

Suggested Commemorative Ceremony

For School Students

Introduction

This ceremony has been designed to provide a form of commemoration of the Battle for Australia, that is suitable for school students. The intention is to educate school students through active participation in the ceremony.

Focal Point

The ceremony needs to have a focal point such as a flagpole, a dedication plaque or even a large stone. Assuming that the ceremony is to be held out of doors, the focal point for the ceremony needs to be located near a reasonably flat area of land large enough to accommodate the assembled students and others. Most schools would choose to use the normal assembly area/parade ground but some may use a special area; perhaps a garden that has been dedicated to Australia's Veterans. Whatever the choice of ground, the focal point should be readily accessible from the assembly area

Audio Equipment

The availability of audio equipment at some schools may be severely limited. However, if the school has a portable CD player the playing of the National Anthem, the 'Last Post' and the 'Rouse' can enhance the ceremony considerably. These musical pieces are available on a CD, titled 'Lest We Forget' that can be acquired through the Australian War Memorial souvenir shop for a 2003 price of \$17.90. The CD also includes a recitation of the 'Ode of Remembrance' that is commonly incorporated in such ceremonies. Contact details for the souvenir shop are Telephone: 02 6243 427402 6243 4274, Fax 02 6243 4396 or

Australian Symbols

The Australian Flag and the Australian Coat-of-Arms should be incorporated into the ceremony if possible.

Sprigs of leaves and flowers to be laid by students during the ceremony can be obtained from typical Australian flora such as Gum Trees and Golden Wattle. Flowers from Golden Wattle are readily available throughout most of Australia on the first Wednesday in September, the day on which Battle for Australia is commemorated.

Preliminary Arrangement

If an Australian Flag and a flagpole are available, the Flag should be set at half-mast before the ceremony starts.

Floral Tributes should be positioned close at hand. To ensure that the ceremony proceeds smoothly arrangements should be made to hand them to the students as they come forward to lay the flowers at the designated point.

Form of Ceremony

1. Students assemble
2. Welcoming Address by the Master of Ceremonies (MC)
3. A Speaker informs the assembly of the significance of the occasion. The Speaker or Speakers can be students who read a short history of the Battle for Australia. Such a short history is shown below.
4. Students sing 'We are Australian'. The words of the song are shown below.
5. Floral Tributes are laid by students whilst other students recount the main events of the Battle for Australia. The main events are listed below.
6. Play the 'Last Post'
7. The 'Ode of Remembrance' is recited by a student
8. One Minute Silence
9. Play the 'Rouse'. The flag is raised to the masthead whilst the 'Rouse' is played
10. The National Anthem is sung, accompanied by played music.
11. The MC thanks the assembly for their attendance
12. Students Disperse

A Short History of the Battle For Australia

Australian forces were involved in World War 2 from the declaration of war on 3 September 1939. The early years saw the Navy in action on all oceans, the Army fighting in the Middle East, in Greece, Crete and Syria, and the Air Force supporting those Army operations and also operating from bases in Britain. On 7-8 December 1941 the Japanese entered the war by attacking American, British Commonwealth and Dutch Forces in South East Asia and in the Pacific.

The Battle for Australia had begun.

The Japanese overwhelmed the Allied forces, capturing Rabaul, which was then Australian territory, on 23 January and Singapore on 15 February 1942. During the Japanese invasion of the island chain from Singapore across the north of Australia, the cruiser HMAS Perth was sunk (1 March) in the Battle of Sunda Strait, HMAS Yarra was sunk (4 March) defending a convoy south of Java and HMAS Vampire was sunk (9 April) in the Bay of Bengal.

Using Rabaul as their main base in May 1942 the Japanese sought to threaten and isolate Australia and attempted a direct sea-borne landing at Port Moresby in Papua New Guinea. They were turned back by a combined Australian and American naval force in the Battle of the Coral Sea. This battle was the first naval engagement in history where the opposing fleets, using carrier borne aircraft, were never in direct sight of each other.

The Japanese next attempted to occupy Port Moresby by landing troops on the northern coast of Papua New Guinea and by advancing over the Owen Stanley Range along the Kokoda Trail. After eight weeks of fighting (July-August 1942), with heavy casualties on both sides, the Japanese attempt was stopped by the Australians a mere 25 kilometers from Port Moresby. It took a further 18 weeks (to January 1943) for the Australians to drive the Japanese back over the Owen Stanley Range and, in conjunction with American forces, to defeat the enemy in a series of battles at Gona, Buna and Sanananda on the north coast of Papua. Throughout the battle over the Owen Stanley Range, the support of Papua New Guinea porters and stretcher-bearers, affectionately known as 'Fuzzy Wuzzy Angels', was invaluable.

To assist their forces attempting to capture Port Moresby, the Japanese made a sea-borne landing at Milne Bay on the eastern tip of Papua New Guinea in August 1942. In a fortnight's hard fighting, the defending Australian troops, supported by RAAF fighters, inflicted the war's first land defeat on the Japanese. During this and other campaigns, the Australians were supplied by ships of the Merchant Marine of several nations, the Dutch providing the largest number.

