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Silent Anzac to resurface

By Michael Brooke

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REHEARSAL: Divers practice using survey equipment on a former J-class submarine in preparation for the planned dive to determine if AE2 can be raised.

HMAS AE2, otherwise known as the silent Anzac, is set to surface from a watery grave to tell the little known story of the RAN's heroic role in the Gallipoli Campaign.

AE2, the second of the initial two submarines operated by the RAN in WW1, was the first RAN warship to launch torpedoes in anger and the first to sink an enemy warship by torpedoes.

Regrettably she was also the first RAN warship to be lost by enemy action when she was sunk in WWI.

The AE2 Commemorative Foundation will conduct a survey later this year to determine if she can be brought to the surface to feature in the 100th anniversary of Anzac on April 25, 2015.

CDRE Terry Roach (Rtd), Vice President of the Submarine Institute of Australia and Director AE2 Commemorative Foundation, told Navy News that a successful training exercise which included a dive on a former RAN J-class submarine off Port Phillip Heads has paved the way for the survey dive on AE2 later this year.

The mission rehearsal and training exercise conducted during February 4-7 allowed the testing of the hi-tech equipment, which will be used to determine if AE2 (which was sunk in the Sea of Marmara at the start of the Gallipoli campaign) can be raised to the surface.

"There is now a high degree of confidence of being able to collect the necessary data to make informed assessments of the structural integrity of the hull of AE2," said CDRE Roach.

"The deeds of the Australian soldiers who fought at Gallipoli have become legend, but the extraordinary story of the Australian sailors who also fought, has yet to be told"

Tim Smith, a maritime archaeologist at the NSW Heritage Office said AE2 has enormous potential as an archaeological site.

"Firstly, it was sunk without loss of life and hence no ethical war dead issues will be violated in our archological examination of it," he said.

"Secondly, it was scuttled by its crew leaving the majority of their possessions and equipment on board and in situ.



Anzac to resurface: The wreck of WW1 sub AE2, known as the "silent Anzac", is set to be brought to the surface.

"Thirdly, the submarine appears to be in relatively good condition for the time it has spent underwater. All management options are currently on the table.

"Previous calls to raise it could only be made by both the Turkish and Australian governments and will naturally factor in the results of our dedicated survey results."