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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

John A. Scocos Column: 70th Anniversary of VE Day

May 8, 1945 was "Victory in Europe" Day. With it came the end of six years of total war that left virtually no person or place in the world untouched.

There was widespread misery and suffering as the war raged and communities on both sides sacrificed for their cause. There was also courage and fortitude across the world in the actions of the millions of men and women who joined the Allies to defeat the evil that was Nazi Germany.

Though the end of the war was anticipated for several months, this day officially marked the end of hostilities in Europe and brought bittersweet joy to the millions who suffered and sacrificed so much.

More than 16 million men and women served in uniform in the United States Armed Forces. Their goal was nothing short of wiping tyranny and evil off the face of the earth. Seventy years ago, they achieved that goal in Europe with the downfall of the Nazi regime.

On May 8, 1945, the remnants of the Nazi regime surrendered to allied forces. Victory was achieved.

This day was immediately proclaimed "Victory in Europe Day" or "VE Day." The day was marked with both celebration and quiet reflection, but nothing would be quite the same again.

What does that victory in Europe mean 70 years later? To those few still alive who fought that war, it carries deep meaning, likely known only to them. To those too young to serve, but old enough to remember, they may very well remember the news of VE Day much the same way they remember the many other significant world events throughout their lives. Many others only know the day as history.

That history includes more than 332,000 Wisconsin men and women served in WWII. More than 8,100 died in the war.

Those who lived this history should be honored and treasured, as the day will too soon come where there is no more "living history" to be shared; only what we were told by that great generation.

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(This May 8, on the 70th anniversary of VE Day, the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs will recognize this historical day with a ceremony at the Wisconsin Veterans Museum in Madison at 9:00 a.m.)