

VFW Commemorates V-J Day

Sept. 2 marks the 76th anniversary of the end of WWII

Sep 02, 2021

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – On this day 76 years ago, a delegation from the Empire of Japan boarded the American battleship *USS Missouri* in Tokyo Bay to sign the *Japanese Instrument of Surrender* and officially end World War II. The day would become known as Victory over Japan Day, or V-J Day, and it is what the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) commemorates today.

Joining the Japanese delegation on the deck of the *Missouri* were representatives from the Allied forces, who for the past six years, had fought the Axis powers of Nazi Germany, fascist Italy, and Imperial Japan. With the death of Italian dictator Benito Mussolini in 1943 and the defeat of Nazis forces in May of 1945, a Japanese surrender was all the Allies needed to end the conflict that had cost millions of lives. By mid-August 1945, after the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the Japanese had enough. Eighteen days later, the documents were signed at 9:04 a.m., by Japanese foreign minister Mamoru Shigemitsu and chief of the Japanese army general staff, General Yoshijiro Umezu, formalizing the surrender. Signatures of the Allies accepting the surrender would follow, bringing the war to a close.

In remembrance of the more than 400,000 Americans and 60 million people killed worldwide, the VFW thanks the more than 16.1 million American soldiers, sailors, Marines, and Coast Guardsmen who answered the call to protect freedom and democracy, and the countless others from ‘the Greatest Generation’ who came together to support their effort. Our nation will always be forever grateful for their courage, commitment, perseverance, honor, and sacrifice.

In a worldwide radio address following his signature accepting the Japanese surrender, Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers General Douglas MacArthur would commend U.S. service members with words which hold as true today as they did back then.

“And so, my fellow countrymen, today I report to you that your sons and daughters have served you well and faithfully with the calm, deliberated determined fighting spirit of the

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American soldier...”