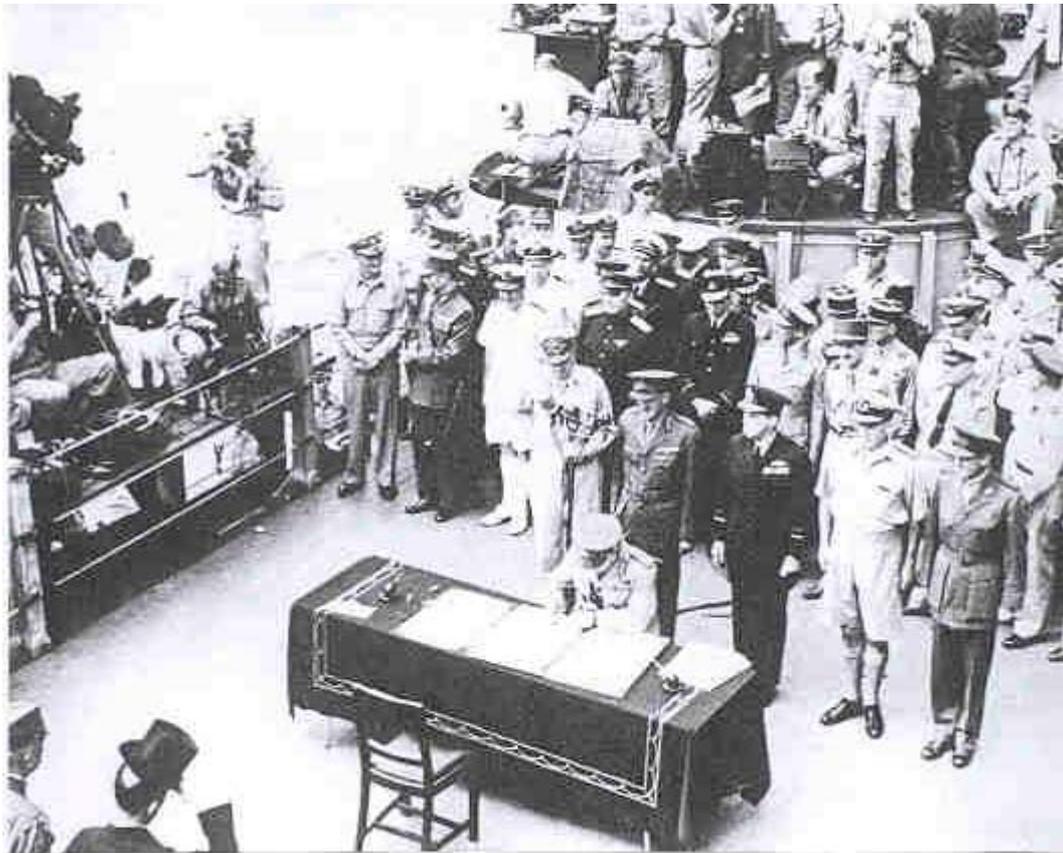


Explanations of the Origins of VP (Victory in the Pacific) and VJ (Victory over Japan) Days

On the morning of 15 August 1945 The Emperor of Japan announced that Japan would accept the Allies ultimatum to surrender.

On the same day just after nine o'clock, as the majority of the population would normally have been starting the day's work, Prime Minister Ben Chifley's voice was heard over the wireless sets of the nation announcing that Japan had bowed to the ultimatum issued by the Allies and peace was at hand.



General Thomas Blamey signs the Japanese surrender documents on behalf of Australia aboard an American warship in Tokyo Bay.

This was the signal for a spontaneous outpouring of happiness never before or since seen in Australia. Martin Place in Sydney, Bourke Street in Melbourne and the main streets of almost every city and town across the nation became rallying points.

Australians, not normally given to public displays of emotion, danced in the streets through piles of shredded paper which rained down from office buildings. Motor traffic came to a halt and trams inched along main streets with revellers clinging to the sides and roofs.

Chifley declared the 15th and 16th public holidays. The uninhibited rejoicing of the 15th gave way to more formalised celebrations on the 16th as victory marches were staged through most major cities. Turn-outs of citizens to watch these displays were similar to those which had farewelled AIF divisions departing for the Middle East in 1940.

The day of Ben Chifley's announcement became known as VP Day. It is RSL policy that the 15th August each year be known as VP Day and the NSW Branch of the RSL has conducted a Commemoration Service at the Cenotaph in Martin Place each year on that date since 1946.

The formal surrender of the Japanese Empire took place on the USS Missouri in Tokyo Bay on 2nd September 1945. This became known as VJ Day.