

FINEST HOUR

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Sir Winston Churchill Leadership Award for Volodymyr Zelenskyy





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The International Churchill Society is dedicated to preserving and promoting the historic legacy of Sir Winston Churchill. For the benefit of scholars, students, and Churchillians, the Society's activities, publications, and programs are conducted through the joint resources of the National Churchill Leadership Center at the George Washington University in Washington, D.C., and America's National Churchill Museum at Westminster College in Fulton, Missouri.

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Finest Hour

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From the Editor

Sir Winston Churchill Leadership Award for Volodymyr Zelenskyy

“To my mind, there has never been an easier case to make than that this year’s Sir Winston Churchill Leadership Award should go to Ukrainian President **Volodymyr Zelenskyy**.” Thus spoke Sir Winston’s granddaughter **Emma Soames** when the recipient of this year’s award was announced in London on 26 July. She continued, “As a wartime leader, he has shown many of the same characteristics of my grandfather: bravery, courage, grace under pressure, and a very close relationship with his people.”

The decision was indeed easy. Organizing the presentation of the International Churchill Society’s premier award proved rather more difficult. ICS Chairman **Laurence Geller** spent several months coordinating with the Ukrainian Embassy in London and Downing Street. When Prime Minister **Boris Johnson** learned of the proposal, he immediately agreed to present the award personally, albeit via a video link with Kyiv, where President Zelenskyy has remained since the Russian invasion of his country began in February of this year.

Chairman Geller also oversaw the raising of £50,000 to donate to the Disasters Emergency Committee for the support of Ukrainian refugees in conjunction with the presentation of the award. The twenty-minute ceremony included remarks by Mr. Geller, Prime Minister Johnson, and President Zelenskyy, which are reproduced here in full. Additionally, we offer the thoughts of historian **Andrew Roberts**, who places the event in perspective. **Andrew Smith**, Executive Director of ICS-UK, supervised the production of the award itself, as seen in our final story.

For additional insight, we invited royal biographer **Hugo Vickers** to compare the circumstances of Ukraine’s First Family in 2022 with those faced by the British Royal Family during the Second World War. “Courage” is the word most frequently associated with the Zelenkys, the House of Windsor, and Winston Churchill. In a study on this topic we identify four elements that Churchill manifested through his courage.

David Freeman, August 2022 🐾

Praise for Zelenskyy

NEW YORK—I applaud the International Churchill Society’s recognition of Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy with the 2022 Sir Winston Churchill Leadership Award. President Zelenskyy has been positively “Churchillian” as Ukraine’s Commander-in-Chief since the unprovoked and unjustified Russian invasion of Ukraine. This award is a testament not only to President Zelenskyy’s courageous and inspirational leadership but also to the bravery of the Ukrainian forces and people, who are fighting with incredible determination,

resourcefulness, and expertise for the very existence of their country and its independence. —General David Petraeus

WASHINGTON—As a fellow recipient of this award, I am utterly humbled by the level of determination, courage, and true grit President Zelenskyy has displayed. He is the embodiment of all that Winston Churchill so deeply esteemed, with pure physical courage at the top of the list. I would gladly sail under his command at sea! —Admiral James Stavridis

LONDON—On July 26, television screens in the Downing Street Press Briefing Room featured the iconic blue shield

and gold trident of Ukraine. When Prime Minister Boris Johnson strode on stage, the shield gave way to the stern, bearded face of the embattled and heroic President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, appearing live from his office in Kyiv. As one standing in the room in London, I can tell you that it was an electrifying moment and a day that will live forever in the memories of those lucky enough to be there. —Robert Courts MP

**Coming in *Finest Hour* 199:
Eightieth Anniversary
of the Hinge of Fate**

The International Churchill Society (ICS) was founded in 1968 to educate new generations about the continuing relevance of the life and legacy of Sir Winston Churchill. In 2016 the society established the National Churchill Leadership Center (NCLC) at the George Washington University in Washington, D.C. to serve as a forum for teaching about the important example of Churchill’s leadership.

