

Consul-General of Japan in Sydney's Newsletter

No. 22 75th Anniversary of the End of the Second World War:

From Enemies to Friends

21 August 2020

This year, 15 August was the 75th Anniversary of the end of the Second World War. Ceremonies were held throughout Australia, and I laid a wreath at the Cenotaph in Martin Place in Sydney.

Japan and Australia were enemy nations during the Second World War, but soon after the war, both countries began to walk along the path of reconciliation. Today we share a “Special Strategic Partnership” and are promoting cooperation across broad and diverse fields. As the entire world faces new and pressing health and economic challenges posed by COVID-19, cooperation between Japan and Australia has an ever more important role to play.

The 75th anniversary of the end of the war is a milestone that presents us with a good opportunity to reflect on the history of war between Japan and Australia, together with our post-war history of reconciliation and cooperation. In this issue of my newsletter, as I report on the 75th anniversary commemorative events, let us consider the significance of the history of war, reconciliation and cooperation between Japan and Australia.



ABC TV's "Australia Remembers: 75th Anniversary of the End of WWII"

(15 August 2020, ABC TV)

- **ABC TV Commemorative Program**

From 9.30am on Saturday 15 August, ABC TV broadcast a special 30-minute program called "Australia Remembers: 75th Anniversary of the End of WWII". Using footage from the time, together with recent interviews and witness accounts, the program introduced aspects of Australia's experiences at war.

Of course, Japan appeared as an enemy nation - the attack on Pearl Harbour - the fall of Singapore - the treatment of Australian POWs - the bombing of Darwin - the midget submarine attack on Sydney Harbour - the battle of the Kokoda Track in New Guinea - and then, the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan's surrender and the end of the war.

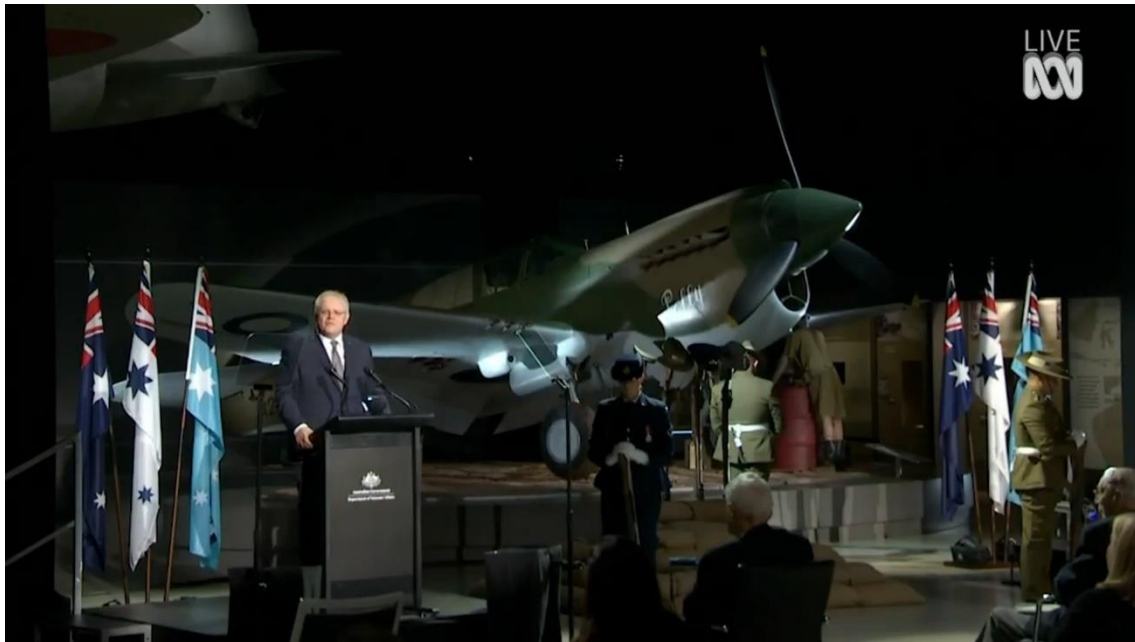
The program finished in a particularly moving way. Having touched on the issue of the many families who lost loved ones in the war and whose grief lay in the shadows the overwhelming joy that came with the news of victory, the program closed with the words of a returned serviceman: "In war, nobody really wins."

