

Peace in the Pacific: Remembering V-J Day

The VFW marks the anniversary of the Japanese surrender and the end of WWII

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WASHINGTON — Today, the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) commemorates the 77th anniversary of the Empire of Japan's formal surrender aboard the American battleship USS Missouri in Tokyo Bay, on Sunday, Sept. 2, 1945, at 9:04 a.m., Tokyo time.

Declared by American President Harry S. Truman as Victory over Japan Day, or V-J Day, the ceremonial surrender and signing of the Japanese Instrument of Surrender officially ended World War II, which began almost six years to the day with Nazi Germany's invasion of Poland. While the war ended in the European theater with the unconditional surrender of the Nazis on May 8, 1945, fighting continued on the other side of the world. For the United States, V-J Day marked the end of nearly four years of persistent conflict since the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, on Dec. 7, 1941, the catalyst for America's entry into the war. Finally, there was peace in the Pacific.

WWII was the deadliest in world history. It is estimated that 70 - 85 million people died worldwide as a result of the conflict. Of the more than 16.1 million American soldiers, sailors, Marines, and Coast Guardsmen that served in both theaters, 407,000 were killed and more than 671,000 were wounded. We will never forget their sacrifice in defending our country and fighting for freedom everywhere.

The more than 1.5 million members of the VFW and its Auxiliary join with a grateful nation in saying "thank you" to those of the "Greatest Generation" still with us today. Our world will forever be indebted to them for the courageous and monumental effort in defeating the Axis powers and freeing so many nations from tyranny across the globe.

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