



## ROYAL AIR FORCE OFFICERS' CLUB

Johannesburg

P.O. Box 69726

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[info@rafoc.org](mailto:info@rafoc.org)

[www.rafoc.org](http://www.rafoc.org)

President:	David MacKinnon-Little
Vice Presidents:	Basil Hersov, Colin Francis, Geoff Quick, David Lake
Chairman:	Bruce Harrison <a href="mailto:bruce@jbharrison.co.za">bruce@jbharrison.co.za</a> Tel: 011 673 0291 Cell: 083 325 0025
Vice Chairman:	Jon Adams <a href="mailto:vice-chairman@rafoc.org">vice-chairman@rafoc.org</a> Tel: 011 678 7702 Cell: 082 450 0616
Hon. Secretary:	Colin Ackroyd Tel: 012 942 1111 Cell: 082 800 5845
Hon. Treasurer:	Jeff Earle Tel: 011 616 3189 Cell: 083 652 1002
Committee Members:	Russell Swanborough Tel: 011 884 2611 Cell: 083 263 2740 Karl Jensen Tel: 011 234 0598 Cell: 082 331 4652 Jean-Michel Girard Cell: 083 659 1067 Geoff Fish Tel: 012 667 2759 Cell: 083 660 9697
Web Master:	Hanke Fourie Tel: 082 553 0210
Bank Account:	Nedbank - Melrose Arch Br: 19 66 05 Account 19 66 278 063

## 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 75<sup>th</sup> 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 REMEMBER THEM**