One of the two program hosts was Japanese-Australian, Ms Kumi Taguchi. If the COVID-19 border closures had not prevented it, she had intended to visit Japan to film footage for a documentary about the 24 Australian POWs who survived the atomic bombing of Nagasaki (9 August 1945).

As I watched Ms Taguchi on the program, I felt a strong appreciation for the role that she plays through her work at the ABC as a bridge between Japan and Australia.

Participating in the program felt very significant. To have a person of Australian and Japanese heritage co-hosting a documentary about the war, would not have been imaginable even a few decades ago. I felt a special kind of responsibility, being a bridge between both sides. It makes me very proud to work for a public broadcaster that sees just how important moments like these are.

Kumi Taguchi



**Prime Minister Morrison delivering his Commemorative Address
at the National Commemorative Service
to mark the 75th Anniversary of end of the Second World War
(15 August 2020, ABC TV)**

● **National Commemorative Service**

From 10am on 15 August, the National Commemorative Service to mark the 75th Anniversary of the end of the Second World War was held, and I watched it live on television.

In his address, Prime Minister Morrison spoke of former enemies who became friends and he gave the example of Darwin. “The walk from war to peace to friendship has taken many steps. Small and big, they have all mattered.” He then introduced the example of the Japanese salvage company in Darwin after the war that made 77 crosses out of salvaged metal and donated them to a church in Darwin, and he explained the teaching in the gospels which says to forgive those who have done a wrong 77 times.

He continued to say that one of the most moving experiences he has had as Prime Minister was laying a wreath together with Prime Minister Abe at the Cenotaph in Darwin, describing this as “a complete journey”. A world in which Japan and Australia are now true partners, this is the type of world that Australian veterans fought for, Prime Minister Morrison explained.



**Prime Ministers Morrison and Abe laying wreaths at the Darwin Cenotaph
(16 November 2018, Cabinet Public Relations Office of Japan)**

In his opinion piece in *The Australian* on 15 August, Prime Minister Morrison also mentioned his time with Prime Minister Abe during his 2018 visit to Darwin and wrote that it was a moving experience for him. He went on to say that this friendship is the world created by the generation of the Second World War – the generation of Australians who won the war, secured the peace and saved humanity. Thanking them for this contribution, he concluded that their deeds would not be forgotten.

When he visited Darwin in 2018, Prime Minister Abe greeted Prime Minister Morrison in a speech at the opening ceremony of the Ichthys LNG Project. In his greeting, he mentioned several historical episodes: not only the joint laying of wreaths at the cenotaph, he also recalled the words of former Prime Minister Menzies, “Hostility to Japan must go. It is better to hope than always to remember,” and the creation of the 77 crosses by the Japanese salvage company.

Such sincere interaction and a relationship of trust between leaders help to move countries and the world.



Laying a wreath at the Cenotaph in Martin Place in Sydney

(15 August 2020)

- **Commemorations in NSW**

From 11am on the morning of 15 August, the NSW state memorial service commemorating Victory in the Pacific Day (VP Day) was held at the Cenotaph in

Martin Place in Sydney. However, this year, consuls-general were unable to attend the ceremony because the number of participants was limited due to COVID-19 precautions. So, I consulted with the RSL (Returned and Services League) NSW State Branch, and after the event had finished, I went and laid a wreath at the Cenotaph. I believe it is very important to participate on such occasions, laying a wreath as the representative of the Japanese Government.

Afterwards, I posted about the wreath laying on our consulate's social media, and I also shared the statement by Ambassador Takahashi. He wrote in part: "[W]e appreciate the spirit of tolerance and friendship that Australia has shown to Japan." "The positive, friendly post-war relationship that Japan and Australia share today is vast in its scope, encompassing not only the economy, but also cultural exchanges, as well as political relationships and defence co-operation." And further: "We have the great responsibility to take the lessons of history deeply into our hearts, to carve out a better future." I hope that this message reaches as many people as possible.



