



HMAS SYDNEY II SEARCH PRESS ROOM

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THE FINDING SYDNEY FOUNDATION

Latest Search Reports

10th March 2008 Report

David Mearns - Search Director, The Finding Sydney Foundation

We have now been at sea for 8 days and are still being plagued by technical problems and unseasonably rough weather. A search line we started early this morning had to be aborted because I didn't feel we were getting good coverage of the seafloor. It is most important that whichever areas we search have been covered completely and that no gaps exist. Like a decorator painting a ceiling we call these gaps "holidays" and they are to be avoided at all costs.

Apparently we owe the high wind and rough sea conditions we are experiencing to the West Australian Summertime Heat Trough, which has been sitting over the coast of WA for days. Because this low pressure trough is stationary it has been preventing more favourable high pressure systems from moving in over our location.

Counting Tropical Cyclone Ophelia, this is the second weather disturbance common to WA that we have experienced in our 8 days. We still have sufficient time to achieve our objectives and find HMAS Sydney but I think the weather (and technical) gods owe us a break.

Glenys McDonald - Director, The Finding Sydney Foundation (Observer)

Everyone on board the Geosounder is working together, and supporting each other to get things happening. This is my first sea voyage, so everything is a new experience. My day begins with a nice hot, one armed shower, as I hang on to ride the moderate swells we are continuing to get. Then it is doing the shuffle to the dining room, where I am pleased to see it is not only me that stands with feet wide apart, with one hand on the cupboard as we serve ourselves from the incredible and delicious menu choice. Peter the day cook and Jo the night cook are rated tops, and personally I have never been so spoiled in my life.

My day is filled with discussing research issues with David and John, learning as much as possible about the technology we are using, relaxing with a good book and having many chats with the crew. There is a great laundry on board and even a gym, but so far I have only done a bit of weights. I continue to write up my daily diary for the Finding Sydney Foundation and usually hit the sack about 10pm. I am sharing a cabin with Kelly from the Williamson & Associates team and she is on the night shift. I sleep like a baby in my darkened bunk being rocked by the waves.



Above Photograph - Peter the Geosounder cook in his galley

John Perryman - Senior Navy Historian (Observer)

It was with high hopes that our SM30 was redeployed late last night as we commenced our next south-north run through the search box. Unfortunately the gremlins of the previous few days continued to affect the sonar equipment which again had to be retrieved during the forenoon so that fault finding could take place.

As an observer on this expedition I can sense the frustration of all concerned as they work long hours in difficult conditions to try and solve these vexing technical problems. When we sailed from Geraldton, most of us were strangers. Indeed many of the Geosounder's small crew had never served with one another before and were just as unfamiliar with aspects of the ship as we were. Such is the way of the off-shore industry. What I have observed throughout the trials and tribulations of the last week, however, is the welding of our small band of men and women into a functional ship's company who remain committed to pressing on with the task in hand in spite of these unbelievable set-backs.

As work continues on the SM30, and with the SM60 still available as a backup, I remain confident in the team's ability to get back into the water soon and continue the search.

Historical Anecdote: There have been four ships named HMAS Sydney which have served in the Royal Australian Navy. All four of these vessels served with distinction and the Battle Honours collectively won by them are displayed on an ornately carved wooden shield known as a Battle Honour board. This board is normally displayed in the vicinity of a ship's gangway when in harbour as a public reminder of the deeds of all ships which have borne her name.



Above Photograph - The Battle Honour board on HMAS Sydney IV.

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Published Mar 10 2008, 11:00 PM by patrickf

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