



OFFICIAL REPORT

OF THE

STATES OF DELIBERATION

OF THE

ISLAND OF GUERNSEY

HANSARD

Royal Court House, Guernsey, Thursday, 8th May 2025

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official States of Guernsey website www.gov.gg:*

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Present:

Sir R. J. McMahon, Esq., Bailiff and Presiding Officer

Law Officers

M. M. E. Pullum, K.C. (H.M. Procureur)

People's Deputies

S. E. Aldwell	A. Kazantseva-Miller
C. P. A. Blin	C. J. Le Tissier
A. H. Brouard	J. P. Le Tocq
Y. Burford	D. J. Mahoney
T. L. Bury	A. D. S. Matthews
A. Cameron	L. J. McKenna
D. de G. de Lisle	N. G. Moakes
H. L. de Sausmarez	R. C. Murray
A. C. Dudley-Owen	V. S. Oliver
J. F. Dyke	C. N. K. Parkinson
S. P. Fairclough	R. G. Prow
S. J. Falla	L. C. Queripel
P. T. R. Ferbrache	P. J. Roffey
A. Gabriel	G. A. St Pier
J. A. B. Gollop	A. W. Taylor
M. A. J. Helyar	L. S. Trott
N. R. Inder	S. P. J. Vermeulen

Representatives of the Island of Alderney

Alderney Representatives S. Roberts and E. A. J. Snowdon

The Clerk to the States of Deliberation

S. M. D. Ross, Esq. (States' Greffier)

Absent at the Evocation

Business transacted

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States of Deliberation

The States met at 12 p.m.

THE BAILIFF in the Chair

PRAYERS

The States' Greffier

EVOCATION

Two-Minute Silence to mark 80th Anniversary of Victory in Europe Day

The Bailiff: Good morning, Members of the States. What we will do very shortly is that we will all rise and observe the two-minute silence to mark the 80th Anniversary of Victory in Europe Day, which will be to remember and thank those who fought for our freedoms.
5 We are trying to do this so that it co-ordinates with the silences held elsewhere across the British Isles and possibly beyond.

So can I now invite you to rise?

CONVOCATION

The States' Greffier: Billets d'État X 2025. To the Members of the States of the Island of Guernsey, I hereby give notice pursuant to Rule 2(5) of the Rules of Procedure of the
10 States of Deliberation that a Meeting of the States of Deliberation will be held at the Royal Court House, on Thursday, 8th May, 2025 at noon to commemorate the 80th Anniversary of the Liberation of Guernsey.

Billet d'État X

80th Anniversary of the Liberation of Guernsey

15 **The Bailiff:** Members of the States, this meeting of the States of Deliberation is being held 80 years to the day after the Bailiff, Victor Carey, convened the States to recognise that hostilities had ended and the war was over. For nearly five years, between June 1940 and May 1945, the Channel Islands endured the only enemy occupation on British soil during the Second World War, when the islands were subjected to belligerent occupation.

20 As a result, our community faced extraordinary hardship during that time. We owe a debt of gratitude to the International Red Cross, with the appearances of the SS Vega from the end of 1944 being a godsend.

25 Some of what follows reflects what was said at the meeting on 8th May 1945, an Assemblée extraordinaire d'urgence, and also later that month. After I have read some passages from those meetings, I will invite the President of the Policy and Resources Committee to speak, following which the meeting will close, and in the Grand Hall we will raise a glass to mark the 80th anniversary of the Liberation.

30 The first item is the proclamation that the Lieutenant Governor, an office also held at that time by Victor Carey, caused to be read relating to events surrounding the end of the Occupation.

To my fellow Islanders of Guernsey, Alderney, Sark, Herm and Jethou, I rejoice with you that the German Occupation, which we have had to endure since June 30th 1940, is now ended. I ask you to remember that many areas, including approaches to the airport, are heavily mined. If you value your safety and that of others, keep away from them until they have been declared safe and be careful not to touch any notice boards or other identifying marks. I ask you to take great care of your identity cards. They must not be lost or destroyed. As I understand the position, all stores and other effects of every kind and description belonging to the German forces and their auxiliaries will automatically become the property of the incoming forces. Any looting or destruction thereof will be severely punished. For a short period, the States will exchange German notes into sterling at the rate of 2 shillings per Reichsmark. But German coins of 10 pfennig and 5 pfennig will continue to be legal tender for the time being. The various banks are closed for business today, but will reopen tomorrow. Every effort will be made for you to communicate with your loved ones overseas as soon as possible. Next Sunday will be celebrated as a day of thanksgiving, this 8th day of May 1945. God save the King.

