

Ancient British explorer ship likely found in Canadian Arctic

September 13 2016

The second of two British exploration ships that vanished during a storied expedition to the Arctic in 1846 has been discovered, submerged but "perfectly preserved" in the Northwest Passage, Canadian scientists say.

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

While the Erebus was located in 2014, the whereabouts of the Terror were unknown until September 3 when it was discovered by scientists from the Arctic Research Foundation, which showed the sunken ship in a video that aired Monday on public broadcaster CBC.

"Resting proud in 24 meters of water, we found HMS Terror... It is perfectly preserved in the frigid waters of the Northwest Passage," foundation spokesman Adrian Schimnowski said in the video.

The three-mast ship, which was built 203 years ago, was found in the same region as the Erebus, the organization said.

"Huge piece of the Franklin Expedition puzzle possibly found at last. Amazing news," Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau posted on Twitter.

The federal agency Parks Canada said in a statement it is "working with our partners to validate the details of the discovery."

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.

It turns out the sailors became trapped in ice for a year and half, and eventually ran out of supplies.

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.

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

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