

WA MUSEUM launch of Exhibition & Book “ *From Great Depth*”

The naval battle of HMAS Sydney – HSK Kormoran 19. November 1941

Geraldton Museum, Friday 18th November, 2016

Address by Torsten Ketelsen, Hon. Consul of the Fed. Rep. of Germany in WA
and Founder of the GMA Garnet Group of Western Australia

Thank you Alec

and can I also thank Graham Taylor

for your warm and generous Welcome to Country of the Yamantji people.

The MC has welcomed the many dignitaries and guests here this evening, but first of all, I would like to recognize the many descendants of those brave souls that lost their lives on HMAS Sydney that are here and pay my respects.

I also recognize:

Mr Ian Blaney, MLC, Member for Geraldton

Professor Deborah Terry, AO, Vice Chancellor of Curtin University

and of course Mr. Alec Coles,

the very hard working and caring CEO of the Western Australian Museum, who, along with his magnificent team has put so much effort and leadership into this particular project and indeed, since taking on his role as CEO, Alec has taken the WA Museum to great prominence well beyond WEA and Australia.

And thank you, Stephen Butler for the solemn recital of the Naval Ode.

It is indeed a very solemn occasion for all of us and on behalf of the Federal Republic of Germany, I would like to acknowledge our respect and sympathy for those that lost their lives and to their descendants on this 75th anniversary of the battle off this coast, very close to where we are gathered here this evening .

We solemnly remember those lost: all 645 men on HMAS SYDNEY and 81 of the 399 men on the KORMORAN.

They were sailors in a theatre of war, doing what was required of them, doing their best for their country.

It was the story of the losses of two countries and we understand the pain of loss that still lingers today amongst the descendants of the families and friends of those brave men.

Thanks to the untiring efforts of Ted Graham and the *Finding the Sydney* Foundation over many years, the final resting places of HMAS SYDNEY and KORMORAN were located in 2.5km deep waters off the coast of Deep Point in Shark Bay.

The Friends of the WA Museum commissioned work by Goethart Consultants with the support of Lottery West, to gauge the community mood as to whether it was appropriate or desirable to re-visit the wreck sites with state of the art HD recoding equipment.

This work not only confirmed the support for the scheme but how overwhelming it was: 97% of those consulted supported an expedition back to the site for the purpose of capturing new images of the wrecks.

This survey also revealed the extraordinary degree to which people wanted to hear the German side of the story that was considered to have been inadequately told or omitted.

This new exhibit " From Great Depth" is impressive.

The technology that was used is cutting edge and the work that has gone into putting it all together is quite extraordinary.

And there is more work to be done --with the hundreds of thousands of High Resolution images to create more opportunities for people to virtually visit the wreck sites, without disturbing the sanctuary of these naval war graves.

But this is not about the technology, or innovation or the prowess of those involved today.

It is about remembering and honouring the loss of those 726 brave souls on that fateful day of November 19th, in 1941.

It is a timely and respectful exhibit that whilst revealing the wonders of a world 2.5kms below the waves, reminds us of the horrors and excesses of war.

The information that you find on these walls tells the important story and the background of the confrontation.

The film itself is a reflective and moving experience. It compliments the extraordinary SYDNEY Memorial that sits on the hill behind us.

It provides a background and a future to this story and, of course ,of both ships.

The GMA Garnet is a local company that mines Garnet mineral sands in the Port Gregory area and processes it here in Geraldton and has done so for some 40 years.

It is today the world's largest producer and supplier of high quality garnet abrasive products, now a global player with a global distribution network.

As the founder of the GMA GROUP, I have never forgotten our deep seated roots right here in the mineral rich MidWest region of Western Australia and our German background.

We are very proud to have had the opportunity to support first the *Finding the SYDNEY Foundation* and then the WA Museum when they proposed this extraordinary project.

We see this as our small contribution to bring closure to a chapter in both our countries history that for too long has been shrouded in controversy, secrecy and innuendo especially before the discovery of the wrecks in 2008.

So also in that sense, this project is of immense significance and it is most fitting -- that the launch of the exhibition "*From Great Depth*" is taking place here in Geraldton, 75 years after that fateful day in November of 1941.

So in closing, I would like to congratulate
Mr. Alec Coles and the team of the WA Museum,

Curtain University,

DOF Subsea

and all of the many partners in this extraordinary achievement.