

News Release

New medal recognizes team that found HMS *Erebus*



TORONTO, March 4, 2015 - The Royal Canadian Geographical Society announced today that 220 people have been awarded the Erebus Medal, a special one-time honour commemorating the find of one of the lost ships of the British Arctic Expedition commanded by Sir John Franklin.

The first Erebus Medals were presented at a special reception at the Royal Ontario Museum on March 4, in the presence of Prime Minister Stephen Harper and Laureen Harper. Among those recognized were key leaders of the 2014 Victoria Strait Expedition, including divers from Parks Canada's Underwater Archaeology Service, Marc-André Bernier and Ryan Harris. For more information about the Prime Minister's comments about the event, please click [here](#).

"This new medal is a recognition of the importance the Society places on the discovery of HMS *Erebus*, one of the most significant underwater archaeological discoveries in history. It also speaks to the impact *Erebus*, and the search for that ship, had on the map of Canada," said John Geiger, CEO of The Royal Canadian Geographical Society.

Other recipients at the reception included representatives from 2014 Victoria Strait Expedition partners, including Parks Canada, the Royal Canadian Navy, Canadian Coast Guard, Arctic Research Foundation, The W. Garfield Weston Foundation, One Ocean Expeditions and Shell Canada.

Said Geiger: "Everyone who contributed to the find, from helicopter pilot Andrew Stirling, to Inuit oral historian Louie Kamookak, to Tom Zagon of the Canadian Ice Service, to the Prime Minister of Canada, have been awarded this medal. All participants in the discovery, including those in the field and those who worked behind the scenes are being recognized. Together, they have rewritten the history books and underscored the importance of the geography of Canada's arctic." For the full list of recipients please click [here](#).

Dr. Paul Ruest, President of The Royal Canadian Geographical Society, added: "On behalf of the Society's Board of Governors, I want to congratulate all recipients. The expedition was a team effort by a coalition of public and private partners. They succeeded where many others failed over 17 decades. They found Franklin's ship."

The Erebus Medal was designed by renowned Canadian medal designer Susan Taylor. It features a stylized HMS *Erebus* superimposed on a nautical compass, and on the reverse, the Compass Rose of The Royal Canadian Geographical Society, with the Society name and Expedition name in both official languages, along with the inscription: "For contributions to the discovery of HMS *Erebus*". Small crowns symbolize the Society's Royal patronage, and the fact that *Erebus* is a Royal Navy ship. The medal is cast in bronze, a reference to the *Erebus* bell.

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The RCGS is dedicated to imparting a broader knowledge and deeper appreciation of Canada — its people and places, its natural and cultural heritage and its environmental, social and economic challenges. The Society is one of Canada's largest non-profit educational organizations and, as part of its mandate to make Canada better known, publishes *Canadian Geographic* magazine.

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