

CORAL SEA WEEK

Souvenir Programme, 1957

W. Hawkins



**Australian-American Association
(Queensland)**

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FOREWORD

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

May 7th and 8th are dates which should be printed in large scarlet type in the Australian calendar, for it was on those days in the year 1942 that a large Japanese invasion force attempting to capture Port Moresby was defeated and turned back by the skilled leadership, superior prowess and personal courage and sacrifice of sailors and airmen of the United States and Australian Forces.

The invaders had just entered the Coral Sea and had they not been repulsed, would certainly have captured Moresby whence, in time, they would most surely have secured a foothold in Queensland.

The tragic result of this to us can well be imagined.

Coral Sea was essentially a naval and air force engagement, but whilst it was in progress, the land troops of our own country and those of our powerful ally were suffering untold hardship in the jungles of New Guinea and other islands to break the hold of the enemy and remove him from those strongpoints from which he could attack our continent.

Therefore, whilst we gather to commemorate this fifteenth anniversary of the Battle of the Coral Sea, let us not forget how near we came to disaster.

Had this battle not gone in our favour, we would have become the slaves and playthings of a ruthless foe.

To young people, especially, I appeal to give earnest thought to this outstanding incident in our history.

We must never cease to be grateful to those who, by their courage and sacrifice, secured the victory. We must thank God by Whose Grace that victory was made possible.

The Australian-American Association exists for the promotion of closer friendship, mutual understanding and active co-operation between the British Commonwealth of Nations and the United States of America.

We think that only by positive action on these lines can we hope to maintain those freedoms and the benefit of democratic institutions which the people in both Australia and the United States cherish and enjoy.

The Coral Sea anniversary affords us a splendid opportunity to give practical expression to our ideals and to demonstrate our profound gratitude to that great Sister Democracy for the willing and powerful help she gave us in our darkest hour.

C. J. McPHERSON, President

Application for Membership of **AUSTRALIAN-AMERICAN ASSOCIATION**

WILSON HOUSE, CHARLOTTE STREET, BRISBANE.

B 9210-B 4969

I wish to apply for membership of the Australian-American Association on the understanding that I shall pay an annual subscription of £1/1/- for the year commencing 1st July, 1957, and that I am liable for the prescribed subscription each year unless I formally resign membership.

Name.....

Address.....

Proposer.....

Seconder.....

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THEY PASSED THIS WAY

Queensland holds pride of place for having erected the first Memorial in Australia to the American people for their contribution to the defence of our homeland during the Pacific war. Planned by the Australian-American Association and paid for by innumerable small donations from all parts of the State, the Memorial is both a tribute of gratitude and a symbol of abiding friendship.

Classical in its simplicity, the Memorial consists of a fluted column of Queensland freestone on a base of Queensland axed granite, surmounted by an emblematic American eagle. The Monument stands 35 feet high from the pavement to the top of the eagle, which itself is 5 feet high. The flag poles on each side of the pavement are 25 feet high.

The site is an ideal one, both aesthetically and historically. The Memorial stands in Newstead Park on a point jutting out into the broad expanse of the Brisbane River, hard by the main shipping area, and can be clearly seen by all who enter Brisbane by sea or air. Newstead House, now the headquarters of the Queensland Historical Society, is the most historic and oldest remaining house in Brisbane. It was the official residence of the first Government Resident, Captain John Wickham.

The area was also closely associated with the "American invasion" of Brisbane, for nearby American ships poured out their troops and supplies from early 1942 to 1945. The site is consequently ideally chosen, linking up as it does two of the outstanding periods in Queensland's history. Further, in addition to the natural beauty of the locality, Newstead Park is now cared for

by the Brisbane City Council, which made the site available, and the Historical Society will be responsible for the general oversight and care of the Monument in the years to come.

In addition to the main inscription herein illustrated, the Memorial carries the following historical record:—

"The Australian-American Association initiated and implemented the erection of this Memorial. The funds were raised by Public Appeal launched by the Lord Mayor of Brisbane on 3rd March, 1950. The first sod was turned by the President of the Association on 3rd May, 1951, in the presence of the Premier of Queensland and the Ambassador Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary of the United States.

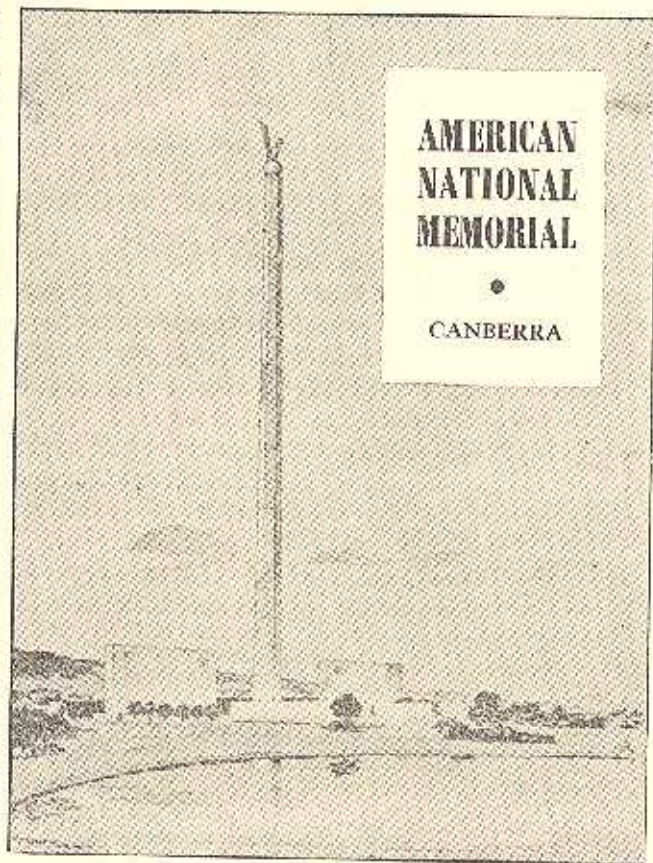
They passed this way

This Monument was erected by the people of Queensland in grateful memory of the contribution made by the people of the United States of America to the defence of Australia during the 1939-45 War.