America’s National Churchill Museum (ANCM) opened in 1969 on the campus of Westminster College in Fulton, Missouri, where Churchill delivered his famous “Iron Curtain” speech in 1946. The museum was designated by act of Congress in 2009 as the official tribute to Churchill in the United States. The museum has hosted leading dignitaries such as Margaret Thatcher, Ronald Reagan, and Madeleine Albright to lecture on Churchill’s enduring importance.

Since 2016, ICS and ANCM have worked in strategic partnership in their shared mission to advance Churchill’s legacy. Both are private, non-profit, tax-exempt organizations that rely on membership and donations. Please consider making a gift above your membership dues either to ICS, ANCM, or the NCLC so that our vital shared work may continue. Donations can be made by visiting www.winstonchurchill.org/donate.



“We Honour You Today”

*Remarks by the Chairman of the International Churchill Society
at the presentation of the 2022 Sir Winston Churchill Leadership
Award to President Volodymyr Zelenskyy*

By Laurence Geller

Ladies and gentlemen, I want to thank you all on behalf of the International Churchill Society for being here today to honour His Excellency President Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

In particular, I would like to thank the Churchill family, including our Society’s President, Randolph, Emma Soames, Jennie Churchill, Marina Brounger, and family members that could not be here today for their constant and generous support for our organisation and for upholding the values for which we stand.

I would also like to thank the Prime Minister and his team for hosting this event at Downing Street and for his unsparing support for the International Churchill Society. Mr. Johnson’s determined efforts in the United Kingdom for the Ukrainian people deserve all our admiration.

We often hear of world changing events. Lately, they

seem to occur all too often. In truth, many events that seemed significant in the moment are all too often consigned to a state of obscurity.

You might ask: how does an event take its place as a key moment in history? Although there can be many reasons for it, above all, fundamentally, it is the propensity to inspire. It is the ability to surmount what seemed an insurmountable enemy. Crucially, it is bold defiance in the face of adversity.

The response to the invasion of Ukraine, and indeed, Europe, that we see today, underscores this notion in a way that has not been seen since Sir Winston Churchill’s steadfast and unswerving global leadership more than eighty years ago

President Zelenskyy—much like Churchill—saw clearly, he warned clearly. He is doing what has to be done. His steadfast attachment to fundamental

principles, his indifference to the pressures and expediencies of the moment, and his unbending determination is not only saving his country, it is also helping to save Europe. Above all, by standing up for freedom and democracy, Mr. Zelenskyy inspires the world.

It was Churchill who said, “Once you take the position of not being able in any circumstances to defend your rights against aggression...there is no end to the demands that will be made or to the humiliations that must be accepted.”

His Excellency President Zelenskyy understands this. He acted without hesitation, and, in the process, he has turned the tide of war in his country’s favour. Indeed, once again, democracy is under siege, and Europe finds itself under threat of tyranny. And, as happened in 1940, it is under the leadership of an unexpected statesman that this threat is being repelled.



President Zelenskyy has demonstrated, much like Churchill did, that aggression must not be allowed to succeed and that the rights of people to choose their own way of life freely must be upheld. This is the epitome of democracy that Churchill fought for when he inspired freedom-loving people during those dark days of the Second World War.

I would also like to recognise the role that Britain has played under the leadership of its Prime Minister. Mr. Johnson understood that it was Britain's duty to be strong enough to do all she can to deter the aggressor, to engage, and to win the battle of ideas—as Churchill sought to do and successfully did.

It is through President Zelenskyy's fortitude and Prime Minister Johnson's unwavering support that Ukraine will retain the gift of freedom that can and will be passed on to the future generations of Ukrainians yet to come.

But there is no glory in war beyond victory. The events unfolding in Ukraine are a tragedy. Our organisation does not seek to romanticise your struggle, Mr. President. It is our intention, however, as it has been since the creation of our society in 1968, to honour Sir Winston Churchill and the principles for which he stood: freedom, justice, honour, duty, mercy, hope, and—always—courage.

Yes, the International Churchill Society was created to memorialise these values in Churchill's name, but, Mr. President, it is you and the Ukrainian people that personify them. Mr. President, the wartime hero, in whose name we honour you today, would recognise the equality of the struggle you face to the one he faced in Britain's darkest hour.

