

Royal Family to lead tributes marking VJ Day 75

- His Royal Highness The Duke of Edinburgh will feature in poignant montage of veterans shared on social media and on large screens
- A powerful re-telling of the story of Victory Over Japan will be broadcast on BBC One with tributes led by His Royal Highness The Duke of Cambridge
- Veterans of the Far East campaign will be present at the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire to remember fallen comrades
- The Red Arrows will take to the skies for a stunning UK-wide flypast

Their Royal Highnesses The Prince of Wales and The Duchess of Cornwall, The Duke of Edinburgh and The Duke of Cambridge will lead commemorations marking 75 years since the end of the Second World War on 15 August, Prime Minister Boris Johnson has announced today.

The Prince of Wales, accompanied by Her Royal Highness The Duchess of Cornwall, will lead the UK in a national moment of remembrance and thanksgiving for all those who served in the Far East. His Royal Highness will lead a two minute silence at 11am at the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire as part of a special televised service.

A number of veterans, including 93 year-old Albert Wills who served in the Royal Navy aboard HMS Indefatigable, will be present at the service to pay their respects to their fallen comrades and will represent the surviving veterans of the war in the Far East still alive in the UK today.

Music at the service will be provided by The Central Band of the Royal Air Force, and the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight will take part in a flypast following the two minute silence.

His Royal Highness The Duke of Cambridge will feature in 'VJ Day 75: The Nation's Tribute,' a special programme filmed at Horse Guards Parade that will be broadcast on BBC One. Alongside veteran testimony, The Duke will honour and give thanks to all those who sacrificed so much during the Second World War.

His Royal Highness The Duke of Edinburgh, who was present on board HMS Whelp in Tokyo Bay for the signing of the Japanese surrender, will feature on large screens in locations across the country in a poignant photo montage showcasing living Second World War veterans.

A piper will play "Battle's Over" at the Imperial War Museums' HMS Belfast in London at sunrise as part of a tribute entitled 'Waking Up to Peace', that will also include pipers playing at dawn in India, Australia, New Zealand and Nepal.

Then in the first such flight since the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games, The Red Arrows will conduct a UK wide flypast tribute over Edinburgh,

Belfast, Cardiff and London with its path including The Royal Hospital Chelsea, home to three Burma Star recipients.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson said:

When the Second World War ended 75 years ago with the surrender of Japan, British soldiers, sailors and airmen were serving in the Far East, fighting hard to achieve victory – and were among the last to come home.

On this anniversary I want to remember what we owe the veterans of the Far East campaign. They brought an end to the Second World War, they changed the course of history for the better, liberated South East Asia, and many paid the ultimate sacrifice.

That's why on this remarkable anniversary – and every day hereafter – we will remember them.

Culture Secretary Oliver Dowden said:

We must never forget the bravery and sacrifice of our greatest generation. On 15 August we will come together as a nation to remember, give thanks and pay tribute to the endurance of those who served around the world and finally secured peace for us. These commemorations will inspire a new generation to learn about them and ensure their stories of heroism and sacrifice live on.

Defence Secretary Ben Wallace said:

VJ Day is sometimes seen as the forgotten victory, but this year, on its 75th anniversary, our celebrations are rightly focused on paying special tribute to the Greatest Generation and their service and sacrifice in the Far East. I will be thinking of the unique hardships faced by those who served, and thanking them for all they did for us.

The partnerships forged during the Far East campaign continue to thrive today. It's a unique honour for me as Defence Secretary to meet Second World War veterans in person at important commemorations such as these. As a former Army officer, I understand just how much today's troops are inspired by those who came before them.

I am proud we have put together such a full programme of events and look forward to paying tribute to our amazing Asia Pacific war veterans.

Plans for the day include:

- At 11am a National Two Minute Silence led by His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales will take place at the National Memorial Arboretum.
- His Royal Highness The Duke of Edinburgh will appear in a photo montage series alongside other Second World War veterans. Each veteran will be pictured with an image of themselves from their time in service in a touching tribute broadcast on large screens across the country marking the 75th anniversary of the end of the war.
- Armed Forces musicians will lead the nation in a Service of Remembrance hosted by The Royal British Legion at the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire. The ceremony will involve a flypast by the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight.
- The Red Arrows will conduct flypasts over Edinburgh, Belfast and Cardiff and will conclude their tour of the UK over London.
- VJ Day 75: The Nation's Tribute will be broadcast on BBC One. Filmed at Horse Guards Parade, alongside veteran testimony His Royal Highness The Duke of Cambridge will give an address which pays tribute to the veterans and the wartime generation, as the Nation honours, thanks and remembers all those who sacrificed so much during the Second World War. The pre-recorded programme, developed with the Ministry of Defence and involving 300 members of Armed Forces personnel, will highlight the scope and diversity of the British military in 1945. It will include a host of famous faces reading tributes, military bands and dramatic visual projection.□

The Service of Remembrance at the National Memorial Arboretum, including the two-minute silence, will be broadcast on BBC One between 0930 – 1130. Due to the ongoing coronavirus pandemic and social distancing, this event is not open to the public and people are asked not to visit the National Memorial Arboretum. VJ Day 75: The Nation's Tribute will be broadcast on BBC One between 2030 – 2200.

Whilst VE Day marked the end of the war in Europe in May 1945, many thousands of Armed Forces personnel were still engaged in bitter fighting in the Far East. Victory over Japan would come at a heavy price, and Victory over Japan Day marks the day that Japan surrendered on 15 August 1945, which ended the Second World War.

During the Second World War, fighting in the Asia-Pacific took place from Hawaii to North East India. Britain and the Commonwealth's principle fighting force, the Fourteenth Army, was one of the most diverse in history – more than 40 languages were spoken, and all the world's major religions represented. The Government's events will pay tribute to the tens of thousands of service personnel from across the UK and the Commonwealth who fought and died in the war against Japan, including all those who were held as prisoners of war by the Japanese.

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Notes to Editors:

Other community events are taking place across the UK however the public are instructed to observe social distancing guidelines and local lockdown restrictions.