MEDIA RELEASE

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BATTLE OF THE CORAL SEA REMEMBERED

Today the largest naval battle that has been fought off our shores, the Battle of the Coral Sea, is remembered.

The Battle of the Coral Sea ended Japanese attempts to launch a seaborne invasion of Port Moresby and has long been regarded as 'the battle that saved Australia'.

During the Second World War, the Japanese planned to cut Australia's supply lines from the United States, despatching a fleet to capture Port Moresby as part of its advance into the South West Pacific.

Allied forces had cracked the main Japanese communication codes, and intercepted and deciphered radio messages regarding the attack.

An American carrier force, supported by an Australian cruiser and destroyer, moved into position to stop the Japanese. In the waters southwest of the Solomon Islands and east of New Guinea between 4 and 8 May 1942, the Battle of the Coral Sea took place.

The Australian ships along with United States vessels were sent away from the main battle area to intercept the Japanese invasion force and did not take part in the major fighting between United States and Japanese air and naval forces.

The battle was fought entirely by aircraft attacking ships, with the opposing ships never firing at each other during the battle. No Australians were killed during the battle, but tragically more than 550 Americans were killed or wounded and the United States aircraft carrier USS *Lexington* was sunk.

The Australian and United States personnel who served in this crucial battle not only ensured that Port Moresby would not be subject to an amphibious invasion, but for the first time during the war they had halted the Japanese during their southward advance in the Pacific.

This year on 3 September, Australia will commemorate 80 years since it entered the Second World War.

Further information on the Battle of the Coral Sea, and Australia's military history can be found on the [Anzac Portal](#), or on the [Australian War Memorial website](#).

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