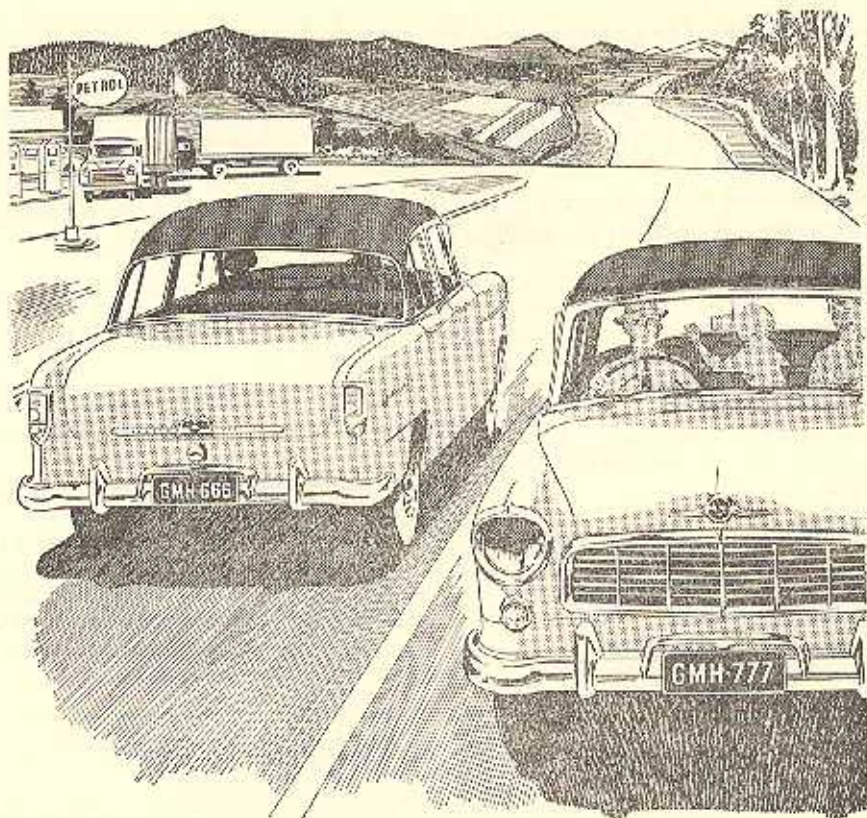
Long may it stand as a symbol of unity of English speaking peoples in the cause of freedom.

AMERICAN
NATIONAL
MEMORIAL

CANBERRA



Unveiled by Her Most Gracious Majesty,
Queen Elizabeth II, 16th February, 1954.



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AUSTRALIAN-AMERICAN ASSOCIATION (QUEENSLAND)

Itinerary

ADMIRAL FELIX STUMP, U.S.N., COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF PACIFIC & U.S. PACIFIC FLEET,
CORAL SEA WEEK, 29th APRIL-3rd MAY, 1957.

WEDNESDAY, 1st MAY.

- 9.00 a.m. Arrive at Brisbane Airport.
Met by Hon. C. W. Davidson,
O.B.E., M.P., Commonwealth
Government representative.
Lt.-Commander John E. Tucker,
M.V.O., V.R.D., representative
of His Excellency the
Administrator.
Mr. C. J. McPherson, M.V.O.,
President Australian-American
Association.
Commander Chesterman, O.B.E.,
Resident Naval Officer.
GENERAL SALUTE.
Inspect R.A.N.V.R. Guard of
Honour.
Inspect R.A.A.F. Band.
Introduction of Official Guests—
G.O.C. Northern Command,
Major-General Harlock.
C.O. R.A.A.F. Amberley Group
Captain Chapman.
Commissioner of Police, Mr. T.
W. Harold.
Mr. W. H. Pickford, Regional
Director Civil Aviation.
Mr. C. Bowser, State Controller
Department of Supply.
Commanders U.S. Submarines.
Executive Members of Aust-
American Assn. and their Wives.
9.20 a.m. Depart Airport.
Motor Cycle Escort.
Public Welcome through City
streets.
9.40 a.m. Arrive Anzac Square.
Met by Major General H. G. F.
Harlock, G.O.C. Northern
Command.
Inspect A.M.F. Guard of Honour.
Meet Sir Raymond Huish, C.B.E.,
State President R.S.S.A.I.L.A.
Proceed to Shrine.
Lay Wreath.
"Taps", "Last Post" to be played.
9.55 a.m. Depart Shrine for Lennons
Hotel.