Mr. President, this society and our great nation support and salute you. *Slava Ukraini!*

Laurence Geller is Chairman of the International Churchill Society.

A Hero for Our Time

Remarks by the British Prime Minister in Presenting the
2022 Sir Winston Churchill Leadership Award to the
President of Ukraine

By Boris Johnson

President Zelenskyy, Your Excellency Ambassador Prystaiko, ladies and gentlemen,

It was at four o'clock on the morning of 24 February 2022 that you called me, Volodymyr, to say that the incredible had happened, that insanity had broken out, and Russian tanks were surging across the frontier of a sovereign independent country in Europe and cruise missiles were exploding all over Ukraine.

And in that moment of supreme crisis, you faced a test of leadership that was, in its way, as severe as Churchill's challenge in 1940.

As the Russians launched their lightning assault on Kyiv, you knew that you were at the top of their target list, and you knew that squads of killers were hunting for you.

And you could have left Kyiv, you could have said—and it would have been hard to contradict you—that the survival of the Ukrainian state required the survival of the President.

But of course, Volodymyr, you did none of those things: you chose to stay in Kyiv, among the Ukrainian people, just as Churchill stayed in London in 1940.

And when one world leader offered you a way out, you replied, “I need ammunition, not a ride,” and I think Churchill would have cheered—and he would probably have wept too—because he was often moved to tears at the kind of sheer moral and physical courage you showed in those grim weeks.

Now I would like to think that when Ukraine's tragedy triggered a global outpouring of support, and when dozens of countries came forward to supply your heroic armed forces with weapons, and scores of nations

imposed sanctions on Russia, and almost three quarters of the entire membership of the United Nations voted to condemn the invasion, I would like to think this was an inevitable reaction, because never in my lifetime in international affairs has there been a clearer case of right against wrong.

But the truth is that it wasn't inevitable, that reaction wasn't inevitable, and the global wave of solidarity for Ukraine was, in large measure generated by your own personal articulation of the cause.

Your defiance, your dignity, your unfailing good humour has moved millions, and, as you stand against barbarism, you've become a symbol of the heroism of the Ukrainian people.



Your defiance, your dignity, your unfailing good humour has moved millions, and, as you stand against barbarism, you've become a symbol of the heroism of the Ukrainian people.



You've addressed so many parliaments that I've lost count, and you brought both sides of the House of Commons to their feet, something that Churchill would surely have envied, and I can imagine his spirit walking with you, silently urging you on, encouraging you through every ordeal, jabbing the way ahead with his walking stick and perhaps marvelling at your superb indifference to physical danger, something that he himself understood.

And like Churchill you've understood that you are not

yourself the lion, the Ukrainian people are the lion, but you have been called upon to give the roar, the roar of freedom against tyranny, good against evil, of light against darkness.

And you have delivered that roar magnificently and that's why it was such a huge stroke of good fortune that you should have been in office at this time of crisis for Ukraine and the world.

And inspired by your leadership, I know not just that Ukraine can win but Ukraine will win, and when that day comes, as

it will, Ukraine will rise and take its place as a free, sovereign, and independent nation.

Thank you, Volodymyr, for everything you have done and *Slava Ukraini!*

Our physical separation notwithstanding, it gives me great pleasure, Volodymyr, to present you with this award.

Boris Johnson was Prime Minister of the United Kingdom from 2019 to 2022.

Slava Ukraini!

*Remarks by the President of Ukraine in Accepting the
2022 Sir Winston Churchill Leadership Award*

By Volodymyr Zelenskyy



Friend Boris!

**Dear members of the Churchill
Society!**

**Dear members of the Ukrainian
Warrior Games team, I know
that you are also there!**

Dear guests!

It is an extraordinary honor for me to receive such a leadership award today. And, in receiving it, it is very appropriate to recall one of

the most famous statements of Winston Churchill, which he said on 8 May 1945, after the end of the war in Europe: “My dear friends, this is your hour. This is not victory of a party or of any class. It’s a victory of the great British nation as a whole.”