This period also saw Australia's northern towns of Broome, Darwin and Wyndham enduring enemy air attacks. Darwin was the main target, suffering repeated bombing attacks from 19 February 1942 to 12 November 1943. The city was defended by Australian, American and British fighter aircraft as well as by Australian anti-aircraft gunners and a flotilla of corvettes, one of which, HMAS Armidale, was sunk by Japanese aircraft in the Timor Sea on 1 December 1942. Australian, American and Dutch aircraft, flying from Australian bases, mounted counter strikes against the Japanese. Other attacks by Japanese aircraft and submarines were made on Sydney and Newcastle. Many merchant ships were torpedoed along the east coast of Australia.

In the meantime, in the Solomon Islands to the east of Papua New Guinea, Australian and American ships and aircraft were engaged in action. Many ships, including the Australian heavy cruiser HMAS Canberra (9 August 1942), were sunk in the fierce sea battles off Savo Island and Guadalcanal. American, New Zealand and Fijian forces cleared the enemy from Guadalcanal and surrounding islands.

In January 1943 the Japanese, having failed to capture Port Moresby, determined to render it useless as a base for Allied operations by intensive bombing. To make their bombing more effective they set out to capture the airfield at Wau which was much closer to Port Moresby than the base at Lae which they had been using. This was forestalled by flying in an Australian force in Dakota transport aircraft. In March 1943, a Japanese convoy of ships carrying reinforcements and supplies to their forces on the north coast of Papua New Guinea was almost totally destroyed by Australian and American aircraft in the Battle of the Bismarck Sea. The Japanese no longer held the initiative.

Hard fighting followed for another two and a half years, in New Guinea, the Northern Solomons, the Pacific islands and the East Indies (now Indonesia). Coordinated with Allied strikes closer to Japan, this culminated in the Japanese surrender on 15 August 1945.

The Battle for Australia had been won.

Main Events Of The Battle For Australia

To be recited whilst students lay floral tributes

7/8 December 1941

The Japanese attack American, Dutch and British Commonwealth forces including Australian forces in the Pacific and South East Asia.

The Battle for Australia had begun.

10 December 1941

Japanese aircraft sink the British Battleship HMS Prince of Wales and the Battlecruiser HMS Repulse off the eastern coast of Malaya.

23 January 1942

Japanese forces capture the port of Rabaul in New Britain, now part of Papua New Guinea

15 February 1942

Malaya and Singapore fall to the Japanese. 130 000 Allied prisoners, including some 15 000 Australians became Prisoners of War

19 February 1942

Japanese aircraft bomb Darwin causing over 250 deaths

27 February 1942

A combined Dutch, American, British and Australian fleet fought the Battle of the Java Sea against a large Japanese force. Faced with superior numbers the Allied fleet suffered severe losses,

28 February 1942

The Australian Cruiser HMAS Perth and the American Cruiser USS Houston fought a large Japanese fleet in the Battle of the Sunda Strait, destroying four Japanese ships before being sunk themselves.

6-8 May 1942

A combined Australian and American fleet defeat a Japanese fleet at the Battle of the Coral Sea and repelled a Japanese troop convoy carrying an invasion force bound for Port Moresby.

Night of 31 May 1942

Japanese midget submarines attack Sydney Harbour, sinking HMAS Kuttabul.

22 July - 16 November 1942

Although repulsed at the Battle of the Coral Sea the Japanese are still determined to capture Port Moresby. Japanese forces land on the north coast of New Guinea and advance over the Kokoda Trail towards Port Moresby. Australian forces contest the Japanese advance; the Japanese are finally halted 25 km from Port Moresby. The Australians then pushed the Japanese back to their strongholds on the New Guinea north coast

Night of 8 August 1942

The Australian heavy cruiser HMAS Canberra along with three American cruisers sunk in the Battle of Savo Island, off the coast of Guadalcanal

25 August - 5 September 1942

To support their advance along the Kokoda Trail to capture Port Moresby, the Japanese attempt to capture the airfields at Milne Bay. They are defeated in the attempt by Australian and American army forces, closely supported by RAAF aircraft.

16 November 1942 - 22 January 1943

Australian and American forces capture the Japanese strongholds of Buna, Gona and Sanananda on the north coast of New Guinea

29 January - 9 February 1943

The Japanese attempt to capture Wau but are stopped by Australian forces.

2 - 4 March 1943

RAAF and American aircraft destroy 12 ships in a Japanese convoy of 16 ships in the Battle of the Bismarck Sea

April - September 1943

The Wau-Salamaua campaign in New Guinea is fought, with the Australians defeating the Japanese

14 May 1943

A Japanese submarine sinks the Australian Hospital Ship Centaur off the south Queensland coast.

