

# JET PLANE

VOL. V, NO. 14

U.S.S. BENNINGTON CVA-20

APRIL 26, 1957

## Battle Of The Coral Sea

*It follows then as certain as that night succeeds the day, that without a decisive Naval force we can do nothing definitive. And with it, everything honourable and glorious. A constant Naval superiority would terminate the war speedily; without it, I do not know that it will ever be terminated honourably.*

*George Washington to Lafayette*

*15 November 1781*

BENNINGTON's visit to Sydney coincides with the Australian celebration of the 15th anniversary of a sea-air battle that stands as one of the turning points of World War II.

The battle of the Coral Sea took place in May 1942 while the Japanese forces were still forging ahead, certain that their flag would soon fly over the entire Pacific. As early as January 1942 they had occupied Palau and Bougainville, both under Australian mandate, and had started their march down the stepping stones of the Solomons. Early successes give them a victory disease which speeded up their strategy for three new ambitious and successive conquests.

First, in order to secure mastery of the Coral Sea and its shores, they would take Tulagi and Port Moresby in New Guinea. Second, to strengthen the defensive perimeter and bring the U.S. Pacific Fleet to a decisive engagement, they would take Midway atoll and the western Aleutians. Third, to cut the lines of communication between the U.S. and Australia and thereby keep Australia out of the war, it was necessary to control New Caledonia, Fiji, and Samoa.

The battle of the Coral Sea came about because the Allies resisted point number one; the battle of Midway was the principle product of objective number two; and after these battles,

point three could not and did not happen.

Admiral Yamamoto was bent on seeking action for the combined fleet for he reasoned that if he could annihilate our Pacific Fleet and set up air patrols between Wake, Midway and the Aleutians, the Imperial Japanese navy could cruise at will throughout the Pacific and land troops anywhere. And what bet-

ter time to dispose of the Pacific Fleet following so shortly the devastation of Pearl Harbor?

But Admiral Yamamoto reckoned without consideration for the plans of Admiral Nimitz for the Pacific Fleet, and he did not consider that the U.S. Navy might depart from the submissive role he had planned for us.

(cont. on page 3)



Neptunus Rex, Ruler of the Raging Main, surveys the doom of BENNINGTON pollywogs as the ship crosses the equator enroute to Australia.