

# This Day in History... September 2, 1945

## Victory Over Japan Day

On September 2, 1945, Japan formally surrendered to the Allies aboard the USS *Missouri*. This is celebrated as V-J Day in the US. Many other countries celebrate V-J Day on August 15, when Japan announced its surrender.

By the summer of 1945 the Allies were preparing to invade the Japanese mainland. Some historians have estimated one million US casualties would be incurred in this invasion, which was planned

for November of 1945. Japanese losses would have been much higher.

In 1942 the Manhattan Project, a top-secret program to develop an atomic bomb, was launched. Shortly after the defeat of Germany, in July of 1945, the first bomb was tested in New Mexico. The US, Great Britain, and China issued an ultimatum to Japan – surrender unconditionally or be destroyed. Unfortunately, the Japanese chose to fight on.



*Stamp depicts President Truman's announcement of Japan's surrender.*

On August 6, 1945, a B-29 bomber called the *Enola Gay* dropped an atomic bomb on the city of Hiroshima, killing an estimated 70,000 to 100,000 people. The Japanese still did not respond, so a second bomb was dropped on Nagasaki on August 9th; 40,000 perished. The following day, the Japanese government announced it intended to surrender under the terms set by the Potsdam Declaration, and issued a formal announcement of acceptance on August 15.



*The official Japanese surrender occurred on the Missouri.*

Celebrations broke out around the world as early as August 10, with soldiers dancing in the streets in Paris, and shouting "It's over in the Pacific and in Berlin." In China they shot off fireworks and in Manila they sang "God Bless America." In Okinawa, several people were killed and injured as soldiers fired every weapon they could find into the sky.

President Harry Truman appeared in a nationwide broadcast on August 14 announcing the surrender, but stating that "the proclamation of V-J Day must wait upon the formal signing of the surrender terms by Japan" on September 2.

The Allies officially began their occupation of Japan on August 28. MacArthur arrived two days later and decreed that no Allied soldiers should harm the Japanese or eat their food. The formal surrender ceremony occurred at about 9 a.m. on September 2, 1945, aboard the USS



*One of the flags aboard the Missouri on this day was the same one that flew over the USS Powhatan when Matthew C. Perry first visited Japan in 1853.*

*Missouri* in Tokyo Bay. Representatives of the Japanese Empire signed the Japanese Instrument of Surrender. MacArthur signed for the Allied nations, followed by Chester W. Nimitz. Members from eight other Allied nations then signed the documents.

In the days that followed, similar surrender ceremonies occurred throughout the Pacific on Japanese-held land. The state of war between the Allies and Japan officially ended with the Treaty of San Francisco on April 28, 1952.



*Stamp pictures one of the most famous scenes of celebration that broke out when Japan announced its surrender.*



*MacArthur accepted and signed the surrender on behalf of the Allied Powers.*



*Nimitz signed on behalf of the US.*

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