- 10.15 a.m. Official Call on His Excellency,
the Administrator, the Hon. Mr.
Justice Mansfield.
10.30 a.m. Press Conference, Choral Room,
Lennons Hotel.
12.00 noon Official call on the Hon. The
Premier, V. C. Gair, M.L.A.
1.00 p.m. Lunch privately at Lennons
Hotel.
3.15 p.m. Official call on the Lord Mayor,
Alderman T. R. Groom.
3.30 p.m. Civic Reception.
4.30 p.m. Depart for Lennons Hotel.
6.30 p.m. Australian-American Association
Evening Reception and Buffet
Dinner at Finneys Auditorium.
9.30 p.m. Depart for Lennons Hotel.

THURSDAY, 2nd MAY.

- a.m. Morning Free.
12.50 p.m. Luncheon with members of the
Australian-American
Association, Carlton Hotel. Met
by Mr. C. J. McPherson, M.V.O.
12.50 p.m. Mrs. Stump—Luncheon with
Australian-American Association
Women's Auxiliary, Finneys.
Met by Mrs. J. R. Crees.
5.15 p.m. United Service Club Reception
and Buffet Dinner. Met by
President Major T. G. Macinn
and Mrs. Macinn.
7.50 p.m. Depart for Newstead Park for
Coral Sea Memorial Service.
8.00 p.m. Arrive Newstead Park.
Met by Mr. C. J. McPherson.
9.00 p.m. Depart Newstead Park for
Lennons Hotel.
10.00 p.m. Arrive Lennons for Coral Sea
Ball. Met by Mr. and Mrs. P. R.
Burn.

FRIDAY, 3rd MAY.

- 8.35 a.m. Depart Lennons Hotel for
Airport.
8.50 a.m. Arrive Eagle Farm Airport.
9.00 a.m. Depart Brisbane.

DISTINGUISHED VISITOR FOR CORAL SEA CELEBRATIONS.

ADMIRAL FELIX BUDWELL STUMP, UNITED STATES NAVY

Felix Budwell Stump was born in Parkersburg, West Virginia, on December 16, 1894, son of John Sutton and Lily Ragland (Budwell) Stump. He attended public school in Parkersburg and the Wernitz Preparatory School, Annapolis, Maryland, before his appointment to the U.S. Naval Academy, Annapolis, from his native state in 1913. Graduated and commissioned Ensign in March, 1917, he advanced progressively in rank until his promotion to Admiral to date from June 27, 1953.

After graduation from the Naval Academy in 1917, he was assigned to the gunboat YORK-TOWN, and in December of that year transferred to the U.S.S. CINCINNATI, operating on escort duty. He became Navigator of that cruiser in May, 1918, continuing to serve in that capacity during the remaining part of World War I, and until she was placed out of commission in the spring of 1919. Following an assignment in the U.S.S. ALABAMA, he reported in September, 1919, for flight training at the Naval Air Station, Pensacola, Florida, and was designated Naval Aviator, May 22, 1920.

He remained at the Pensacola Air Station until July, 1920, for instruction in the N.C. Seaplanes, the large flying boats of that period, after which he joined the U.S.S. HARDING for duty in connection with the Atlantic N.C. Plane Division. In December, 1921, he was assigned to the Naval Air Station, Hampton Roads, Virginia, in command of an experimental test squadron, and in June, 1922, reported for instruction in aeronautical engineering at the Post-graduate School Annapolis, Maryland. He continued the course for a year at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology at Cambridge, where he received the degree of Master of Science in June, 1924. Following further instruction in that field, at the Naval Aircraft Factory, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and the Bureau of Aeronautics, Navy Department, Washington D.C., he was assigned, in December, 1924, to Torpedo Squadron TWO, based on the experimental carrier LANGLEY, operating with Aircraft Squadrons, Battle Fleet.

Returning to the Naval Air Station, Hampton Roads, Virginia, in June, 1927, he served until September, 1930, as Assembly and Repair Officer there, after which he assumed command of the cruiser scouting wing, with additional duty on the staff of Commander Cruisers Scouting Fleet. He served in those duties until April, 1932.

He then served for two years in the Maintenance Division, Bureau of Aeronautics, Navy Department, reporting in June, 1934, as Commanding Officer of Scout Bombing Squadron TWO, based on the U.S.S. SARATOGA. Relieved of that command in June, 1936, he joined the U.S.S. LEXINGTON as Navigator, and in August, 1937, returned to the Bureau of Aeronautics, for duty as Head of the Maintenance Division.

Again ordered to sea in May, 1940, he served as Executive Officer of the U.S.S. ENTERPRISE until June, 1941. He assumed command in September, 1941, of the U.S.S. LANGLEY. He was in command of the LANGLEY in Manila Bay when the United States entered World War II, December 8, 1941, and continued to command that sea plane tender until January 13, 1942, when he joined the staff of Commander in Chief, Asiatic



ADMIRAL FELIX STUMP.

—Official photograph U.S. Navy

Fleet. In this latter position he was awarded the U.S. Army's Distinguished Service Medal with the following citation:

"For exceptionally meritorious and distinguished service in a position of great responsibility as Commander of the combined operation centre of the Allied-American, British, Dutch and Australian air command and of the Joint-American, British, Dutch and Australian high command. At a critical time in the defence of allied territory in the South-west Pacific against the invading enemy, and against overwhelming odds, Captain Stump made a direct contribution to the success of operations by the combined allied air and ground forces, through high keen foresight, courage, leadership, devotion to duty and wide experience, both naval and military. His tactful liaison contributed greatly to the maintenance of the closest co-operation in and the maximum operation efficiency of combined allied forces. Under his direct supervision the combined operation centre of the allied command was rapidly organised in Java and efficiently operated despite the eminent danger and difficulties resulting from the ruthless and devastating attacks of the numerically superior enemy forces in their impending invasion. Captain Stump's outstanding ability, judgment, aggressiveness and devotion to duty exemplify the highest qualities of an officer and the finest traditions upon which our services have been founded."

