



Deputy Chief Minister

PRESS RELEASE

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Wartime themed concert to mark Evacuation Day public holiday

A special concert to commemorate the wartime evacuation of the civilian population of Gibraltar will take place at the Victoria Stadium on 7 September.

This is the event that the Government has chosen to mark Evacuation Day, which will be a public holiday this year, the 75th anniversary of the evacuation.

The concert will have a wartime theme and will include performances to mark the music and the culture of the wartime era.

It will follow a number of other successful commemorations which have been held throughout the year to mark the chain of events which commenced 1940. Previous events have included a more formal Memorial which was held at Casemates Square, an exhibition which took place at the John Mackintosh Hall and the setting up of a website with data and photographs of the actual evacuation itself.

The wartime evacuation of the civilian population of Gibraltar is one of the untold stories of the Second World War. It saw the compulsory evacuation of women, children, the elderly and the infirm from Gibraltar. They first set sail for French Morocco, were then re-evacuated back to Gibraltar and then onwards to London, Madeira, Jamaica and Northern Ireland. The whole episode had the effect of cementing further the identity of the Gibraltarians as a people.

The concert will include performances mainly by local acts with the Military Wives Choir from the United Kingdom also having agreed to participate. Their songs will include a Vera Lynn medley.

The theme will be set by the Re-enactment society in their new World War Two costumes. There will be dance pieces interspersed with singing. The dance pieces will come from Jade Federico, who will perform a dance entitled the Evacuation of the Gibraltarians, from the Gibraltar Academy of Dance with a piece choreographed by Paulette Finlayson and from Jonathan Lutwyche, who will perform a piece choreographed by Ann Marie Gomez. The concert will feature performances from Mount Opera, who will perform songs from the Andrew Sisters and Edith Piaf, and Paul Riley's Big Band featuring Chloe Martinez will include Glen Miller songs in their repertoire.

Invitations are being sent out to over 700 former evacuees, who have registered with the Government either on-line or in person. They will have seating provided for them. The concert which starts at 8.00pm is free and is open to the general public for whom limited seating will be provided at the back of the arena.

Commenting on the event, the Deputy Chief Minister Dr Joseph Garcia who has been leading for the Government in this matter said:

“The Chief Minister announced the Evacuation Day Bank Holiday as a symbol of respect and remembrance to mark the 75th anniversary of the wartime evacuation. The Government feels very strongly that this anniversary should be marked as part of Gibraltar’s contribution to the wider War effort. It was obvious from the previous events that have taken place that the former evacuees themselves take pride in their own contribution and are very grateful that this is being recognised. There were some 230 evacuees who died while they were away from Gibraltar for reasons which included flying bombs, diseases, street accidents and old age. We have to celebrate with those who are still alive during the occasion but we must also remember all those who never made it back home.”