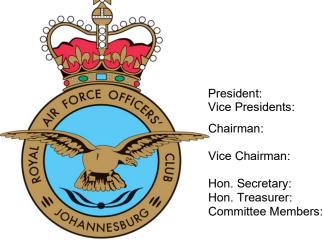
ROYAL AIR FORCE OFFICERS' CLUB

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RAFOC REMINISCENCES AND RAMBLINGS - WEEK 19 - VJ DAY

Good morning - This is a Special edition of RAFOC Ramblings to commemorate the end of World War II on this day in 1945. Some of you might have wondered why we did not make reference to it in the Ramblings yesterday, but now you know, we wanted to make special and dedicated reference to the 75th Anniversary of VJ Day.

VJ DAY:

Victory over Japan Day (V-J Day) is the day on which Imperial Japan surrendered in World War II, in effect bringing the war to an end. The term has been applied to both of the days on which the initial announcement of Japan's surrender was made - August 15, 1945, in Japan, and because of time zone differences, August 14, 1945 (when it was announced in the United States and the rest of the Americas and Eastern Pacific Islands) – as well as to September 2, 1945, when the surrender document was signed, officially ending World War II.

August 15 is the official V-J Day for the United Kingdom, while the official US commemoration is September 2. The name, V-J Day, had been selected by the Allies after they named V-E Day for the victory in Europe.

On September 2, 1945, a formal surrender ceremony was performed in Tokyo Bay, Japan, aboard the battleship USS Missouri. In Japan, August 15 usually is known as the "memorial day for the end of the war" (終戦記念日, Shūsen-kinenbi); the official name for the day, however, is "the day for mourning of war dead and praying for peace"



Surrender of Japan, Tokyo Bay, 2 September 1945: Representatives of the Empire of Japan on board USS Missouri (BB-63) during the surrender ceremonies.



Civilians and service personnel in London celebrating V-J Day on August 15, 1945.

VJ DAY:

We remember the beginnings of 'Unbroken Heroes'...a work in progress. A poem written 75 years ago.

Poet unknown. Source: 3 Squadron Royal Australian Air Force Archives

Northward they travelled, Northward to Thai conquered the jungle, only to die, that the yellow man's railway, with sinews of war, might penetrate swiftly, from shore, to shore. Crossing the land of Thai.

To the earth by the side of the track they fell, their neighbours, the coolies, writhing in hell.

The hell of disease, the Hades of thirst, the slave with the master, the best with the worst.

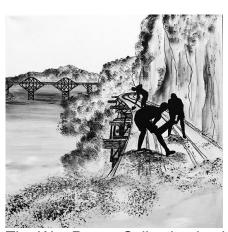
Helpless victims of Thai.

Still to the North, the remnants reeled, to meet their fate on a battlefield of plague and lice and rotting flesh. Pawns of the warlords, caught in the mesh -Of steaming, festering, Thai.

They fought with the fly, and the rat, and the rain, the damp fetid air of that jungle terrain, the cholera scourge, the dysentery plague, they shivered and shook like men with an ague, In the mud of perfidious Thai.

For them not the glory of death in the field, forgotten, their bones lie rotting, concealed - 'neath a carpet o creeper and fungus and slime. What matter? the railway is finished in time - Who cares if the toiler dies.

But though forgotten by fellow men, when reveille sounds, they shall march again, onwards and upwards, never to fall, Each soul inspired by the clarion call -Of the almighty God in the sky.



Copied from Geoff Quick in Tanzania on his Face Book page

Sal and I have been up that line.... (The illustration is the bridge from the film BTK, not that it lessens the impact when you visit the graveyard.)

WE WILL REMBEMER THEM

The War Poppy Collection by Jacqueline Hurley