He had a month's duty in March, 1942, at Headquarters Commander in Chief, U.S. Fleet, Navy Department, Washington, D.C., before he joined the Staff of Commander Western Sea Frontier, as Air Officer. He remained in the assignment until November, 1942, when he reported to the Bethlehem Steel Company plant, Quincy, Massachusetts, where the U.S.S. LEXINGTON was fitting out. He assumed command of that carrier upon commissioning, February 17, 1943, and under his command she had an illustrious war record.

The LEXINGTON struck her first blows against the Japanese held Gilbert Islands in September, 1943, and following that action, participated in the strike against Wake Island early in October of the same year. In November she formed part of a Task Group operating off the Gilberts with the double objective of neutralising Japanese air power based on Mille and Jalut Atolls in the Marshalls, and to cover the operations of American Fleet and ground units in the Tarawa, Makin, and Apamama Area. She performed both tasks brilliantly. After the American hold on the Gilberts was assured, the LEXINGTON, with other units of the invasion force, was dispatched northward to raid the centres of Japanese air-power on Kwajalein and Maleolap Atolls, in the Marshalls. Struck by a torpedo from an enemy plane on the night of December 4, 1943, she was forced to return to the United States for repairs returning to the war in the Pacific in February.

He is entitled to the ribbon for and a facsimile of the Presidential Unit Citation awarded to LEXINGTON, and personally was awarded the Silver Star Medal. The citation for the latter follows in part:

"For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity . . . in action against enemy Japanese-held Tarawa, Apamama, Wake, Mille and Kwajalein, from September 18, to December 5, 1943 . . . (he) engaged in sustained offensive operations against the enemy during the assault on these strategic Japanese bases in the Central Pacific Area, and when the LEXINGTON was hit and damaged by an enemy torpedo bomber on the night of December 4-5, he boldly fought off persistent aerial attacks for more than two hours before he retired from the combat area . . ."

Relieved of command of the LEXINGTON in April, 1944, he assumed command of Carrier Division TWENTY-FOUR, on May 4, 1944. During that assignment he participated in the Hollandia, Aitape operations in May; in operations June-August, 1944, which resulted in the capture of the Southern Marianas; in the amphibious landings of troops on the shore of Leyte Gulf, Philippine Islands, in October of that year, turning back the enemy in the Battle off Samar Island; commanded six carriers which furnished air cover for two widely separated convoys and a covering group of battleships, cruisers and destroyers in connection with the amphibious occupation of Mindoro, Philippine Islands, in December, 1944, and commanded six small carriers off Lingayen during the period of invasion of Luzon, P.I., in January, 1945.

For his services in the above duties he was awarded the Legion of Merit with Combat Distinguishing Device "V", the Navy Cross, a Gold Star in lieu of a second Navy Cross, and Gold Star in lieu of the second and third Legion of Merit, both with Combat "V".

Two Great Countries Agree

Although we in Australia live many thousands of miles from our American cousins, we, in no small measure share the same interests, activities and general outlook on life as Americans do.

Most important is the fact that both nations strongly agree that a country can only progress when free enterprise is given as much help and encouragement as possible. It is the practise of this belief that has today made America the leading world power.

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They realise that this fine country of ours is still in its infancy and that within the next 100 years will grow and develop into a land above and beyond our wildest dreams.

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7 p.m. Northern Command Band

INTRODUCTION

Mr. C. V. McPherson, M.V.O.
President, Australian-American Association

HYMN—

(Note: Band will play a chord first).

O God, our help in ages past,
Our hope for years to come,
Our shelter from the stormy blast,
And our eternal home.

Before the hills in order stood,
Or earth received her frame,
From everlasting Thou art God,
To endless years the same.

O God, our help in ages past,
Our hope for years to come,
Be Thou our guard while troubles last,
And our eternal home.

PRAYER—

The Rev. James Payne, L.Th.
Rector St. Stephen's Church of England, Coorparoo

BAND SELECTION—

Northern Command Regular Army Band

ADDRESS—

The Hon. V. C. Gair, M.L.A.
Premier of Queensland

BAND SELECTION—

Northern Command Regular Army Band
"Stars and Stripes March"

LESSON—

Rev. George
President Council

ADDRESS—

Admiral Felix
Commander-in-Chief
and U.S.

HYMN—

(Note: Band will play a

Abide with Me, fast for
The Darkness deepens
When other helpers fail
Help of the helpless, O
Swift to its close ebbs
Earth's joys grow dim
Change and decay in
O Thou: That changest
Abide with me.

I need Thy presence;
What but thy grace, O
Who like Thyself, my
Through cloud and sun
Abide with me.

I fear no foe, with Thee
Ills have no weight on
Where is death's sting
I triumph still if Thou

Hold Thou Thy Cross,
Shine through the gloom
Heav'n's morning h
shadows flee:
In life, in death, O Lord

TAPS —

will play selected items until 8 p.m.

George Nash
Council of Churches

ix Stump, U.S.N.
Chief of Pacific Fleet
Pacific Fleet

chord first).

ills the eventide,
s, Lord with me abide,
ail, and comforts flee,
O Abide with me.
out life's little day,
its glories pass away,
all around I see,
est not;

every passing hour:
an foil the Tempter's power?
guide and stay can be?
nshine, Lord

ee at hand to bless,
nd tears no bitterness,
? Where grave thy victory?
abide with me.

before my closing eyes:
m and point me to the skies.
reaks, and earth's vain

ed, abide with me.

