

Lieutenant Colonel Peter Sweeney RFD's presentation is titled *The Battle of the Coral Sea*.

The Japanese aim in its advance south through the Pacific Ocean, was to sever Australia's contact with the United States. The Japanese aimed to achieve this by occupying the islands north of Australia including Papua New Guinea. The occupation of that Australian territory was to be achieved by an amphibious landing at Port Moresby.

The Japanese fleet of troop transports, escorted by cruisers and destroyers and aircraft carriers was met by a combined United States and Australian Navy fleet in the Coral Sea. The battle was notable for two reasons. It was the first naval battle 'fought in the air' and the first naval battle where the ships neither sighted nor fired directly on each other.

Peter's father, Chief Petty Officer Ordnance Artificer Raymond Sweeney, fought on HMAS *Hobart* in the battle.

Peter is a military historian and a battlefield guide. He will complete a Master's degree in Military History through the ADFA campus of UNSW this semester. He has guided in Gallipoli and Australian battlefields on the Western Front.

Peter has accompanied a number of cruises to the Pacific Ocean which sailed through the Coral Sea, as an enrichment speaker on Australian military history. He escorted groups from the ships ashore at Milne Bay, Rabaul and Darwin.

He is co-owner of the battlefield touring company Battle Honours Australia Pty Ltd (BHA) which arranges walking tours of Australian Battlefields worldwide and day tours of WWII sites of interest around Sydney. Last month BHA conducted a battlefield tour on water with a harbour cruise tracking the Japanese submarine attack on Sydney Harbour on 31st May 1942.

Commentary on the tour was provided by Peter Grose, author of the book '*A Very Rude AWAKENING: The night the Japanese midget subs came to Sydney Harbour*'.

Peter Grose will be returning to Australia on 31st May 2019 for another harbour cruise.