4 - 16 September 1943

Australian forces capture Lae

26 September 1943

A combined Navy and army special operations team mount a successful raid on the Japanese held port of Singapore

September - November 1943

Australians defeat Japanese forces on the Huon Peninsula, New Guinea

October 1943 - January 1944

Australian forces continue to defeat Japanese forces in the Markham and Ramu valleys

24 April 1944

Australians capture Madang, New Guinea

April 1944 - January 1945

Ships of the Royal Australian Navy supported American landings along the north coast of New Guinea, at Morotai, and were involved in naval actions in the American invasion of the Phillipines. During the Phillipine invasion, the Australian heavy cruiser HMAS Australia was heavily damaged by a Japanese kamikaze aircraft.

November 1944 - August 1945

Australian forces advanced on the island of New Britain and 'bottled up' Japanese forces at Rabaul

December 1944 - August 1945

Australians conducted operations against Japanese on Bougainville Island and advanced along the north coast and inland, of New Guinea from Aitape to Wewak

May - August 1945

Australian campaign against the Japanese in Borneo

6 and 9 August 1945

Atomic bombs dropped on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

15 August

Japanese surrender unconditionally

I am Australian

I came from the dreamtime
From the dusty red soil plains
I am the ancient heart, the keeper of the flame
I stood upon the rocky shore
I watched the tall ships come
For forty thousand years I'd been
The first Australian

I came upon the prison ship
Bowed down by iron chains
I cleared the land, endured the lash
And waited for the rains
I'm a settler, I'm a farmer's wife
On a dry and barren run
A convict, then a freeman
I became Australian

I'm the daughter of a digger
Who sought the mother lode
The girl became a woman
On the long and dusty road
I'm a child of the depression
I saw the good times come
I'm a bushie, I'm a battler
I am Australian

I'm a teller of stories
I'm a singer of songs
I am Albert Namatjira
I paint the ghostly gums
I am Clancy on his horse
I'm Ned Kelly on the run
I'm the one who waltzed Matilda
I am Australian

I'm the hot wind from the desert
I'm the black soil of the plains
I'm the mountains and the valleys
I'm the drought and flooding rains
I am the rock, I am the sky
The rivers when they run
The spirit of this great land
I am Australian

Chorus

We are one but we are many
From all the lands on earth we come
We share a dream and sing with one voice
I am, You are, We are Australian

Suggested Commemorative Ceremony

For Adult Groups

Introduction

This form of the Battle for Australia ceremony has been designed to cater for adult groups. However, it should be kept in mind that the primary aim of holding Battle for Australia ceremonies is to educate the youth of Australia in the events that occurred in the Pacific War. Accordingly, every opportunity should be taken to involve young people in the ceremony wherever possible.

Ceremonial Support

An assumption is made that some ceremonial support such as a band, a Guard of Honour and a catafalque party are available for this ceremony. If they are not, the reference to them in the form of ceremony can be ignored.

Audio Equipment

If a band is not available, recourse can be made to using a CD player and obtaining the CD 'Lest We Forget' from the Australian War Memorial souvenir shop for a 2003 price of \$17.90. This CD contains the National Anthem, the Last Post, the Rouse and a recitation of the Ode of Remembrance. Contact details for the souvenir shop are Telephone: 02 6243 427402 6243 4274, Fax: 02 6243 4396 or Email: memorial.shop@awm.gov.au.

Preliminary Arrangements

If an Australian Flag and a flagpole are available, the Flag should be set at half-mast before the ceremony starts

Form of Ceremony

1. Participants in the Ceremony and the public seated by the designated time
2. The Master of Ceremonies (MC) welcomes all to the occasion and introduces the Host Officer
3. Guard of Honour and Band march onto the parade ground
4. Guest of Honour is greeted by the Host Officer and is escorted to the saluting dais where the Guest of Honour is accorded a salute appropriate to his rank
5. Guest of Honour may be invited to inspect the Guard of Honour
6. Guest of Honour is seated
7. Catafalque Party is posted
8. Welcoming remarks by the Host Officer
9. Address by the Guest of Honour or other nominated dignitary

10. Prayers by a Chaplain
11. Wreaths/floral tributes are laid in accordance with the specified precedence
12. The MC asks all to stand if they able to do so
13. Last Post is played
14. The Ode is recited
15. A one minute silence is observed
16. Rouse is played. (The Flag is raised to the masthead during the Rouse)
17. The National Anthem is played
18. The MC invites all to sit
19. Catafalque Party dismounts
20. Guest of Honour is escorted to the saluting dais by the Host Officer where the Guest of Honour is accorded a salute appropriate to his rank
21. Guest of Honour is escorted to his car by the Host Officer
22. Guest of Honour departs
23. Guard of Honour and Band march from the parade ground
24. Master of Ceremonies thanks all for attending
25. Ceremony concludes

NOTE: Young people can be readily involved in reciting the Ode of Remembrance and in the laying of floral tributes as well as in raising the Flag during the playing of the Rouse. Should more than one guest be accorded a salute, a young person can escort the guest to his seat after the guest receives his salute.

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