

MEDIA ADVISORY

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75TH ANNIVERSARY OF WWII NAVAL BATTLE OF THE CORAL SEA TO BE COMMEMORATED AT WORLD WAR II MEMORIAL

*A wreath will be laid at the Pacific Arch of the Memorial in honor of
all those who took part in this strategic victory.*

Washington, DC – On Thursday, May 4, 2017 at 11:30 am, the Friends of the National World War II Memorial will be joined by World War II veterans and other dignitaries to mark the 75th anniversary of the Battle of the Coral Sea at the National World War II Memorial.

The May 4-8, 1942 Battle of the Coral Sea, between the Imperial Japanese Navy and the naval and air forces from the United States and Australia, was the world's first all-carrier battle and the first sea battle in which neither side could see the other.

In an attempt to strengthen their defensive positioning for their empire in the South Pacific, Japanese forces decided to invade and occupy Port Moresby in New Guinea and Tulagi in the southeastern Solomon Islands. The U.S. learned of the Japanese plan through signals intelligence and sent two United States Navy carrier task forces and a joint Australian-American cruiser force, under the overall command of American Admiral Frank J. Fletcher, to oppose the Japanese offensive.

Japanese forces successfully invaded and occupied Tulagi and advanced towards the Coral Sea with the intention of finding and destroying the Allied naval forces. The carrier forces from the two sides exchanged in airstrikes over two consecutive days. With both sides having suffered heavy losses in aircraft and carriers damaged or sunk, the two fleets disengaged and retired from the battle area.

Although a tactical victory for the Japanese in terms of ships sunk, the battle would prove to be a strategic victory for the Allies. The Japanese invasion fleet turned back, saving the region that a Japanese air base at Port Moresby would have dominated. More importantly, Japan's two newest carriers, *Shokaku* and *Zuikaku*, were damaged so much that they could not participate in the Battle of Midway the next month.

To mark this significant event in world history, Friends will be joined by WWII veterans to present wreaths at the World War II Memorial's Pacific Arch in recognition of all those who took part in the Battle of the Coral Sea 75 years ago and in remembrance of the more than 600 Allies killed.

Who: World War II Veteran
U.S. Navy Ceremonial Band Bugler

Where: National World War II Memorial
17th Street between Constitution and Independence Avenues
Washington, DC

When: Thursday, May 4, 2017 at 11:30 AM

About Friends of the National World War II Memorial (www.wwiimemorialfriends.org):

Founded in 2007, the Friends of the National World War II Memorial (Friends) is a 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to honoring and preserving the national memory of World War II. To meet this mission, Friends sponsors an annual public lecture series featuring prominent historians; hosts an annual teachers conference in Washington, DC; and collects and archives video interviews of World War II veterans and other members of the Greatest Generation. Additionally, Friends has the lead responsibility in planning and staging five or more major national commemorative events annually and each summer sponsors a dozen free public performances of military bands at the Memorial. Friends relies on private support to breathe new life into the Memorial and to ensure that it continues to serve as a living lesson for all Americans.

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