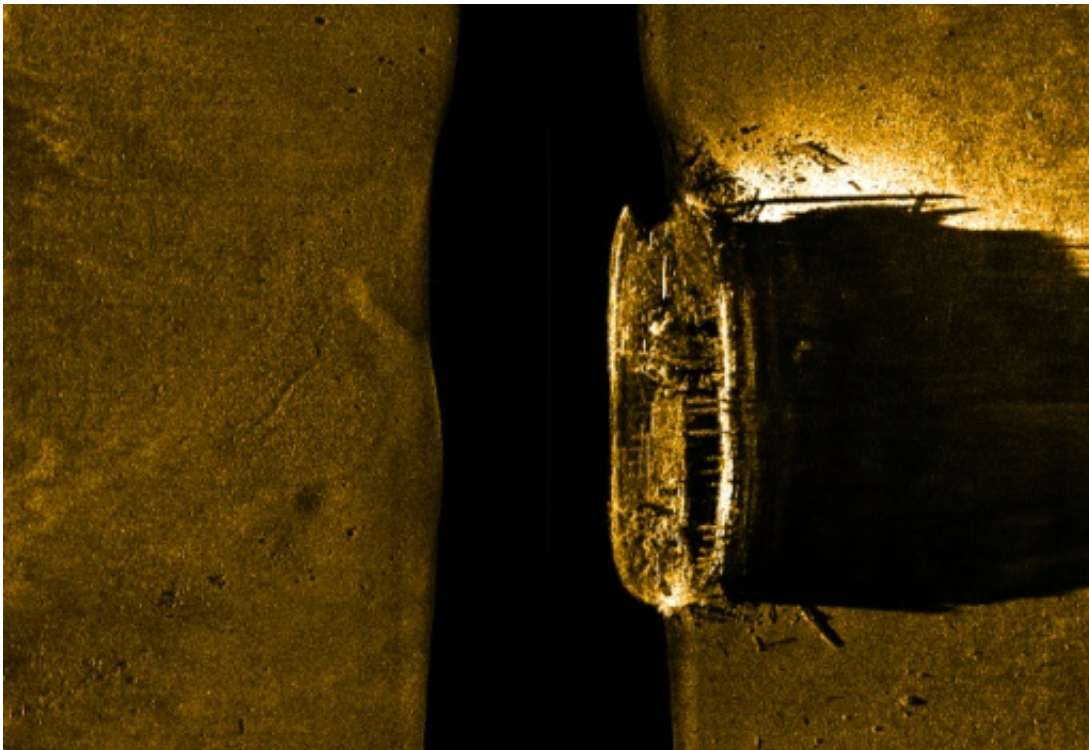


Canada confirms Arctic discovery of 200-year-old ship

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The HMS Erebus ship found by Parks Canada in 2014

Canada's parks department on Monday confirmed the discovery of a British exploration ship that vanished during a storied Arctic expedition in 1846.

The statement comes two weeks after scientists from the Arctic Research Foundation announced they had found the ship—part of a two-

vessel expedition during which both disappeared—submerged but well-preserved beneath 24 meters of water in the Northwest Passage.

"Parks Canada's underwater archaeology team is proud to confirm that the wreck located in Terror Bay on the south-west side of King William Island, Nunavut is that of HMS Terror," the government agency said.

The ill-fated HMS Erebus and HMS Terror left Britain on May 19, 1845 under the command of Sir John Franklin on a mission to discover the Northwest Passage linking the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans.

The Erebus was located in 2014, while the Terror's whereabouts remained unknown until now.

Silt and marine life cover the wreck's upper deck, the underwater archeology team said.

But it was able to match a number of features typical or unique to 19th-century British polar exploration ships to historical records as well as design specifications common to the Erebus and Terror.

They included three masts, iron bow sheathings and a double-wheeled helm.

Scans of the wreck also showed the configuration of Terror's bowsprit, the placement of the ship's helm, the boarding port and deck scuppers—holes on the side of the ship to allow drainage.

The ship was discovered in a bay off King William Island, where an Inuit member of the Arctic Research Foundation spotted a mast piercing the water's surface several years ago.

The fate of the Franklin Expedition didn't become clear until 1859,

when a vessel chartered by Franklin's widow Lady Jane came across a somber message on King William Island.

After the ships had become trapped in ice, the sailors eventually ran out of supplies a year and a half later.

The message revealed that Franklin and 23 crew members died on June 11, 1847 in unspecified circumstances.

On April 22, 1848, 105 survivors left the ships in an attempt to reach solid ground on foot, but none survived.

Canadian researchers in the 1980s said the remains of expedition members found on Beechey Island indicated they had died of cold, hunger and lead poisoning from canned food.

Although the shipwreck belongs to Britain, the Canadian government said it is in talks to preserve the archeological site.

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