LAST POST.

VOTE OF THANKS—

The Hon. C. W. Davidson, O.B.E., M.P.
Minister for Navy

BLESSING—

The Rev. James Payne, L.Th.

THE NATIONAL ANTHEM WILL BE SUNG—

God save our Gracious Queen,
Long live our Noble Queen,
God save our Queen,
Send her victorious, happy and glorious
Long to reign over us,
God save the Queen.



O, can you see by the dawn's early light,
What so proudly we hailed at the twilight's last
gleaming,
Whose bright stars and broad stripes through the
perilous fight,
O'er the ramparts we watched were so gallantly
streaming?
And the rocket's red glare, the bombs bursting in
air,
Gave proof through the night that our flag was
still there.
O say does the Star Spangled Banner yet wave,
O'er the land of the free and the home of the
brave?

3

world speed records

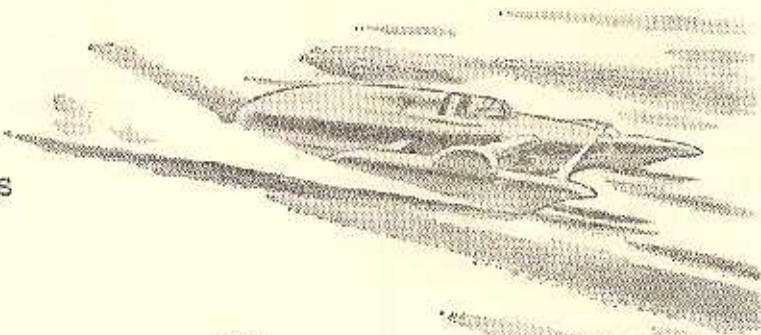
Land

John Cobb's Railton Mobil Special
394.2 m.p.h.



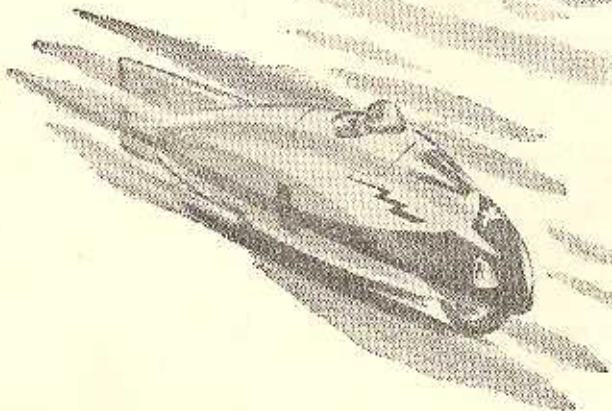
Water

Donald Campbell's
Bluebird
225.63 m.p.h.



Motor Cycle

Johnny Allen's Triumph
650 c.c., 214.4 m.p.h.



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MR. C. J. McPHERSON, M.V.O.

Vice-Presidents :

MR. F. S. PARKES

MR. A. K. LAWTON

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE CORAL SEA BATTLE— A LANDMARK IN AUSTRALIAN HISTORY

Fourteen years ago, Australia's fate was being decided by the battle of the Coral Sea, the turning point of the Pacific War. But for American aid we should have been defeated.

The Australian-American Association is again arranging a comprehensive range of activities to commemorate the Coral Sea Battle of May 4th-8th, 1942, which saved Australia from the threat of invasion, and was the first major step in the defeat of Japan.

The full significance of the joint American-Australian Naval and Air victory in the Coral Sea Battle fifteen years ago was not generally realised until its historical and geographical importance became evident in the march of events towards the downfall of Japan. Even today, its proximity to the Australian coastline, and the possibilities involved had the Japanese plans succeeded, are not appreciated by many.

The Coral Sea Battle was the first serious check to the amazing rapid series of Japanese successes, which had advanced Japanese power well south of the Equator. The margin between victory and defeat was extremely small. Reliable authorities have stated that had the Japanese been successful, our position in New Guinea would have proved untenable and the whole of the North-East Australian coastline would have been open to invasion.

The Coral Sea Battle is now rightly recognised as a landmark in the history of Australia. It marks the nearest approach of hostile forces in strength to the coastline of Australia and our deliverance from threatened invasion.

It is for those reasons that the Australian-American Association arranged for the annual commemoration of Coral Sea Week on a Commonwealth-wide basis. It is an occasion upon which to call to mind the joint comradeship in arms achieved during the war, and the contribution made by America to the defence of our homeland.

The Japanese plan and the following extracts are taken from the fully documented U.S. Naval History of World War II, by Samuel E. Morison.

BASIC JAPANESE WAR PLAN

Following Japanese successes in 1941, three new conquests were planned.

1. Tulagi and Port Moresby, in order to secure air mastery of the Coral Sea.
2. Midway Atoll and the Western Aleutians, in order to bring the United States Pacific Fleet to a decisive engagement.
3. New Caledonia, Fiji, and Samoa, in order to cut lines of communication between the United States and Australasia.

All three moves were in the Japanese Basic War Plan, as stated in Japanese Combined Fleet Operation Order No. 1, promulgated 1st November,

1941. "The areas which are to be rapidly occupied or destroyed, as soon as the war situation permits" were (1) Areas of Eastern New Guinea, New Britain, Fiji, and Samoa; (2) Aleutian and Midway areas; (3) Areas of the Andaman Islands; (4) Important points in the Australian Area. The whole of the "Op. Order" is from the Nachi Documents (recovered from cruiser Nachi in 1945), translated by Captain E. T. Layton from the original.