And now I can quite rightly say that this award is not only for me, and it reflects not only my efforts. It would not be possible without all of us. It would not be possible without one hundred

and sixty Ukrainian soldiers who were awarded the title of Hero of Ukraine for the period from February 24. It would not be possible without more than twenty-four thousand Ukrainian men and women who have been awarded our state awards for bravery in the battles against the Russian terrorist invasion. This award would not be possible if the entire Ukrainian people had not risen up to defend freedom from the attack of tyranny, as Boris said now, a tyranny that is trying to return us to the worst that happened in the twentieth century, and that was then defeated thanks to the influence of Churchill in particular.

Something else should be said as well: Ukrainians and European history will always remember those who did not hesitate to come to the aid of our people and the very idea of freedom.

Addressing Londoners celebrating the victory of 1945, Winston Churchill recalled that Britain had stood alone for a whole year against the greatest military power of the time. And it did not quit the struggle. Instead, it created an example for all nations fighting against

tyranny—an example of the fact that victory is possible if you remember what honor is and do not deviate from your principles.

When we celebrate our victory, which we surely will, we will be able to say, thankfully, slightly different words from those said by Prime Minister Churchill because Ukraine was not left alone after February 24. With us were those who helped us, those who remembered at the worst time what honor is, and who “had no thought of quitting the struggle.”

I’m talking about you now, Boris. This award is yours too. This showed our joint leadership—Ukrainians, the British people, and everyone who will never surrender their freedom to tyrants, no matter what weapon is used against us.

The price of freedom is extremely high, but it is incomparably higher for those who first surrender and then try to regain it than for those who always protect it with all their might.

We are defending it. We are fighting—just as during the terrible trials of the twentieth century. Just as then, the factor of personal leadership is now crucial: leadership on the battlefield, leadership in helping the active army, leadership in international relations. And although the stakes in this war are different, they are no less high than those of eighty years ago.

What are we fighting for now?



The price of freedom is extremely high, but it is incomparably higher for those who first surrender and then try to regain it than for those who always protect it with all their might.

We fight not just for our land, although that is part of it; not just for human rights or the right of one nation, the Ukrainians, to live independently, although we fight for these too, of course; and not just for freedom in Europe or everywhere on the borders of Russia, although this will be guaranteed as a consequence of our victory.

We are fighting together to ensure that war is never again seen by any aggressor as a means of achieving aggressive goals.

And perhaps for the first time in the history of mankind, we are now able to show everyone in the world and for ages that democracies, united, can stop any tyranny, even if at first it seems that the foe has unlimited resources for aggression.

But this can become a reality only if Russia loses on the battlefield in Ukraine.

That is why it is necessary to continue the supply of modern and effective weapons to our state in sufficient quantities to break finally the offensive potential of Russian tyranny. Sanctions against Russia must be strengthened and applied against all those who commit or support terror. And it is necessary to involve more

nations in our coalition for the defense of freedom—especially those against whom Russia in the twenty-first century decided to use one of the most terrible types of weapons: hunger, artificial hunger.

The democracies of the world are capable of stopping any tyranny. We are capable of stopping any evil that threatens our freedom. Only the joint leadership of the entire free world can be enough for this.

And patience should be enough—patience on the way to victory. No one knows today how much time and effort it will take to reach it.

The victory, however, is worth the effort. And it will become our shared history—so outstanding that you and I will later be quoted in the same way as we are now quoting Sir Winston Churchill.

Thank you for your attention!

Thank you for the award—this award to the people of Ukraine!

Glory to Ukraine!

*Volodymyr Zelenskyy is
President of Ukraine.*

“Churchill Would Have Cheered”

Premiership of Boris Johnson Ends with a Triumph

By Andrew Roberts

In Downing Street on 26 July, during his final days as prime minister, Boris Johnson presented the Sir Winston Churchill Leadership Award of the International Churchill Society (ICS) to President Volodymyr Zelenskyy of Ukraine, who attended virtually from Kyiv. The Prime Minister explained eloquently why the West needs to continue to stand beside Ukraine in its struggle against tyranny. He likened Zelenskyy's decision to stay in his capital after the Russian attack to Churchill opting to stay in London during the Blitz.

