



# News Release *Communiqué*

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For Immediate Release

## **Governments of Canada and Nunavut celebrate Franklin Expedition Discoveries in Gjoa Haven**

Inuit oral history directly contributed to solving one of the world's greatest archaeological mysteries

September 12, 2014

Gjoa Haven, Nunavut

Government of Canada, Government of Nunavut

The Honourable Leona Aglukkaq, Minister of the Environment and Minister responsible for Parks Canada, along with the Honourable Peter Taptuna, Premier of Nunavut, visited the community of Gjoa Haven, Nunavut, for a celebration in honour of the recent Franklin Expedition discoveries.

After more than 160 years of searching to understand the fate of English explorer Sir John Franklin's fabled arctic voyage, the 2014 Victoria Strait Expedition team recently located one of Franklin's historic ships and two land-based artifacts, solving one of the world's greatest archaeological mysteries.

The discovery of the ship and artifacts, confirmed to be from the 1845 Franklin Expedition, was made possible with the use of Inuit traditional knowledge. The southern strait was identified as a target search area as a direct result of 19th century Inuit oral testimony describing a shipwreck to the south of King William Island.

The Franklin Expedition ships, Her Majesty's Ship (HMS) *Erebus* and HMS *Terror*, are an important part of Canadian history, laying the foundations of Canada's Arctic sovereignty nearly 200 years ago. Until their discovery, they were Canada's only undiscovered national historical site and one of the world's greatest maritime mysteries.

### **Quick Facts**

- Over the course of the past six seasons, Parks Canada has worked with an array of partners from the public and private sector, with this year's team undertaking the most ambitious search to date.
- Government partners for the 2014 Victoria Strait expedition include Parks Canada, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, the Canadian Coast Guard, the Royal Canadian Navy, Defence Research & Development Canada (DRDC) (an agency of the Department of National Defence), Environment Canada, and the Canadian Space Agency, as well as the Governments of Nunavut and Great Britain.
- Private and non-profit partners include the Arctic Research Foundation, the Royal Canadian Geographical Society who additionally brings in The W. Garfield Weston Foundation, Shell Canada and One Ocean Expeditions as partners.
- This year marks 50 years of outstanding accomplishments in underwater archaeology at Parks Canada.

### **Quotes**

"This is truly a historic moment for Canadians. Franklin's ships are an important part of Canadian history given that his expeditions, which took place nearly 200 years ago, laid the foundations of Canada's Arctic sovereignty. The story of Captain John Franklin and his crew is an iconic Canadian tale and international mystery – one that would not have been solved without the Inuit oral tradition passed down through generations in Gjoa Haven. I would like to thank the Government of Nunavut and all the partners in the 2014 Victoria Strait Expedition for their incredible passion and dedication which led to these incredible discoveries."

*The Honourable Leona Aglukkaq, Minister of the Environment and Minister responsible for Parks Canada*

.../2



“Congratulations to the Government of Canada and all the partners on discovering one of Franklin’s ships in the 2014 Victoria Strait Expedition. I am proud of the Nunavut archeology team, and recognize their role in helping to narrow the search by uncovering important artifacts on the land. The Franklin shipwrecks are an important piece of Nunavut’s past, and this discovery strengthens the link between Inuit oral history and modern, global society.”

*The Honourable Peter Taptuna, Premier of Nunavut*

### **Associated Links**

[Royal Canadian Geographical Society – The 2014 Victoria Strait Expedition](#)

[Minister Aglukkaq Announces 2014 Search for Franklin Expedition](#)

[Government of Nunavut discovers Franklin artifact](#)

[Statement by the Prime Minister of Canada announcing the discovery of one of the ill-fated Franklin Expedition Ships lost in 1846](#)

- 30 -

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