

From the Daily Telegraph, Sidney, Wednesday, May 1, 1957:

"They're Here for a Big Occasion: The presence in the harbour of the U.S. aircraft carrier Bennington and her escorting destroyers has an important significance for all Australians.

It is a reminder of the great sea battle—the Battle of the Coral Sea—fought 15 years ago to keep the Japanese from our shores. It is a reminder, too, that it can happen here—that war can come to this continent.

And, finally, the sight of these American ships at Woolloomooloo wheels into perspective our true relationship with America.

America's political policies often bewilder us... but when the chips were down in 1942, when the naval might of Japan was moving against us, it was America who saved the day.

We can boast all we like about what the AIF and the RAAF did in New Guinea—and with ample justification—but we should not kid ourselves.

All would have been lost—the Japanese would have got through to New Guinea—had it not been for the valor and ability of the United States Navy in the Coral Sea.

That battle....determined Australia's fate.

We therefore welcome the men of the Bennington and the destroyers as close friends and allies.

They are here to help us celebrate an occasion that ranks in importance with Anzac itself.

It's good to have them.



At a solemn service held aboard CVA-20 as she passes through the Coral Sea, two veterans of that battle cast a wreath on the waters of the final resting place of the men who could not return.