Indeed, Zelenskyy's resolve was yet braver because, unlike Churchill in 1940, who could walk around bomb sites in relative safety, Zelenskyy, as Johnson pointed out, “knew that squads of killers were hunting for you. And you could have left Kyiv. You could have said—and it would have been hard to contradict you—that the survival of the Ukrainian state required the survival of the president.”

Johnson added: “But of course, Volodymyr, you did none

of those things. You chose to stay in Kyiv, among the Ukrainian people, just as Churchill stayed in London in 1940. And when one world leader offered you a way out, you replied ‘I need ammunition, not a ride,’ and I think Churchill would have cheered—and he would probably have wept too, because he was often moved to tears—at the sheer moral and physical courage you showed in those grim weeks.”

The Sir Winston Churchill Leadership Award has been given to many distinguished people over the years, including Margaret Thatcher, Prince Charles, and Madeleine Albright, but it is impossible to think of any living world leader who personifies Churchill's brand of defiance of tyranny and belief in democracy better than Zelenskyy.

Were Churchill alive today, he would immediately recognise what Boris called “the sheer moral and physical courage” Zelenskyy showed after Russia invaded on 24 February.

A reincarnated Churchill would, of course, be shocked that a full-scale, state-on-state war has been unleashed in Europe once again, only three-quarters of a century after the Second World War so devastated the Continent. His scorn for Vladimir Putin would have produced rhetorical flights equal to those he directed against Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini.

Similarly, one can imagine that the transfiguration of Zelenskyy, from a television comedy star to a towering war leader, would have brought forth



Were Churchill alive today, he would immediately recognise what Boris called ‘the sheer moral and physical courage’ Zelenskyy showed after Russia invaded on 24 February.



some imperishable lines from an admiring Churchill.

As for Ukraine, we can with a fair amount of certainty believe that Churchill would have echoed the sentiments he expressed about Finland in January 1940, when he said of the country: “Superb, nay, sublime. In the jaws of peril, Finland shows what free men can do. The service rendered by Finland to mankind is magnificent.”

In his speech at the ceremony in No.10, Laurence Geller, Chairman of the ICS, pointed out how “Mr. Johnson understood that it was Britain’s duty to be strong enough to do all she can to deter the aggressor, to engage, and to win the battle of ideas—as Churchill sought to do and did. It is through President

Zelenskyy’s fortitude and Prime Minister Johnson’s unwavering support that Ukraine will retain the gift of freedom that can, and will, be passed on to the future generations of Ukrainians yet to come.”

They were generous words for a prime minister who heard precious few of them over the preceding few weeks, but whose unwavering support for Ukraine will be acknowledged by history.

In his own remarks, Zelenskyy paid Boris a heartfelt tribute, which puts into proper perspective the spitting invective of some of the MPs in the House of Commons at his final Prime Minister’s Questions Time.

“Ukraine was not left alone after February 24,” said its

President. “We had those who were helping us who remembered in the darkest times, what is honour. You have not thought of quitting the struggle—I’m talking about you Boris. This award is yours as well, and this is the manifestation of our joint leadership of Ukrainians, Britons and all those who will not give their freedom away to any tyrants.”

Can any political career have had a more glorious epitaph?

Andrew Roberts is a trustee of the International Churchill Society and author of Churchill: Walking with Destiny (2018). This article originally appeared in the Daily Telegraph and is reprinted with permission.

We Shall Fight On

How Volodymyr Zelenskyy Channels Churchill

By David Freeman

Winston Churchill wrote that “courage is rightly esteemed the first of human qualities because, as has been said, it is the quality which guarantees all others.” Churchill asserted that “men and kings must be judged in the testing moments of their lives.” By these standards, Volodymyr Zelenskyy has been tested and not found wanting. The leadership displayed by the Ukrainian president in 2022 has many parallels with the actions of Churchill in 1940 including defiance, vision, resolution, and communication.

