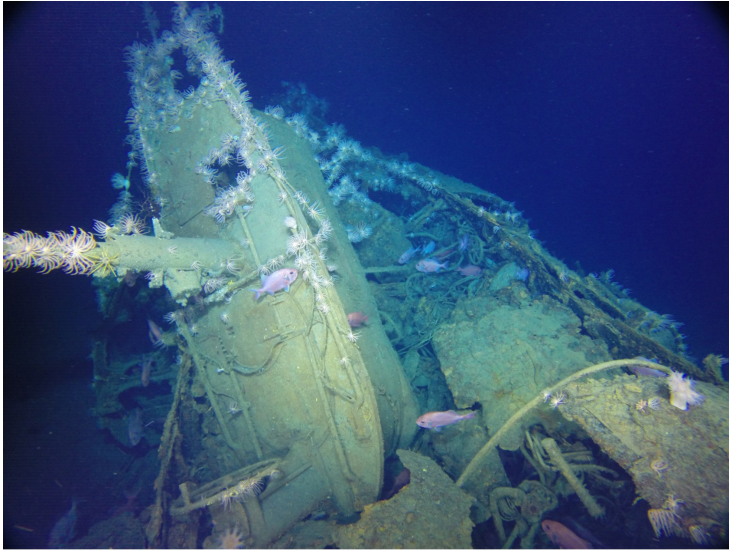


# AE1 Project Touchstone

## Objective

The objective of AE1 Project Touchstone is to recover a relic from HMAS AE1 to provide the centre piece of a national memorial/display in the Australian War Memorial (AWM).



HMAS AE1 Fin and implosion rubble over control room.

Image courtesy of Paul G. Allen, Find AE1, ANMM and Curtin University. © Navigea Ltd.

## The Current Situation

- The Project is being managed by a not-for-profit organisation, the Australian E Class Submarine Foundation Ltd, the same team who led the search for, and detailed examination of, AE1 in 2017 and 2018.
- It is supported by the RAN Chief of Navy, the UK Royal Navy, AWM, Submarine Institute of Australia (SIA) and descendant families in Australia and the UK.
- The Check Survey is supported by the Australian National Maritime Museum (ANMM).

- ANMM support for recovery is contingent upon recommendations of completed wreck site Conservation Management Plan and subsequent approval by Australian and Papua New Guinea (PNG) governments
- Any recovery will be undertaken in accordance with the 2001 UNESCO Convention on the Protection of Underwater Cultural Heritage and the Australian Commonwealth government's Underwater Cultural Heritage Act 2018.
- The plan will require approval from the governments of Australia and PNG.
- We are currently in the Concept Phase, developing a detailed proposal to meet these stringent requirements.

The **immediate priority** is a Check Survey of AE1, utilising an ROV to obtain still and video footage to provide information on her current state and identify recovery options.

- This is a critical input for the Concept Plan and approval process.
- We seek assistance with a suitable vessel able to operate an Inspection Class or larger ROV in 300-350m of water, with surface currents of 1-3 knots.
- The AESMF is able to source suitable stills cameras, an Inspection Class ROV and pilot.



## Background

- HMAS AE1 was Australia's first submarine. It was lost in the opening days of World War I, and was Australia's first naval casualty.
- She lay lost for 103 years, despite 12 searches to locate her 35-man Australian and British crew.
- AE1 was found in December 2017 by Fugro with participants from the Royal Australian Navy, ANMM, Silentworld Foundation and led by a team from Finding the Men of AE1 Ltd.
- A detailed examination of the wreck was undertaken in April 2018, thanks to the generous support of the late Paul Allen, who provided the Research Vessel Petrel and her embarked team of experts.
- Curtin University developed a detailed 3D model of the wreck using still photographs taken during this examination.
- Analysis of the results set out in this Report revealed the cause of the loss, a ventilation hull valve left open on diving. This could have been a mechanical failure or oversight: we don't know.
- The principals led the AE2 Commemorative Foundation Ltd. (AE2CF) project Silent Anzac, to protect, preserve and tell the story of HMAS AE2.
- On successful completion of the AE2 project, the principals formed Finding the Men of AE1 Ltd. and led the successful search and detailed examination.
- The AESMF was formed on completion to protect and tell the stories of both submarines. Current activities include:
  - Achieving formal protection by PNG and Australia,
  - Setting up a trip wire with the locals to call in any interference with the wreck site,
  - Setting up a commemorative plaque on Mioko Island overlooking the wreck site,
  - Undertaking a check survey to ascertain the current state of the wreck site, and
  - Recovering a touchstone item for an Australian National Submarine Memorial.
- A visit to Port Moresby and Mioko Island is planned in 2023 in pursuit of these objectives.

## The Australian E Class Submarine Foundation

- The AESMF is a not-for-profit, limited-by-guarantee company formed to protect Australia's first submarines, HMAS AE1 and AE2, and to tell their stories.

