



# HMAS SYDNEY II SEARCH PRESS ROOM

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THE FINDING SYDNEY FOUNDATION

## Official Press Releases

### Search For HMAS Sydney II Underway (3rd Mar 2008)

The Finding Sydney Foundation chartered vessel, DOF SV Geosounder, today left from Geraldton Harbour with the hopes of the nation sailing with her.

On board is a team of international experts who offer Australia's best chance of finding the resting place of the World War II cruiser HMAS Sydney II, tragically lost in November 1941 in the Indian Ocean off Western Australia with its entire crew of 645, following a fierce engagement with the German raider HSK Kormoran. HSK Kormoran was damaged and scuttled, with 317 of her nearly 400 crew surviving the engagement.

Directing the offshore search for The Finding Sydney Foundation is international ship wreck hunter Mr. David Mearns of the UK. Mearns and his company have located many deepwater shipwrecks and hold the current Guinness World Record for the deepest shipwreck ever discovered: a German Blockade Runner sunk during WWII at a depth 5,762 metres.

"This is without question the most challenging shipwreck search I have ever undertaken," Mr Mearns said before departing, "but we have assembled a first-rate team and in every way I believe we are up to the challenge."

Leading the team of geophysicists and marine sonar experts onboard the SV Geosounder is Mr. Art Wright from Williamson & Associates of Seattle. Their low frequency, deep towed side scan sonar search system will cover a defined area of approximately 1800 sq nautical miles, some 120 nautical miles offshore from Steep Point, Western Australia, in water depths ranging from 2300 to 4200 metres.

"Phase One of the search is a bit like mowing the lawn, albeit a very large lawn" Mr Mearns said, "We'll be systematically towing a sonar "fish" along a grid of overlapping track lines that covers the seabed in areas where we believe the wrecks sank. Given the large size of the search area we will be using sonar that can cover this area at an extraordinarily fast rate. Once any contact of a potential wreck is made, we will then make a series of higher resolution narrow swathe passes to confirm the dimensions and characteristics of any target, with any debris field being mapped."

Also on board is Foundation Director Mrs Glenys McDonald and the Commonwealth's observer, Mr John Perryman who is the Royal Australian Navy's Historical Officer.

Mrs McDonald, whose passion for Sydney has spanned more than 16 years, said she was honoured to be on board.

"This search, which has been largely funded by Federal and State Government grants, will be transparent so that all Australians will have confidence in the outcome" she said. "We all feel the weight of the relative's hopes and desires and we do hope this search will give them closure."

The entire search will be covered on board by an independent documentary film team from Electric Pictures,

who are working with Film Australia to make a documentary of the search to be broadcast by the National broadcaster ABC soon after completion of the project.

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## Comments

No Comments

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