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Official Press Releases

Search For HMAS Sydney Underway Southern Kormoran Site Investigated (23rd Mar 2007)

HMAS Sydney Search Pty Ltd (HMA3S), the company formed to search for Australian warship HMAS Sydney, lost off the WA coast in 1941, reports that Geo Subsea have investigated the "southern" site known as KDLS3 strongly believed by researchers Warren Whittaker and (the late) Lindsay Knight to contain the final resting place of HSK Kormoran, the German vessel that sank HMAS Sydney.

The site, located seaward of the Abrolhos Islands off WA, was surveyed using a state-of-the-art, hull-mounted multibeam echo sounder (MBES) system, with the capacity to map the seabed up to a distance of three kilometres either side of the vessel's track, at depths of up to 5,000 metres. The purpose of the survey was to identify any significant seabed features and to finally verify the validity of any claims related to the site. This was achieved and no wreckage was found.

The survey was carried out using the MV Geosounder, en route from Fremantle to Dampier. Geosounder is operated by leading Perth-based Geo Subsea Pty Ltd, a subsidiary of an internationally renowned offshore survey and investigation company with worldwide operations, DOF Subsea.

HMA3S Chairman, Ted Graham, said the results of the survey were very positive in eliminating a site that had received much publicity and attention.

"The results of the survey make it possible for us to eliminate this particular site because the MBES imagery conclusively shows no evidence in the area to indicate the presence of a shipwreck". he said.

Mr Graham said the survey had been run by Geo Subsea on a pro bono basis, as an "in kind" contribution to the search effort, and was a very important first step in our efforts to find the wreck of HMAS Sydney and solve Australia's greatest maritime mystery.

"We are very appreciative of Geo Subsea's gesture, and the valuable seabed information they have provided. We are hopeful that MV Geosounder will be able to carry out further reconnaissance surveys to gain a better understanding of the seabed topography in our designated northern search area. These could be performed on a sail-through basis whenever the vessel transits the Search area between its various company projects this year.

David L. Mearns, Director of Blue Water Recoveries, Ltd., who will be directing the search for HMAS Sydney on behalf of HMA3S and has carefully reviewed the survey results, says "the KDLS3 site was ideal for searching with Geosounder's MBES because the average depth is only 850 metres and the seabed is relatively flat and featureless with a gentle slope of only 1.4 to 2 degrees. If a ship the size of Kormoran (157 metres long and 9,400 GRT), which was the biggest auxiliary cruiser used by the Kriegsmarine in WWII, had exploded and sunk on the site it would clearly show up in the MBES images for all to see."

Mr. Mearns said the survey was the most definitive and conclusive ever conducted at the KDLS3 site. "Unlike earlier surveys the MBES completely covered a 2,000 metre swathe centered on the KDLS3 position with such a concentration of depth soundings that a wreck the size of Kormoran would have registered a minimum of 55 individual soundings. The fact that there wasn't even the slightest hint of wreckage finally shuts the door on the KDLS3 position and should allow everyone to focus on our upcoming search of the "northern" position.

HMA3S have submitted a copy of the Geo Subsea survey report to the WA Maritime Museum, the official custodian of wrecks and wreck sites under Commonwealth legislation. A copy of this report can be viewed below:

Media Contact:

Ted Graham
Chairman
The Finding Sydney Foundation
media@findingsydney.com
(+)61-8-9261 7749

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Comments

No Comments