Defiance: On the day Churchill became prime minister in May 1940, the German army launched an assault on Western Europe that quickly resulted in the defeat of France and the Low Countries. Britain was isolated. It did not appear to many that there could be any chance of victory, and some counseled making an accommodation with the Nazis that amounted to a kind of defeat. Churchill said “No!” Despite everything.

Before the Russian invasion began in February of this year, all analysts predicted that the much larger Russian armed forces would easily overwhelm those of Ukraine. But the Ukrainians

immediately displayed an unanticipated tenacity. When offered the opportunity by the United States government to be evacuated from his capital city of Kiev, President Zelenskyy responded by saying, “I need ammunition, not a ride.” In standing by his post and his people from the beginning of the crisis, the president has led by example.

Vision: Within a week of becoming prime minister in 1940, Churchill told his son Randolph that he believed Britain could not only survive but achieve victory, provided American assistance was forthcoming. Churchill immediately began the process of cultivating the necessary support of President Franklin Roosevelt. It required supreme tact and patience. The process seemed agonizingly slow, with the British people fighting for their lives each and every day. Eventually, Congress responded to the president’s request with the Lend-Lease program that helped carry the Allies to victory.

President Zelenskyy now calls for all the aid that the Free World can provide. He too believes his country can prevail. He may well be right. In March, retired Lt. Gen. Ben Hodges, who served

as commanding general of US Army Europe, stated his belief that “Russia is not likely to win this war.” His assessment is that Russian forces lack the necessary logistical capabilities to subjugate an overwhelmingly hostile population in a nation as large as Ukraine. The key once again will be the provision of material aid by the United States, Britain, and the other allies.

Resolution: On 4 June 1940, as the situation in France rapidly deteriorated, Churchill delivered one of his most legendary speeches. He told the British people, “...we shall not flag or fail. We shall go on to the end, we shall fight in France, we shall fight on the seas and oceans, we shall fight with growing confidence and growing strength in the air, we shall defend our Island, whatever the cost may be, we shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight in the fields and in the streets, we shall fight in the hills; we shall never surrender.”

On 8 March of this year, President Zelenskyy became the first ever foreign leader to address Parliament in the chamber of the House of Commons. This he did via a live

BELOW

Winston Churchill addresses United States Congress during the Second World War



video link. MPs wore headsets so as to hear a translation of the speech in real time. Describing the scene in the *Daily Telegraph*, Allison Pearson wrote, “And then came the unforgettable, the unbearably beautiful, heart-cleavingly stirring, almost too-much-to-bear moment. Adapting Winston Churchill’s great speech, Zelenskyy delivered the immortal ode of British defiance and made it Ukraine’s, ‘We will fight in the sea and in the air, we will fight in forests, fields and on shores, we will fight on the land and in the streets. We will fight on the banks of the different rivers, of Dnieper.’” Seasoned politicians in the House struggled not to lose control of their emotions.

Communication: Within six weeks of taking office in 1940, Churchill had delivered three of his most legendary speeches. First he promised the House of Commons, “victory at all costs.” Next he vowed, “we shall never surrender.” Finally he told the British people that it was their “Finest Hour.” In this way, Churchill successfully communicated his sense of defiance, vision, and resolution to the British people. “Of all the talents bestowed upon men,” a young Churchill had written many years before, “none is so precious as the gift of oratory. He who enjoys it wields a power more durable than that of a great king.”

From the start of the present crisis, President Zelenskyy has communicated with the people of Ukraine through internet media not just daily but several times a day. He includes images that prove he continues to remain at his post in Kiev. He shares with Ukrainians both the good news and the bad. Observers around the world have made comparisons between Zelenskyy and Churchill and concluded that the president has already won the crucial “Battle of Information” in its war with Moscow. Came the hour: came the man.

*David Freeman is editor of
Finest Hour.*

The King Is Not Leaving

Ukraine's First Family Today and Britain's Royal Family
in the Second World War

By Hugo Vickers

It was a generous gesture from President Biden to offer to extricate President Zelenskyy from Ukraine, but it was no surprise to hear that that most courageous of presidents had no intention of accepting. He knew he had to be with his people: “I don’t need a ride. I need ammunition.” President Zelenskyy has echoed the words of Winston Churchill in his inspiring imprecations to the Ukrainian people and now, possibly unwittingly, he follows the example of another young family who were presented with the same problem back in the last century.

