



PRIME MINISTER  
CANBERRA

## COMMEMORATIVE SERVICES FOR THE 68TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BATTLE OF THE CORAL SEA

Sixty-eight years ago, Australia and the United States joined forces to halt the Japanese advance in the Pacific. Today, we remember the Australian and American military personnel who so valiantly fought in the Battle of the Coral Sea.

Had the Japanese been able to seize control of Port Moresby and to establish a base in the Solomon Islands, the Imperial Japanese Navy would have been able to interdict supply lines between Australia and the United States and further extend Japanese control into the Southwest Pacific.

The Battle of the Coral Sea was a critical turning point in the Second World War. It was the first battle in which Japan was denied its strategic objective. It was also a critical forerunner to the Battle of Midway, during which the Allies significantly weakened Japanese naval power and seized the offensive against Japanese forces.

The bond forged between Australia and the United States during these dark days of war continues. As allies, we remain united by common democratic principles and shared strategic interests.

I take this opportunity, on behalf of all Australians, to express my deep gratitude to Australian and American servicemen and women, both past and present, for their dedication and courage.

The Honourable Kevin Rudd MP  
Prime Minister of Australia