**Meeting the Acting President of RSL NSW State Branch Ray James
(11 August 2020, location RSL NSW State Branch office)**

● **Visit to the RSL (Returned and Services League) NSW State Branch office**

Prior to the commemoration in NSW, I paid a visit on the Acting President of RSL NSW State Branch, Mr Ray James, on 11 August. The RSL NSW State Branch office is in a building overlooking Martin Place in the heart of the Sydney CBD.

From my side, I expressed my belief that the 75th Anniversary of the end of the Second World War is an important event for both Australia and Japan. I conveyed my appreciation for Australia's spirit of tolerance and friendship to this day, and my gratitude for the continuing reconciliation and cooperation between the two countries.

Acting President James is a veteran of the Vietnam War. He told me that he had become friends with Japanese through his family. This made me realise anew the valuable role that grass-roots exchange plays in creating warm ties between Japanese and Australians.



Exhibition at the ANZAC Memorial (Sydney):

“1945: From Hot War to Cold War”

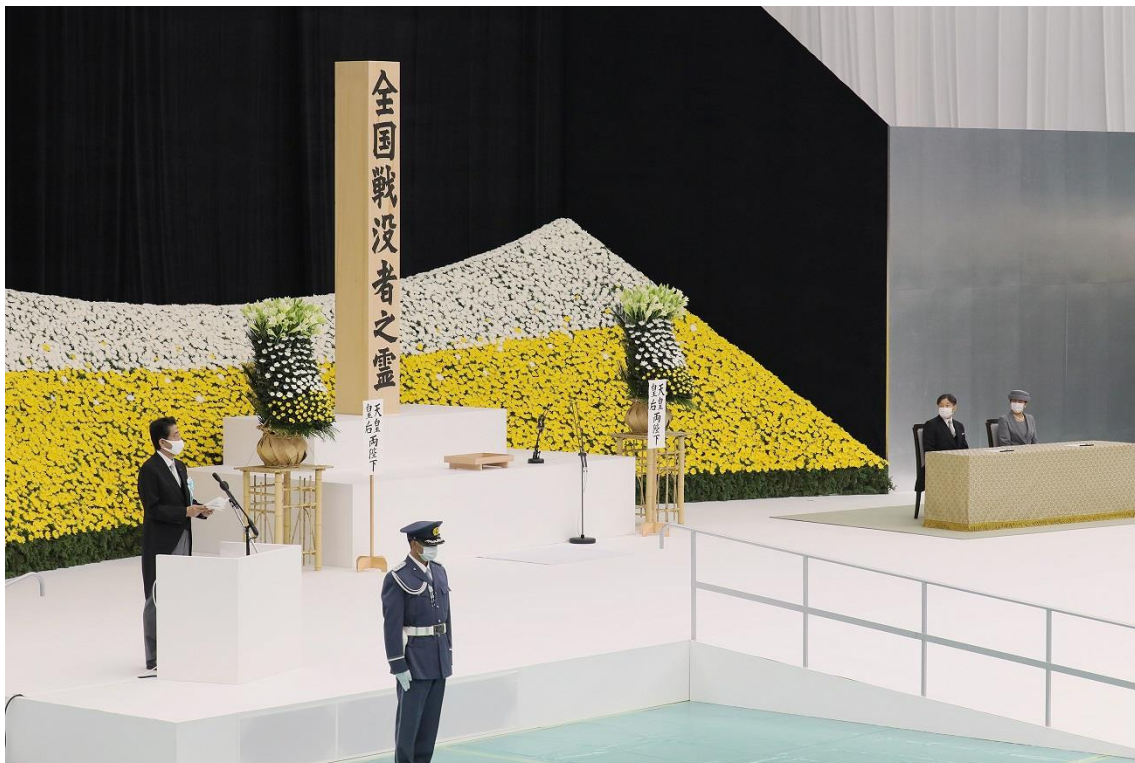
(17 August 2020)

- **Visit to the ANZAC Memorial**

At the start of this week (17 August), I visited the ANZAC Memorial at Hyde Park in Sydney and saw the special exhibition “1945: From Hot War to Cold War”. The exhibition began in March this year and is being held at the Memorial on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of the end of the Second World War. The exhibition runs until February 2021.

