely on this day with the extreme feeling that they were released from enemy occupation.
- As the war has ended in Europe, people were freed from worries and anxieties which have been tiring them out for years. However, even though the war in Europe came to an end, the war in Japan was still in action, after a day of celebration, almost everybody continued working on the tasks they'd been assigned as before with the wish and hope to end the last remaining war.