Japan's overall plan for the Coral Sea Operation was: "With the co-operation of the South Seas Army Detachment and the Navy, we will occupy Port Moresby and important positions on Tulagi. We will establish air bases and strengthen our air operations in the Australian area."

The Japanese Task Force for the Coral Sea invasion comprised:—

1. The Port Moresby Invasion Group of eleven transports carrying both Army troops and a Naval Landing Force, screened by a destroyer squadron.
2. A smaller Tulagi Invasion Group.
3. A Support Group of one seaplane carrier and five other ships.
4. A Covering Group, consisting of light carrier "Shoho," four heavy cruisers and one destroyer.
5. The Striking Force of two big carriers, "Shokaku" and "Zuikaku," two heavy cruisers, and six destroyers—a total of 62 ships.

The Allied Task Force, which included "Australia" and "Hobart" consisted of two heavy carriers, "Lexington" and "Yorktown," 3 cruisers, 13 destroyers, and three other ships, a total of 26. It was under the command of Admiral Frank Fletcher.

Tulagi was to be occupied first, on 3rd May; then the Support and Covering Groups and Striking Forces would leave Rabaul on the 4th and land a sizeable army at Port Moresby on the 7th. (A timetable that was never carried out!)

The Japanese expected the United States Navy and the Army Air Force to try to stop them. But once the Allied Task Force entered the Coral Sea, Admiral Inouye expected to destroy it by a pincer movement, while the Invasion Group nipped through Jomard Pass into Port Moresby. Then the carriers would proceed to smash up Allied planes and ships at the four Queensland bases, as they had done so successfully at Darwin.

Nimitz and MacArthur properly regarded this Japanese thrust as a major threat. Port Moresby was not simply a place to be denied to the enemy; it was essential for General MacArthur's strategic plans. He intended to develop this outpost as a



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major air base to block enemy penetration of Australia and as a starting point for his return journey to the Philippines.

INTO THE CORAL SEA.

At about 0500, May 3rd, the Tulagi Invasion Group made an unopposed landing on the beaches which United States Marines were to win back three months later. The Port Moresby Invasion Group was still anchored at Rabaul, scheduled to leave at 1800 next day.

On May 4th planes from "Yorktown" made three separate attacks on shipping in Tulagi harbour, damaging one destroyer and sinking a few smaller ships.

By May 5th the Port Moresby Invasion and Support Groups were steaming merrily along on a southerly course aiming at the Jomard Passage through the Louisiade Archipelago. The Japanese Striking Force was beating down along the outer coast of the Solomons. By dawn on May 6th the enemy carriers were well into the Coral Sea. By the afternoon of the 6th, intelligence confirmed that the Port Moresby Invasion Group would turn the corner of New Guinea through Jomard Passage and that they would come through the next day or the 8th, if not stopped. At 1930, May 6th, Admiral Fletcher resumed course to the north-westward to be within striking distance of the Port Moresby Invasion Group by daylight on May 7th.

The main action of the Battle of the Coral Sea should have been fought on May 6th, and would have been if either Admiral had been aware of the other's presence.

By midnight on May 6th the Port Moresby-bound transports were closing Misima Island, almost ready to slip through Jomard Pass. The Covering Group was protecting the left flank of the Port Moresby invaders, "Shoho" furnishing the combat air patrol until sundown.

This was the day, the 6th May, that marked the low point of the war for American arms; General Wainwright was forced to surrender his forces in the Philippines. But on the very next day there opened a new and brighter chapter in the Pacific war. The time had come for the Allies to take their first step forward. The transition from Corregidor to Coral Sea is startling, dramatic, and of vast importance.

CORAL SEA: ACTIONS OF 7th MAY—LOSS OF U.S. SHIPS "NEOSHO" AND "SIMS"

The Japanese Striking Force reversed course to the northward on the evening of 6th May and maintained it until two hours after midnight, when it turned again and headed south.

"Sims" was patrolling about a mile ahead of "Neosho" shortly after 0900, when 15 high level bombers dropped, missed and disappeared. At 1038 another group of ten made a horizontal bombing attack on "Sims" which avoided nine bombs dropped simultaneously. After noon her number came up when 36 dive bombers arrived. The planes came in from astern in three waves. Three 500-pound bombs hit the destroyer, two exploded in her engine room, and within a few minutes she buckled amidships and sank stern first.

In the meantime, 20 dive bombers concentrated on "Neosho." Within a few minutes they scored

seven direct hits and eight near-misses, one by a suicider who exploded against No. 4 gun station; gasoline burst from the plane's tanks and flowed blazing along the deck. Captain Phillips ordered all hands to "make preparation to abandon ship and stand by." She drifted for four days and was finally scuttled on May 11th.

"Sims" and "Neosho" did not die in vain. If they had not drawn off the strike, Japanese planes might have found and attacked Fletcher on the 7th when the American planes were working over "Shoho".

CRACE'S CHASE

Admiral Fletcher, at 0625, May 7th, ordered Admiral Crace's Support Group to attack the Port Moresby Invaders, which reconnaissance planes reported heading for Jomard Passage.

