

NEWS RELEASE

5TH NOVEMBER 2009

**WORLD WAR WHO?
ASTONISHING SURVEY RESULTS LEADS TO NEW CHARITY PARTNERSHIP**

School children believe Adolf Hitler was coach to Germany's national football team and that the symbol of Remembrance Day is the McDonalds Golden Arches, according to new research released today Thursday 5th November.

The astonishing results emerged from a study of 2,000 children from across the UK, conducted by the veterans' charity Erskine that revealed limited knowledge of the World Wars amongst today's school children.

The survey questioned children between the ages of nine and 15 on their knowledge of key World War triggers, events, people and dates.

More than one in 20 thought Adolf Hitler was in charge of Germany's football team, not leader of the Fascist Nazi Party. 12 per cent worryingly assume the McDonalds Golden Arches is the symbol of Remembrance Day, whilst forty per cent didn't even know that Remembrance Day falls on November 11th.

A quarter admitted they don't stop to think about the soldiers who sacrificed their lives but just over half do know where their local war memorial is located. Encouragingly though, it emerged that 70 per cent wish they are taught more about the World Wars at school.

Major Jim Panton, Chief Executive of Erskine, said: "Some of the answers to this poll have shocked us and it has shown that Erskine, amongst others, has a part to play, not just in caring for veterans but in educating society as a whole. As we approach Remembrance Day it is hard to believe that forty per cent of our children do not know when it is. There are also some positives to come out of this survey with the level of interest from children wishing to learn more at school about the World Wars. School children are the future of the country and it is important that we help them to learn about our history."

Following the survey Erskine will work in partnership with Their Past Your Future (TPYF), a UK-wide education project, to develop the charity's schools pack on the back of the survey results. This will enable Erskine and Their Past Your Future to start educating young people online about the sacrifices made during World War Two.

Andrew Salmond, TPYF Scotland Project Manager for Museums Galleries Scotland said: "This initiative offers a fantastic opportunity to inform young people about the experiences of war – both at home and abroad. Some, we know, will convey wartime loss and suffering, others will speak of daring and inspiration. However, all will be of great educational value, offering an insight to what previous generations have endured in times of conflict."

Some of the most interesting results include:

- One in six believe Auschwitz is a World War Two based theme park

- Only half correctly said D-Day was the invasion of Normandy - a quarter believing it was 'Dooms Day'
- A quarter thought a nuclear bomb was dropped on Pearl Harbour which spurred America's involvement
- One in 20 think the Holocaust was the celebration at the end of the war
- One in 10 think the SS was Enid Blyton's Secret Seven, not Hitler's personal bodyguards
- One in 12 think The Blitz was a massive cleanup operation in Europe after World War Two

Each year, Erskine cares for over 1350 veterans, many having served in World War Two and who are more than willing to share their firsthand experiences and memorable war stories with younger generations.

Full results from Erskine's survey are available to download at www.erskine.org.uk

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Notes to editors

ERSKINE

Founded in 1916, Erskine has provided nursing and medical care for former members of our Armed forces through two world wars and the more recent conflicts and peace keeping initiatives of the twentieth and twenty first centuries. Re-building shattered lives, restoring dignity and providing first-class care to ex-Service men and women both young and old have been the cornerstones on which Erskine has built an unrivalled reputation from its five care homes across Scotland. For more information please visit www.erskine.org.uk

THEIR PAST YOUR FUTURE

Their Past Your Future Phase is a UK-wide educational project, led by a partnership of; the Imperial War Museum; Museums, Libraries and Archives England; Northern Ireland Museum Council; National Library of Wales, and; Scottish Museums Council. The programme is supported by the Big Lottery Fund. TPYF encourages exploration of the impact and ongoing legacy of 20th Century conflict on people and places in the UK and around the world. All elements of the project aim to inspire people of all ages to truly discover the impact of 20th century conflict, and discover why it is relevant now and in the future. There is a strong focus on developing meaningful contact between young people and veterans or eyewitnesses of conflict, and on utilising the resources of UK museum, libraries and archives to provide innovative and exciting opportunities for learning.

For more information please visit www.theirpast-yourfuture.org.uk