

Australian Navy Buys Magnetometers

The Australian Navy is the latest military unit to purchase JW Fishers Proton 4 magnetometers. The Aussies join a long list of military clients using Fishers underwater search equipment including the US Navy, the Italian Navy, the Egyptian Navy, Argentina's Prefectura Naval, and Israeli military units. The Proton 4 is a sensitive metal detector that will find ferrous metal objects laying on, or buried under, the seafloor. This rugged instrument can detect large shipwrecks more than a quarter of mile away. Even targets like ship anchors can be detected at a range of 30m or more. The military use magnetometers for a variety of search operations include locating sunken vessels, detecting bombs and other underwater explosive devices, finding lost anchors, and identifying the location of pipelines and cables before performing dredging operations.

The Australian Navy bought several of the Proton 4 mags equipped with cables of varying lengths, underwater altimeters, tracking software, and deep dive wings. The altimeters are an important accessory that inform the operator of the distance between the towfish and the ocean floor. This helps the user tow the mag close enough to the bottom for maximum detection penetration, yet far enough away from the seabed to avoid collision with underwater obstacles. The tracking software allows the magnetometer readout data, along with GPS position coordinates to be displayed and stored on a PC. Also shown on the computer is the track of the boat as it passes across the search area. The deep dive wing allows maximizing depth while minimizing the amount of cable deployed. With most towed equipment the typical ratio of cable length to tow depth is 4 to 1. The deep dive wing cuts the ratio in half to 2 to 1 which means that only 200 feet of cable is required to tow at a depth of 100 feet.

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