At that meeting, the Bailiff addressed the States of Deliberation using these words:

On this memorable occasion in the history of the Island, I have summoned you to inform you officially, and through you, the people of the Island, that the war is over and the Occupation that we have endured for nearly five long and trying years is ended. The German authorities have assured me that until such a time as the Allies arrive in the Island, they will on their side do all that is necessary to ensure that discipline of their troops will be maintained and that they will govern themselves in an orderly manner vis-à-vis the civil population. I feel sure, therefore, that I can rely on the co-operation of the people of Guernsey to keep good order by conducting themselves in a proper manner towards all and sundry, particularly the German troops. After three o'clock this afternoon, all flags can be hoisted throughout the Island, and I would suggest that further celebration should not take place until the arrival of the Allies. There is, however, no

objection to thanksgiving services being held meanwhile. I have as yet no information as to the arrival of the Allies, but, like yourselves, I hope that their arrival is imminent. In conclusion, I would like to take this opportunity of thanking you, and the inhabitants of the Island, for the exemplary manner in which you have all undergone the privations and vicissitudes due to the exigencies of war and the severance of outside communication during this long period.

35 As was apparent when the Bailiff spoke 80 years ago, he did not know when the Allies would arrive. In the event, it was on the morning of the following day that HMS Bulldog arrived in St Peter Port and, at dawn, German forces signed the declaration of surrender.

Soon after, British troops landed on our shores. Flags were raised, bells rang out, voices cheered, and Sarnia Cherie was sung. An Island long silenced began to find its voice once
40 more.

The Secretary of State for Home Affairs, the Right Hon. Herbert Morrison, visited the Island and attended a meeting of the States on 14th May, 1945, at which the Bailiff thanked the British Government for:

the wonderful way in which you have come to our rescue. It has been the end of a nightmare, but today we feel that we are free.

45 I will close with what the Bailiff said at a meeting held on 23rd May 1945, at which Brigadier Snow attended:

Gentlemen, I have invited Brigadier Snow, the Commander of the Armed Forces in the Channel Islands to be present at this States meeting, as I am quite sure you would like to welcome him and to offer him our thanks for his coming to the Island. Brigadier Snow and his officers, and the whole of the troops that are over here, have come to help and assist us in these times. If it had not been for their timely deliverance of the Island, we would have been, as you know, in a very bad state indeed for lack of food. All that is finished now. Brigadier Snow and the officers under him have come prepared to carry out, as far as possible, the redemption of the Island in the next three months, and they have done wonderful things since they arrived here. I may tell you this, that while we thought at times we were forgotten on the mainland, for over a year Brigadier Snow and his troops have been preparing assiduously for the time when they could come over here and help us. They have been studying maps, plans, photographs. In fact, when they landed here, they knew as much about the Island as we did. They knew the names of the roads. They knew the names of the principal buildings. They could have found their way around the Island as well as any Guernseyman. They were Guernseymen except that they could not speak our patois. Well, gentlemen, I can assure you, and I know that you are of the same opinion, that we owe the very deepest gratitude to His Majesty's Government and to these troops that they have arrived here. They have done so much for us since their arrival. It has been a miracle the way everything has gone so smoothly. Already many stores and food have been landed, and the first rations were distributed to the population on Friday last. I only wish I could say more, but my heart is too full, and I know yours are too, to adequately express our gratitude to all those who have helped us, are helping us and will help us in the Island redemption. May I, on behalf of the States of the Island and the population of the Island, express, Brigadier Snow, our heartfelt thanks to you and to your officers and men who have done so much for us during the last few days, and to say that we will be most delighted to do whatever we can do in co-operation with you.

50 Members of the States, I doubt any of us can properly appreciate what it was like at the end of the Occupation, and tomorrow our community will mark together the milestone of

80 years of freedom. It will be a time to reflect and a time to celebrate what those events meant and still mean to our community.

The visit of Her Royal Highness the Princess Royal will enhance the day and mark the longstanding relationship between Guernsey and the Crown, which we continue to value to this day.

Deputy Trott.

Deputy Trott: Thank you, Sir.

I will not attempt to summarise everything that happened in the Island during the Second World War but will touch on some of the experiences of people from Guernsey's community and in Guernsey at that time to give some context for the relief, reflection and jubilation that Liberation Day brought in May 1945.

As German invasion loomed in June 1940, an urgent order was issued by Guernsey's Government to evacuate the children. Parents were asked to prepare and report to the harbour by 8.00 the next morning. Around 5,000 children set off for towns across mainland Britain. Amongst those children were my own parents. My father's family was evacuated to Huddersfield, and my mother's family to Stafford; two of the many towns that welcomed and sheltered our Islanders.

The children, although evacuated to the relative safety of mainland Britain, faced challenges being relocated to unfamiliar surroundings, often away from other family members. In all, around 17,000 civilians were evacuated from Guernsey in the days before the invasion.

On Friday, 28th June, German aircraft, mistaking tomato trucks for military vehicles, bombed the White Rock and fruit export sheds. The attack claimed the lives of 33 Islanders and injured 67 others.

The Occupation began on Sunday, 30th June, more German troops arrived the next day, and the Swastika flag was raised. Eventually there was one soldier for every two of the remaining Islanders.

Life for the 25,000 people remaining in Guernsey changed dramatically. Curfews, censorship, and restricted movement became the norm, while essential supplies like food, fuel, and medicine grew increasingly scarce. Both civilians and the occupying forces faced severe shortages, leading to widespread hardship and starvation.