At 1358, Crace's group, consisting of "Australia," "Chicago" and "Hobart," was attacked by eleven single-engined land-based planes. All ships opened fire and drove them off. Immediately after, radar picked up twelve "Sallys" (land-based Navy bombers) 75 miles away. Crace ordered radical manoeuvres and every ship opened fire as the planes came in low. Eight aerial torpedoes were dropped, but all missed and five of the bombers were shot down. Immediately after the surviving torpedo planes had retired, 19 high-flying "Sallys" dropped their steel eggs from an altitude of 15,000 to 20,000 feet. The ships dodged the bombs as they had the torpedoes, and the planes flew away.

By midnight Admiral Crace had reached a position about 120 miles south of the New Guinea bird's tail. He continued on course part of the night and then, having heard that the Port Moresby Invaders had turned back, headed south.

As the Japanese attack was of the same type and strength as the one that sank H.M.S. "Prince of Wales" and "Repulse" on December 8th, 1941, the escape of Crace's Support Group without a single hit is a tribute to its training, and to the high tactical competence of its commander. The Japanese thought they had bettered the score of 8th December. They claimed having sunk "Chicago" and "Australia," and having torpedoed another battleship.

SINKING OF "SHOHO"

While the planes of the Japanese Striking Force were slaughtering "Neosho" and "Sims," the Port Moresby invaders still were moving toward Jomard Pass. However, Japanese planes had now discovered the United States carriers. The Port Moresby Invasion Group was consequently ordered to turn away instead of entering Jomard Pass. Thus 0900 on May 7th marked the nearest that this or any other Japanese naval force got to Port Moresby.

"Shoho" having been located was immediately attacked. Ten SEDs attacked at 1110, "Lexington's" torpedo squadron followed seven minutes later, and "Yorktown's" air group piled in at 1125. Ninety-three planes against one light carrier. No ship could have survived such a concentration. After receiving two 1,000-pound bomb hits, she burst into flames and went dead in the water. More hits followed, and "by 1130 the entire vessel was damaged by bombs, torpedoes and self-exploded enemy planes," records the "Shoho" war diary. Abandon Ship was ordered at 1131 and the carrier sank within five minutes.

CARRIER BATTLE OF 8th MAY 'Yorktown' and 'Lexington' v. 'Shokaku' and 'Zuikaku'

The decisive action was fought out in a Carrier battle on the morning of 8th May. The number of planes operational on both sides was almost the same—121 Japanese and 122 American.

At 0838 Admiral Fletcher ordered both U.S. Carriers to launch air strikes. The "Yorktown" group of 39 planes took off at 0915 and an hour and a quarter later the attack on "Shokaku" commenced. Only two bomb hits were scored, one well forward, which damaged the flight deck, and the other well aft, which destroyed the repair compartment. "Lexington" dive-bombers added one more hit.

"Shokaku" lost 108 men killed and 40 wounded; but was not holed below the waterline, and at 1300 she high-tailed it for home. She almost capsized on the way and arrived in bad shape; but she got there. Admiral Takagi had no qualms about releasing "Shokaku," for by this time he believed that both United States carriers were well settled on the bottom of the Coral Sea.

By the time the American planes began returning to the carriers, both "Yorktown" and "Lexington" had been hit. Ninety planes from "Shokaku" and "Zuikaku" were heading up the American carriers a few minutes after "Yorktown's" attack on the Japanese carriers ended and before "Lexington's" had commenced. In this strange crisscross air battle, superior success attended the Japanese, whose strike group was larger and better balanced and more accurately directed to its target than that of the Americans.

At 1118 the Japanese approached from the north-eastward, down wind and down sun. Torpedo bombers came in on both bows of the "Lexington" to launch their "fish" from an altitude of 50 to 200 feet. One hit on her port side forward was quickly followed by a second on the same side opposite the bridge. One small bomb exploded in an ammunition box on the port side of her main deck, another scored on the smokestack structure. Near-misses ruptured plates and raised huge plumes of water. It was all over in nineteen minutes.

Six minutes later "Yorktown" was attacked. For the next three minutes she dodged steel eggs, then received her one and only hit. An 800-pound bomb struck the flight deck and penetrated to the fourth deck. Sixty-six men were killed or seriously injured, mostly by burns. Owing to skilful handling "Yorktown" escaped with damage that did not impair flight operations.

The big carrier battle was over by 1140 May 8th. But at 1247 a devastating internal explosion shook "Lexington" from stem to stern. More eruptions followed, each more violent than the last. At 1707 abandonment was ordered and destroyer "Phelps" administered the coup de grace with torpedoes. At about 2000 the battered Amazon, with one final detonation, slipped into a 2,400 fathom deep.

INVASION THWARTED

But the enemy had retired; his main objective, the invasion of Port Moresby, has been thwarted. Before the end of May 8th, Inouye formally postponed the Port Moresby invasion until 3rd

July! (But Midway settled that). One may well ask what prevented the Invasion Group from reversing course again and steaming through Jomard Passage to its original destination instead of returning to Rabaul. The Army Air Force may take a bow for that. Inouye did not dare risk his transports in a second try, because of the intense activity of the Allied Air Force along the southern shores of Papua, and the want of air protection now that "Shoho" was sunk and the Striking Force had retired.

The Battle of the Coral Sea will be ever memorable as the first purely carrier-against-carrier naval battle in which all losses were inflicted by air action and no ship on either side sighted a surface enemy. It was a tactical victory for the Japanese, but a strategic victory for the United States. The enemy inflicted relatively greater losses than he sustained; "Shoho" and the few small ships sunk at Tulagi were a cheap price to pay for "Neosho," "Sims" and "Lexington".

