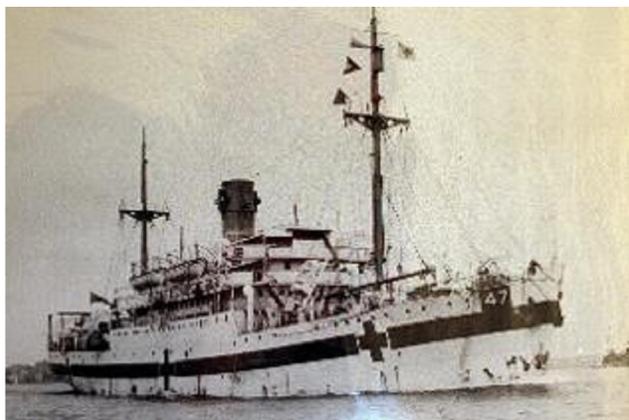


Hospital ship Centaur discovered off Queensland coast

FROM: AAP

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- Shipwreck hunters find AHS Centaur
- Ship was sunk by the Japanese in 1943
- Filming of wreck to begin in January



Hospital ship "Centaur", which was torpedoed during World War II. Source: The Courier-Mail

SHIPWRECK hunters have found the hospital ship Centaur which was torpedoed without warning in 1943 off the Queensland coast, killing 268 people.

Search director David Mearns has advised government officials of the exact location of the wreck and said filming of the wreck would begin in January.

Acting Prime Minister Julia Gillard said Australians and relatives of those who had been aboard the ship were grateful for the find.

"The discovery of the AHS Centaur will ensure all Australians know and commemorate the 268 brave nurses and crew who died in the service of their nation," Ms Gillard said.

"I hope by locating the final resting place of the AHS Centaur, the family and friends of those men and women who were tragically lost find some resolution."

The AHS Centaur was sunk by a Japanese submarine on 14 May, 1943 about 50 nautical miles east north-east of Brisbane. Of the 332 persons on board, only 64 survived.

The search crew has undertaken five high-resolution sonar tracklines over the target site, and is now conducting a further run to obtain a clearer picture of the wreck.

Queensland premier Anna Bligh said it was a time of reflection.

"It is timely to take a moment to remember those lives lost on that tragic day in 1943, and the devastating effect this has had on their families," Ms Bligh said.

"This morning's confirmation that the wreck has been found will hopefully provide some peace to the loved ones of those killed."

"We will now use this momentum to finish this task and film the wreck site.

"In early January, a remotely operated submersible vehicle equipped with a high-definition camera will collect high quality imagery of the wreck and the surrounding area."

Mr Mearns said the wreck is located approximately 30 nautical miles due east of the southern tip of Moreton Island (27 deg 16.98

South, 153 deg 59.22 East) at a depth of 2,059 metres.

The Australian and Queensland governments jointly committed \$4 million to the search and officers from the Department of Defence and the Department of Premier and Cabinet provided oversight and technical assistance to the project.