At the entrance of the exhibition, there is a photo of the atomic bomb mushroom cloud over Nagasaki, and in the exhibition room, there is a large-scale photo showing Hiroshima lying in ruins after the atomic bombing of the city. These illustrate the fact that this time marked the shift from the end of the Second World War to the beginning of the age of nuclear deterrence. There are also exhibits about the Thai-Burma Railway and the signing of the formal surrender. Even as Japan and Australia have achieved reconciliation, I realized that the various memories and records of war with Japan will continue to be handed down for many years to come.

From this month, the exhibition can be viewed online as a 3D virtual tour. Please take a look if you are interested.



**Prime Minister Abe's address at the Memorial Ceremony for the War Dead
(15 August 2020, Cabinet Public Relations Office)**

- **Memorial Ceremony for the War Dead in Japan**

On 15 August, a ceremony was also held in Japan. In the presence of Their Majesties the Emperor and Empress, Prime Minister Abe attended the Memorial Ceremony for the War Dead held at the Nippon Budokan and delivered his commemorative remarks, which included the following passage:

Over the 75 years since the end of the war, Japan has consistently walked the path of a country that values peace. We have worked to the very best of our ability to transform the world into a better place.

We must never again repeat the devastation of war. We will continue to remain committed to this resolute pledge. Under the banner of "Proactive Contribution to Peace," we are determined to join hands with the international community and play a greater role than ever before in resolving the various challenges facing the world. We shall overcome the current novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and carve out the future of our nation for the sake of the generation alive now and the generations of tomorrow.

Joining hands with Australia, this Consulate shares this resolve to play its part in solving the various challenges the world is facing.



**The flag at half-mast at the official residence
of the Consul-General of Japan in Sydney
(15 August 2020)**

● **From enemies to friends**

On 15 August, the flag at my official residence was flown at half-mast. As the flag fluttered against the fine blue sky, I felt the passage of time since the war.

Amongst the series of 75th anniversary events, I was profoundly moved by the philosophy within Prime Minister Morrison's commemorative address, namely by the belief that former enemies should not continue to hate but should reconcile, and that the friends we are today is thanks to the path taken by those who fought to secure the peace. "From enemies to friends" – this epitomizes Australia's engagements with Japan till today.

This philosophy not only applies to Japan and Australia. It is universal. In order to broaden the path “from enemies to friends” around the globe, I would like to promote wide-ranging cooperation between Japan and Australia, while at the same time conveying the significance and results of this cooperation to the world.

75th Anniversary of the End of the Second World War | ABC TV Special Program followed by the Broadcast of the National Commemorative Service (15 August 2020)

<https://youtu.be/GTMsF9U1vYI>

Article by ABC Australia’s Kumi Taguchi about the Second World War (9 August 2020)

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-08-09/kumi-taguchi-nagasaki-hiroshima-atomic-bomb-survivor-covid/12529238>

75th Anniversary Commemorative Address by Prime Minister Morrison (15 August 2020)

<https://www.pm.gov.au/media/commemorative-address-australian-war-memorial-act-150820>

Opinion piece in The Australian by Prime Minister Morrison on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of VP Day (15 August 2020)

<https://www.theaustralian.com.au/inquirer/nation-forged-in-the-fire-ofwar/news-story/b594aaf874f2609a59ad0167fcf4e932>

Prime Minister Abe's visit to Australia (16-17 November 2018) (Japanese)

https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/a_o/ocn/au/page4_004506.html

Statement by Ambassador to Australia Takahashi Reiichiro (15 August 2020)

[https://www.au.emb-](https://www.au.emb-japan.go.jp/itpr_en/15082020_Statement_by_Takahashi_Reiichiro.html)

[japan.go.jp/itpr_en/15082020_Statement_by_Takahashi_Reiichiro.html](https://www.au.emb-japan.go.jp/itpr_en/15082020_Statement_by_Takahashi_Reiichiro.html)

ANZAC Memorial Exhibition "1945: From Hot War to Cold War"

<https://www.anzacmemorial.nsw.gov.au/event/exhibition-1945-hot-war-cold-war>

Address by the Prime Minister at the Seventy-Fifth National Memorial Ceremony for the War Dead (15 August 2020)

https://japan.kantei.go.jp/98_abe/statement/202008/_00003.html

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