# Royal seating next to Sir Keir triggers mixed reactions during VE Day 80th anniversary



The recent VE Day celebrations marked not only a significant historical milestone but also a moment of unexpected public sentiment directed towards the royal family, particularly regarding the seating arrangements at the remembrance event. The 80th anniversary of Victory in Europe Day, commemorating the end of the Second World War in Europe on May 8, 1945, saw Prince William and his wife, Princess Kate, alongside other members of the royal family, participate in a series of solemn observances. The evening event, however, elicited mixed reactions from royal fans, particularly due to the presence of Labour leader Sir Keir Starmer sitting next to Prince William.

As the commemoration unfolded, attended by war veterans and senior royals, viewers expressed their discontent online every time Prince William appeared on screen, voicing their frustrations about Starmer’s proximity to him. Comments ranged from light-hearted jabs to more pointed criticisms, with some questioning the appropriateness of Starmer’s presence during such a significant national event. One viewer stated, "See Prince William drew the short straw having to sit by Starmer," while another lamented that the leader of the opposition, whom they perceived as unsympathetic towards the monarchy, had overshadowed the royal image they cherished.

The day's commemorations had begun with King Charles and Prince William leading a wreath-laying ceremony at Westminster Abbey earlier that day, emphasising the centenary of sacrifice. Prime Minister Starmer himself described the occasion as a tribute to the “defiance, sacrifice, and courage” displayed during the war, aligning the day with a broader theme of remembrance that echoed internationally. Similar events took place in France and Germany, showcasing a united front against the backdrop of historical conflict, a narrative that resonates deeply in contemporary discussions surrounding national identity and unity.

The VE Day 80th anniversary celebrations featured a grand military parade in which over 1,300 armed forces members marched from Parliament to Buckingham Palace, complemented by historical aircraft flypasts. This event, alongside public readings of Winston Churchill's historic speeches, served not only to celebrate the victory of the Allies but to honour the sacrifices made by the elderly veterans in attendance, representing the living memory of the war. Such cues underline the ongoing relevance of these commemorations in promoting national cohesion, particularly as many countries continue to grapple with the implications of conflict and remembrance.

Amidst the pomp and solemnity of the occasion, the public's reaction to Starmer reflects broader tensions within British society, especially regarding the central role of the monarchy and the political landscape. The juxtaposition of royal duty alongside political figures can often evoke strong emotions among royal watchers, many of whom hold a deep affection for the monarchy and its historical significance. Critically, this incident sheds light on how political affiliations intersect with deeply seated national sentiments, sparking debates about appropriateness in ceremonial contexts.

As the evening progressed, the celebratory atmosphere remained, emphasised by the notable attendance of dignitaries, including the Duke and Duchess of Edinburgh and Princess Anne. Nevertheless, the chatter regarding seating arrangements serves as a reminder of the complexities that come with public life, particularly as figures in political realms and royal duties unite under the spectre of history.

In conclusion, while the royal family's participation underscored a significant moment for national reflection, the public's varied responses highlight the intricate relationship between monarchy, politics, and national heritage—an interplay that continues to shape the narrative of contemporary British society.

**Reference Map**1. Lead article on VE Day celebration and public reaction.
2. Background on the significance of the VE Day anniversary and Prime Minister's comments.
3. Details on the military parade and wider commemorative activities.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.express.co.uk/news/royal/2052873/prince-william-keir-starmer-ve-day-royal-fans> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.reuters.com/world/uk/king-charles-leads-britains-ve-day-celebrations-2025-05-08/> - On May 8, 2025, King Charles and Prince William led the UK's 80th anniversary VE Day commemorations with a wreath-laying ceremony at Westminster Abbey. The event included a nationwide two-minute silence and a thanksgiving service honoring fallen soldiers, with elderly veterans in attendance. Prime Minister Keir Starmer described the anniversary as a tribute to defiance, sacrifice, and courage. Internationally, similar events took place in France and Germany, with leaders like French President Emmanuel Macron and German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier participating in their respective countries' ceremonies.
3. <https://www.reuters.com/world/uk/king-charles-royals-mark-victory-europe-day-with-military-parade-2025-05-05/> - King Charles and senior British royals participated in commemorations marking the 80th anniversary of VE Day, beginning with a grand military parade and flypast in central London. The celebrations honored Nazi Germany’s surrender on May 8, 1945, and started with Big Ben striking midday, followed by excerpts from Winston Churchill’s historic speech. Over 1,300 members of the British armed forces, alongside Ukrainian troops symbolizing continued UK support for Kyiv, marched from Parliament to Buckingham Palace. The parade was observed by King Charles, Queen Camilla, Prince William, Princess Kate, Prime Minister Keir Starmer, and war veterans.
4. <https://www.reuters.com/world/uk/king-charles-royals-gather-military-parade-mark-ve-day-anniversary-2025-05-03/> - King Charles and senior members of the British royal family are set to participate in a grand military parade and flypast, launching a four-day national commemoration of the 80th anniversary of VE Day—marking the end of World War II in Europe on May 8, 1945. The events, organized by the British government, begin on Monday with Big Ben striking noon and a public reading of Winston Churchill’s VE Day speech. Over 1,300 armed forces members will parade from Parliament to Buckingham Palace, observed by the royals, Prime Minister Keir Starmer, and war veterans. Historic military aircraft, including a Red Arrows display, will fly over London as part of the celebrations. Ukrainian armed forces will also participate to demonstrate UK support in their conflict with Russia. The royals will host a tea party for around 50 veterans and survivors of the war. On the anniversary itself, a thanksgiving service at Westminster Abbey and a national two-minute silence will be held, culminating in a celebratory concert. Prime Minister Starmer emphasized the significance of the anniversary as a moment of national unity and remembrance.
5. <https://www.royal.uk/clarencehouse/prince-wales-and-duchess-cornwall-mark-75th-anniversary-ve-day> - On May 8, 2020, The Prince of Wales and The Duchess of Cornwall marked the 75th anniversary of VE Day. The Prince led the nation in a two-minute silence from Scotland, laid a wreath, and The Duchess placed flowers at the memorial in remembrance of those who died in the Second World War. The Duchess also recorded excerpts from her father’s accounts of his time serving with the 12th Royal Lancers during WWII. Additionally, The Duchess spoke to two veterans of the 7th Armoured Division, also known as the Desert Rats, who served in North Africa during the Second World War.
6. <https://www.royal.uk/75th-anniversary-ve-day> - On May 8, 2020, the UK marked the 75th anniversary of VE Day, commemorating the end of World War II in Europe. The Queen's message was broadcast at 9pm, the same time as her father's broadcast in 1945. The Prince of Wales, accompanied by The Duchess of Cornwall, led the nation in a two-minute silence at 11am on VE Day. At the Balmoral War Memorial, The Prince laid a wreath and The Duchess laid flowers in remembrance of those who died in the Second World War. The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge also joined veterans for a special VE Day party at the Royal British Legion's Mais House Care Home.
7. <https://people.com/prince-william-joins-royals-world-leaders-d-day-anniversary-behalf-king-charles-8656052> - The British monarch, 75, could not be there himself because it was felt by his medical team to be too much for him to tackle amid his ongoing cancer treatment. While the King’s doctors are encouraged by the progress made so far, his treatment program is continuing, and palace officials still assess each outing in the light of prioritizing his continued recovery. With this in mind, officials and his medical team were mindful that the international heads of state event followed King Charles' appearance at the British memorial in Normandy earlier in the day. The monarch also attended commemorations on the British side of the water on June 5. Royals and world leaders attend D-Day anniversary event on June 6, 2024.