On the other hand, the main purpose of the Japanese operation, the capture of Port Moresby, was thwarted. The Louisiades proved to be a barrier beyond which no warship flying the banner of the Rising Sun could ever pass. Tulagi, one of the two secondary objectives of the enemy had been won and it cost us dear to root him out of it. But in the other scale one must place the temporary elimination of "Shokaku" and "Zuikaku." The former was so damaged that she could not rejoin the fleet for two months, and the latter, owing to plane losses, was out of the war until about the 12th June. If these two fine carriers, with veteran pilots, had been able to participate in the Battle of Midway, they might well have supplied the necessary margin for victory.

Call Coral Sea what you will, it was an indispensable preliminary to the great victory of Midway. The morale value of the battle to all Allied nations, coming as it did immediately after the surrender of Corregidor, was immeasurable. It was a story of cool efficiency, relentless action, determination and superb heroism.

Less than a month later, on June 4th, Japan lost four of her best carriers at the Battle of Midway—which was the turning point of the Pacific War. Coral Sea was the end of the beginning—Midway was the beginning of the end.

Important points to note:—

1. The determined attempt to capture Port Moresby and the size of the Invasion Force.
2. The decision to "try again" on July 3rd.
3. The intention to bomb Townsville and other bases on the Queensland Coast.
4. The relative strength of the forces engaged.
5. The Japanese failure to implement their "plan."
6. The effect of the Midway victory on June 4.

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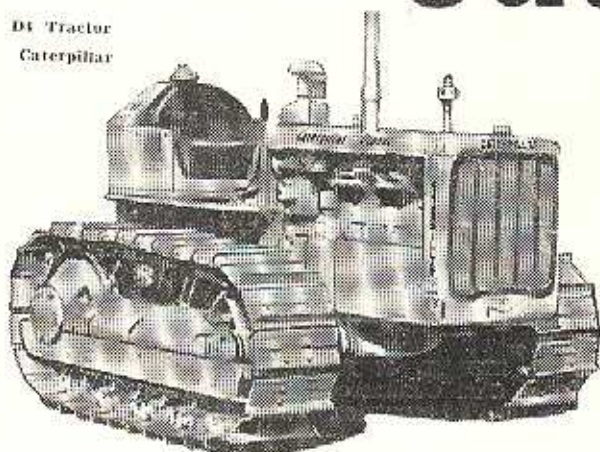
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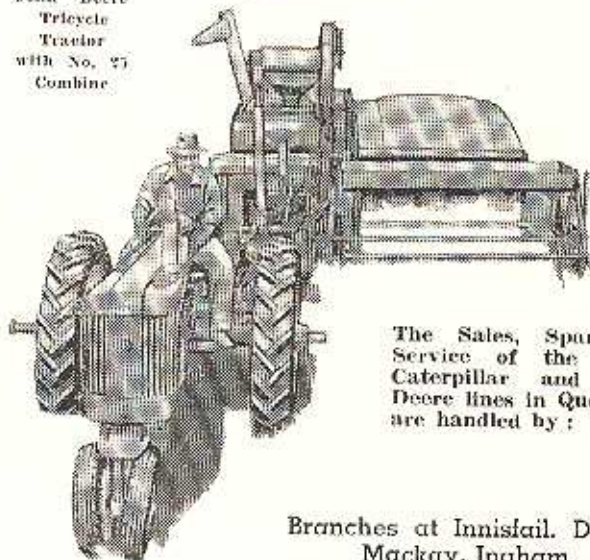
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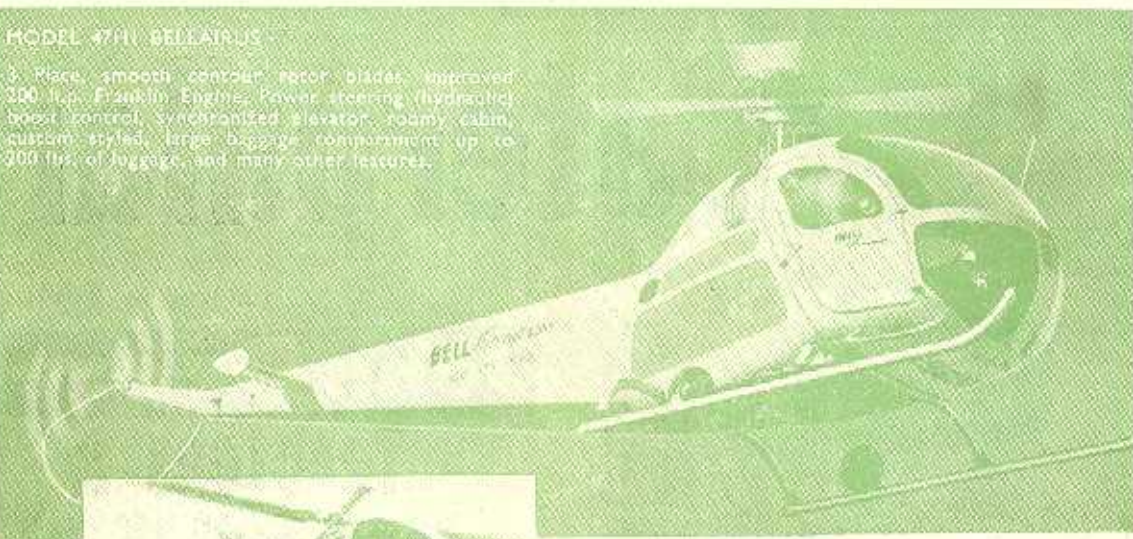
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