When Britain went to war in September 1939, King George VI had been on the throne for only two and a half years. Queen Elizabeth, who became known as Queen Mother after the King’s death, felt that the years of peace (only twenty years) had in some way been an interlude, and that the Second World War seemed to be almost a continuation of the First. At the outbreak of war, the King and Queen were in London and their daughters were up in Scotland, where they stayed until plans could be made for

them. A number of families sent their children over to the USA or Canada. These varied from Crown Princess Juliana of the Netherlands, who was one who took that route, to John Julius Cooper (later Viscount Norwich), son of Duff and Lady Diana Cooper, and to Vivien Leigh’s daughter, Suzanne. She was sent across the Atlantic to Canada with her grandmother.

But Queen Elizabeth saw the need for the Royal Family to set an example to the British people. She declared that her daughters would never leave without her, that she would never leave without the King and that the King himself would certainly never leave. And so they stayed. President Zelenskyy’s wife, Olena, declared something very similar on Instagram: “Today I will not have panic and tears. I will be calm and confident. My children are looking at me. I will be next to them. And next to my husband. And with you.”

President Zelenskyy is forty-four years old. King George VI was forty-five at the outbreak of war. The King and Queen had the two daughters, Princess

Elizabeth (then thirteen), and Princess Margaret (nine). The Zelenskyy’s have a seventeen-year-old daughter, Aleksandra, and a six-year-old son, Kiril. Princess Elizabeth and Princess Margaret stayed in Scotland until Christmas 1939. It was then deemed possible to have Christmas at Sandringham, despite Norfolk being on Britain’s exposed east coast. In January 1940 it was announced that the princesses had left for “their new evacuation home in the country.” This was Windsor Castle, though it was not stated as such. Princess Margaret said later: “We left for the weekend and stayed five years.” She also noted that the castle was surrounded by barbed wire, “which wouldn’t have kept the Germans out, but certainly kept us in.”

Queen Elizabeth took shooting lessons at Buckingham Palace, focusing on hapless rats in the garden. She wanted to be prepared for invasion. She made inspirational speeches to the women working in the factories and to others. She and the King made a point of visiting bombed areas in London and elsewhere, walking amongst their people

to comfort them. They also gave a weekly lunch to Winston Churchill, who succeeded Neville Chamberlain as Prime Minister in May 1940. Churchill said later that these private lunches were a great help to him in wartime. The King and Queen dispensed with servants at the table, so that they could speak freely, and, since they were frequently traveling around Britain, they were able to tell their Prime Minister the mood of the country. The Queen even copied out an inspirational poem for Churchill, and sent it round to Downing Street.

Princess Elizabeth was only fourteen when in October 1940, she broadcast to evacuated children, telling them that when peace came, “it will be for us, the children of to-day, to make

the world of to-morrow a better and happier place.” (To this message of eighty years before she referred in her now-famous Covid speech from the castle in April 2020.) She “dug for victory,” and from time to time the princesses were seen riding bicycles behind their mother’s pony cart, a calmer, happier world for which the British people were fighting. These were important images of peace—the Queen Mother never wore uniform in wartime. She always remained a civilian, her beige and pale coloured outfits in stark contrast to the black boots and uniforms of Nazi Germany.

Princess Elizabeth turned nineteen in April 1945 and was old enough to take her own part in the war effort by joining the

Auxiliary Territorial Service (ATS). She trained as a driver and as a mechanic, starting as a Second Subaltern and being promoted to Junior Commander, again setting an example—to girls of her age. And then the war ended.

For both President Zelenskyy and the King, the message was the same. They were with their people, and while George VI was in London, however bad the war became, however much the enemy bombs rained down, there was hope. He inspired his people. When the King died in 1952, Churchill’s wreath bore the simple words: “For Valour.”

