

10th Anniversary of finding Sydney - some activities



On 16th March 2008 the Finding Sydney Foundation found the wreck of HMAS

Sydney II.

Shown on return to Geraldton at the HMAS Sydney Memorial; Left to Right - Don Pridmore, Keith Rowe, David Mearns, Premier of WA Alan Carpenter, FSF Chairman Ted Graham, Glenys McDonald, Lieutenant John Perryman CSC RANR; Commodore Bob Trotter OAM RAN (Ret'd)

Symposium at the Australian National Maritime Museum, Darling Harbour, Sydney - 16th March 2018

To mark the 10th anniversary of finding HMAS *Sydney*, the museum will present a Symposium telling the story of *Sydney II* from its short honourable service to the historical day her location was discovered, on to recent years when the wrecks were revisited by an expedition that captured a stunning array of images and scientific data.

Presenters and topics covered include:

- Senior Naval Historical Officer John Perryman "The Significance of *Sydney's* loss to Australia, the RAN and to families"
- Commodore Bob Trotter OAM RAN (Ret'd), Director of the Finding *Sydney* Foundation "The FSF - Building on early hopes and false trails to create a successful search expedition."
- FSF Search Operation Director David Mearns - "The Discovery of the Wrecks"
- Dr Andrew Woods, WA Museum - will present 3D footage of the wrecks from the 2015 expedition and visualisations.

Presented in conjunction with Curtin University & Western Australian Museum.

<http://www.anmm.gov.au/whats-on/events/hmas-sydney-symposium>

Shark Bay Discovery & Visitor Centre, ANZAC Day April 2018 Launch of exhibition

"Fire on the Water – witnessing the wrecks of ***Sydney*** and ***Kormoran***"

At the Shark Bay World Heritage and Discovery Centre in Denham in April this year, a new short film and accompanying interpretation will tell the story of the battle between HMAS *Sydney* and HSK *Kormoran*. 3D footage and still images from the 2015 expedition to the wreck sites, undertaken by WA Museum, Curtin University and DOF Subsea, will be used to create a timeline of the battle and to offer insights into what happened when the ships met off Shark Bay 77 years ago.

The new film, called '*Fire on the Water*', uses imagery not seen in the previous film released at the WA Museum Geraldton for the 75th Anniversary in November 2016 and focuses on the events of the battle itself. The narrative approach is similar, so each can be seen as a companion piece to the other - just using imagery, text and music. There will also be a 'timeline' of the battle on the wall outside the screening room, using still images from the expedition to show what is understood to

have happened. As Shark Bay is the closest place to where the battle occurred, it is good place for the battle story to be told.



The HMAS *Sydney* Memorial at the Shark Bay World Discovery Centre

The project is funded by a Protecting National Historic Sites grant from the Australian Government's Department of the Environment and Energy, with additional funding and project management from the Shire of Shark Bay, as well as in-kind support from WA Museum.

The producer and curator is Robyn Johnston, who produced the "From Great Depths" exhibit and film on the *Sydney/Kormoran* story which is currently on display at WA Museum's Museum of Geraldton.

The consultant historian for the Shark Bay battle story is Wes Olson, author of two books on *Sydney*, "Bitter Victory" (2000) and "HMAS *Sydney* (II) in Peace and War" (2016).



The exhibition, with the title "Fire on the Water – revealing the fate of *Sydney* (II) and *Kormoran*" will open in Denham on Anzac Day: Wednesday 25 April 2018, 9:00am

Shark Bay World Heritage Discovery and Visitor Centre
53 Knight Terrace, Denham WA
08 9948 1218
www.sharkbayvisit.com.au/

Honouring the Unknown Sailor from HMAS *Sydney* II 6th February 2018

In this 10th year since his burial at Geraldton and in the 10th year since the wreck of his ship was found, we gathered to pay respect to this man who, unknown, is every one of his 644 shipmates who died.

It was on this day in 1942, over two months after HMAS *Sydney*'s loss, that a Carley float containing the body of one of her men was seen drifting off Flying Fish Cove, Christmas Island; the float was recovered, and the body later interred in the Old European Cemetery with full military honours. Some weeks later the Island was occupied by the Japanese for the duration of the war. The grave was never more than a mound of earth that gradually disappeared under material washed down from the escarpment above and any means of identifying the man, including the exact location of his grave, was lost until successfully investigated more than sixty years later.

Nevertheless, this unknown man, the only member of her Ship's Company to be found, became the anchor for honouring the memory of all the brave men who laid down their lives in HMAS *Sydney*'s last battle.

After many years searching, the grave site on Christmas Island was found in 2006 and the body was exhumed and examined but, so far, not identified. The records of some 300 men went down with the ship. The man was re-interred at this place of peace with full military honours on 19 November 2008. The Unknown Serviceman continues to serve his country by enshrining a nation's love of peace and to remind us that, in the sacrifice of the men whose names are recorded on the Wall of Remembrance at our nearby Memorial, there is faith enough for all of us who remain.

Salute to unknown sailor

■ Francesca Mann

The loss of HMAS Sydney II 76 years ago is still considered Australia's worst naval tragedy.

The battle between the Sydney and the German auxiliary cruiser Kormoran off the WA coast on November 19, 1941, resulted in the loss of all hands on the Sydney.

What has made the tale more tragic is that of the 645 servicemen on board, only one body was recovered.

A small service was held at the Geraldton War Cemetery on February 6 to honour the unknown serviceman lost on the Sydney.

Trevor Ralph, a volunteer tour guide at the HMAS Sydney II Memorial, said it was important to honour the sacrifices made.

"We're trying to remember those who lost their lives on board the ship while defending our country," he said.

"It's a very sad story. The youngest person on the ship was 14 years old."

About 20 people gathered at the grave of the unknown sailor, marking 76 years since the only man from the Sydney was recovered.

On February 6, 1942, a Carley float containing the remains of one of the Sydney's men was discovered drifting off Flying Fish Cove, Christmas Island.

The man was interred in the Old European Cemetery.

The exact location of his grave was rediscovered in 2006 after many years of searching. The body was exhumed and examined, and



A service was held at the Geraldton War Cemetery on February 6 to honour the unknown serviceman who lost his life when the HMAS Sydney II sank in 1941. Picture: Trevor Ralph

relatives of the lost sailors were asked to provide their DNA.

But no match was found and the man's identity remains a mystery. Records of about 300 men went down with the ship. The man was

re-interred at the Geraldton War Cemetery in 2008.

"He was the only person found from the ship," Mr Ralph said.

"It was decided he needed to be buried in the nearest war cemetery

and was brought to Geraldton."

The service was co-ordinated by the Geraldton Voluntary Tour Guides, the Geraldton City RSL Sub-branch and the Rotary Club of Geraldton.

That's all for now folks. I'll keep you posted on what other events may be happening later in the 10th anniversary year.

Kind regards

Bob