

Shipwreck Hunter Honoured



Deep-sea shipwreck hunter, David L. Mearns, UK, has been awarded an honorary Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) for service to Australia by locating the WWII shipwrecks of HMAS Sydney II and AHS Centaur.

The Award Citation reads: "As Director of Blue Water Recoveries, Mr. David Mearns and his team discovered the wreck of HMAS *Sydney II* (image), fatally damaged and sunk on 19 November 1941, and that of her enemy HSK *Kormoran*. Mr. Mearns spent seven years researching and investigating, culminating in March 2008 when his team located and photographed both wrecks in the Indian Ocean. He has been able to provide almost 1500 still images and over 60 hours of broadcast quality video.

On 20 December 2009, Mr. Mearns also discovered the wreck of AHS *Centaur* which was torpedoed and sank off Moreton Island in south-east Queensland on 14 May 1943. On 10 January 2010 he provided official visual confirmation in support of his discovery and collected over 24 hours of footage along with numerous photographs detailing identifying markers of AHS *Centaur*.

The work of Mr. Mearns in locating the wreckage of HMAS *Sydney II* and AHS *Centaur* has solved these long-time Australian mysteries and provided solace to the families of those lost on both vessels."

Mr. Mearns has also recently been awarded a prestigious Maritime Fellowship Award by the UK-based Maritime Foundation for an outstanding lifetime contribution in a particular maritime field. The Award Citation reads: "For his outstanding courage, technical skill and perseverance in searching for, and locating illusive ship wrecks whose hidden secrets have been of global significance. David Mearns has, as a result of his expeditions, raised international standards for the design and construction of bulk carriers. He has also brought closure to the dependants of merchant seamen and naval personnel through the most committed and determined investigations. The images have had such far reaching resonance that they have touched the lives of nations."