

## Remembering World War II

# Iron County Quietly Celebrates the Victory in Europe

by Jay M. Jones

Seventy-five years ago the United States celebrated Victory in Europe (V-E Day) on May 8, 1945 as Germany surrendered to the Allied Nations, which included the United States, Great Britain and the Soviet Union.

Celebrations were held across the country and across much of Europe. In Iron County the mood was subdued. On May 10, 1945 the weekly newspaper Iron County Record reported the news and commented: "News of the end of the war in Europe was received by Cedar City people with a feeling of reverence and thanksgiving rather than stirring a desire for celebration, and V-E Day was observed quietly."

Although this brought an end to the fighting in Europe, the war with Japan continued in the Pacific region.



***Two of the United States postage stamps issued during the World War II era. At left, "Win the War", issued in 1942. At right, "Honoring Those Who Have Served", issued in 1946.***

On the same day that the Iron County Record reported V-E Day, it also reported the combat deaths of Leo Esplin in the Philippines and Jack Moore in Germany. In addition, there were reports of the wounding of Eugene Woolf and Henry Zuniga in battle, while a new War Loan drive was launched and the local Selective Service Board strained to meet its quotas. No, the war wasn't over.

A program on radio station KSUB marked V-E Day. William R. Palmer of Cedar City noted the significant contributions of local people in men, materials and work. He expressed the hope that this effort could soon be turned to peacetime pursuits.

World War II had been especially long for National Guard soldiers from around the country that had been activated in the months before the United States entered the war, and who served throughout the war.

Back in March of 1941 at the Cedar City National Guard Armory, 122 officers and men of Battery "F" of the 222nd Field Artillery were mustered into full-time service. At that time they were told that their active duty term would be one year. The attack on Pearl Harbor in December of 1941 changed that, and most of the men served on active duty throughout the war, including front line duty for some.

Nearly fourteen hundred men from Iron County served in the military during World War II. Their names are inscribed in a World War II Memorial in Veterans Park in Cedar City. Some of their sacrifices and the hardships endured by their families will never be fully appreciated. But for the overwhelming majority, the Allied victory in Europe was a ray of hope that the end of the war was significantly closer and better days would come.