Hugo Vickers’ books include Elizabeth, The Queen Mother (Hutchinson, 2005).



ABOVE

Winston Churchill joins the Royal Family on the balcony of Buckingham Palace on V-E Day, 8 May 1945. Photo credit: Alamy

A Historic Legacy for Our Modern World

By Justin Reash

In the early hours of 24 February 2022, as missiles wreaked havoc on Kyiv, Ukraine's capital, the world awoke to the first international European war since 1945. The outlook for Ukraine was bleak; the superior forces of the Russian army would soon overrun the country it had first invaded in 2014. The Ukrainian government would be toppled and the historic nation fully annexed by Putin.

Or so we thought.

Five months later, the International Churchill Society recognized Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy with its prestigious Sir Winston Churchill Leadership Award. As it turns out, the Ukrainian government has not fallen; the nation remains unconquered.

One day after the Russians invaded, the United States offered to exfiltrate Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy. His response? "The fight is here; I need ammunition, not a ride." With those words, President Zelenskyy catapulted from a potential president in exile to the leader of a courageous people vowing to defend their land, whatever the cost may be.

In his ascent to international fame and admiration, President Zelenskyy has routinely invoked Churchill's leadership during the Second World War. "We will not surrender, we will not lose, we will go to the end," he said to the House of Commons on 8 March



2022. It was in recognition of this "never give in" spirit that our society presented the President with the annual leadership award.

Churchill's modern legacy, although deep and nuanced, can be simplified in one phrase he used to rally the British in the dark year of 1941: "never give in, never give in, never, never, never."

We at ICS remind ourselves of this quote daily. We exist to encourage people in all walks of life never to give in, regardless of what obstacles they are facing. We point to Churchill's courage, wit, warmth, and intelligence as tools to help those in adversity in their struggle to persevere. We seek to inspire the world through Churchill's actions, words, and spirit.

We are constantly energized by the numerous messages we receive from people around the world, from Churchill experts or those first coming to know him, detailing how a single Churchill

sentence or act has affected them in a profound way. Whether it be President Zelenskyy or poet Amanda Gorman, who studied Churchill's speech structure to compose the poem she read at the inauguration of President Joseph Biden, Churchill continues to inspire in ways great and small.

If you are moved by this mission, then may I ask you to support our organization by joining as a member or making a donation? Every penny makes a difference, since we are a non-profit organization that relies solely on donations to fund our cause. To do this you can reach out to me personally at jreash@winstonchurchill.org or call me at 1-202-994-4744.

In the words of Churchill, now adopted by President Zelenskyy: "Give us the tools, and we will finish the job!"

*Justin Reash is
Executive Director of the
International Churchill Society.*

Presentation of Sir Winston Churchill Leadership Award

The International Churchill Society recognises the extraordinary personal leadership and bravery of President Volodymyr Zelenskyy



TOP (L-R) Laurence Geller, Marina Brounger, Jennie Churchill, Prime Minister Boris Johnson, Ukrainian Ambassador Vadym Prystaiko, Emma Soames, Randolph Churchill, Zoë Churchill • **BOTTOM LEFT** President Zelenskyy accepting the award via video link from Kyiv
BOTTOM RIGHT The Sir Winston Churchill Leadership Award



Image courtesy of the National Portrait Gallery,
Smithsonian Institution

“
*Those who serve Supreme Causes
must not consider what they can
get but what they can give.*”

—WINSTON CHURCHILL

ACTION THIS DAY

The International Churchill Society (ICS), America's National Churchill Museum (ANCM), and the National Churchill Leadership Center (NCLC) need your support. The reputation of Sir Winston Churchill and the institutions of democracy he so eloquently defended are under unprecedented attack.

Please help us continue our mission to educate new generations about the continuing relevance of Churchill's life and legacy. We work every day with people around the world to keep the historical record accurate and the memory green.

You can designate your donation to support either ICS, ANCM, or NCLC.

There are three ways to do this:

1. Use the remit envelope attached to this magazine
2. Go to winstonchurchill.org/donate
3. Call us at +1 (202) 929-0309

Let us go forward together!