The States of Deliberation delegated their authority to a Controlling Committee, which was tasked with managing the Island's affairs, albeit under the watchful eye of the German military authorities.

Hitler saw the Channel Islands as a potential stepping stone for an invasion of the United Kingdom. The Nazis quickly set about transforming Guernsey into a fortress. Thousands of forced labourers were brought to the Island by Organisation Todt including prisoners of war, political prisoners, and enslaved workers. They toiled under brutal conditions, living in over-crowded camps with little in the way of food or medical care. An unknown number of these people lived, suffered, and died in our Island. Many of the concrete fortifications endure across the Channel Islands, often built on and into our beautiful coastlines.

From September 1942, around 1,000 British citizens residing in Guernsey were deported to be held in a civilian internment camp in the German town of Biberach. Guernsey people were also held at Compiègne, Dorsten and other camps. The wartime experience for Guernsey's deportees was incredibly hard as daily life was defined by fear, silence, and deprivation. Many died due to their internment.

Three Jewish women were deported from Guernsey to Auschwitz. They did not survive, and their tragic fate stands as a stark reminder of the far-reaching cruelty of the Holocaust.

The Occupation tested the fabric of Guernsey's community. Many of us will know stories of our families' experiences during this period, and I expect that most of them are not publicly known.

Although Guernsey's Government, institutions and courts continued to operate, they did so under the influence of the occupying forces, who controlled much of the Island's legislation and legal processes. Some individuals, including some local police officers who were convicted of crimes of theft, received sentences that, particularly when viewed through modern standards, appear harsh or unjust. I can only express sincere regret for any injustices suffered during that period. In doing that, I honour the resilience and dignity of those affected and acknowledge the pain and sense of injustice that some families still carry.

In some of the darkest days of the Occupation, in the winter of 1944-45, the International Red Cross ship SS Vega brought vital food parcels, medical supplies and messages from loved ones. It brought more than sustenance; it brought hope. On 8th May 1945, 80 years ago today, the guns fell silent across mainland Europe and the Nazis finally surrendered. As we reflect on this 80th Anniversary, I pay tribute to the bravery of all who fought and those who died in the Second World War to secure peace.

I know that Islanders today are grateful to the members of Guernsey's community who fought or otherwise contributed to the war effort.

As the Presiding Officer has already reminded us, there was a Proclamation and a special States Meeting on 8th May to announce that the Occupation was ended. Local diarist Reverend R. Douglas Ord captured the sentiments of Islanders, when he wrote:

As the afternoon wore on, the streets were filled with citizens whose expression was that of people awakening from a long nightmare sleep to find themselves in a world of reality unbeset by evil dreams.

Miriam Leale, another Occupation diarist, wrote:

The weather is glorious, the birds have never sung so beautifully, and the daisies have never twinkled so happily.

For many Islanders, returning to Guernsey after the Occupation was both deeply emotional and bittersweet. Logistically it took time for many people to return, and some did not return at all. Although they faced damaged homes, lost possessions, and a changed Island, there was relief and gratitude in simply being home.

Despite the hardships, the chance to rebuild their lives on familiar soil brought hope and a renewed sense of belonging. But there were bereavements to be mourned, and there were gaps to bridge too.

When my own father returned home at the age of eight, after five formative years spent in Huddersfield, he could no longer speak nor understand Guernésiais and came home with a broad Yorkshire accent. He had to be introduced to his own father, who had been serving in the British forces during the war.

Liberation Day remains a cornerstone of our community's identity. It is a day to celebrate and preserve our history, our culture, and our shared values. It reminds us of the dangers of conflict, war, and fascism. It teaches us that freedom, democracy, and justice

are never guaranteed. They must be protected, nurtured and passed on for future generations.

145 And as time moves forward, we must take care not to let the memories of the Occupation fade. Those who lived through the Occupation survive as 'the Liberation Generation' but are gradually passing, and with them, the direct memories to keep their stories alive, to teach the next generation, and to ensure that the lessons of our past are not lost nor forgotten.

150 Today, we are mindful that conflict still touches Europe and other places. For example, people in and from Ukraine face a struggle that painfully echoes our own history. As a community, which has experienced occupation and evacuation, we stand in solidarity with those defending their right to peace, to be sovereign, and free from tyranny. We respond with compassion and courage when others face injustice.

155 As we mark the 80th Anniversary of our Liberation, let us do so with pride, with reverence, and with a renewed commitment to the values that have shaped Guernsey's community, in the spirit of unity, peace and reconciliation.

Liberation Day is not only about the past; it is about who we are today, and the strength we carry forward into the future.

Thank you, Sir.

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The Bailiff: Thank you very much.

As I announced earlier, there will be a chance to raise a glass in the Grand Hall and everyone here is invited to join us.

But I will now invite the Greffier to close the meeting.

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The Assembly adjourned at 12.26 p.m.