



Dr. Colin Carrie MP Oshawa

Conservative Government Uses Cutting Edge Canadian Technology to Provide First-ever Live Video Feed and Tour of HMS *Erebus*

For Immediate Release

Toronto, ON April 16th, 2015 – The Honourable Tony Clement, President of the Treasury Board, and Dr. Colin Carrie, Member of Parliament for Oshawa and Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of the Environment, hosted a ‘live dive event’ at the Royal Ontario Museum (ROM) presenting an up-close and personal tour of HMS *Erebus* and live chat via webcast with Parks Canada’s Underwater Archaeology Team in the High Arctic. Minister Clement and Dr. Carrie participated in the event on behalf of the Honourable Leona Aglukkaq, Minister of the Environment and Minister responsible for Parks Canada.

Staging dives in sub-zero conditions under the frozen surface of Queen Maud Gulf in Nunavut, Parks Canada underwater archaeologists, supported by Royal Canadian Navy divers, thrilled Grade 7 geography students from University of Toronto Schools. The class was taking part in a special underwater archaeology program at the ROM and had the opportunity to see a first-ever live guided tour of the wreck of HMS *Erebus* from under the Arctic sea ice.

Archaeological surveys are being conducted during an approximate 1-week expedition under the ice to further research the wreck and to continue photo and video documentation. The Department of National Defense’s Joint Task Force North has established a temporary camp near the site of HMS *Erebus* as part of Operation NUNALIVUT to support the archaeological diving operations; an expedition that simply would not be feasible in such an austere and extremely challenging environment without their expertise.

The Government of Canada is excited to connect Canadians with this historic research and was pleased to host this first-ever live dive. University of Toronto Schools’ students spent the day learning about the historic Franklin Expedition and exploring underwater archaeology methods and equipment, before the surprise virtual visit from divers in the Arctic. Today’s efforts offered this group of young Canadians a unique, once-in-a-lifetime chance to personally connect with history, generating an experience forever engraved in both their minds.

Quick Facts

- Franklin’s ships are an important part of Canadian history, as the expedition which took place nearly 170 years ago, laid the foundation of Canada’s Arctic sovereignty. On May 19, 1845, HMS *Erebus* and HMS *Terror* departed England, under the command of Sir John Franklin, on an ill-fated Arctic expedition in search of a Northwest Passage. Until the discovery of HMS *Erebus* in 2014, the fate of the Franklin expedition was one of Canada’s great mysteries.

- During the Government of Canada's 2014 Victoria Strait Expedition, the discovery of a Franklin expedition ship was made by Parks Canada on September 7. On September 30, 2014, the ship was positively identified as HMS *Erebus*.
- Parks Canada and the ROM recently formed a partnership to create an innovative project aimed at sharing the story of the Franklin Expedition. The Franklin Outreach Project will include pop-up displays, lectures, and exhibitions and incorporate contemporary research and technology and Inuit traditional knowledge to bring the Franklin story to life.
- Operation NUNALIVUT is a sovereignty operation conducted annually since 2007 in Canada's North. It provides an opportunity for the Canadian Armed Forces to: assert Canada's sovereignty over its northernmost regions; demonstrate the ability to operate in the harsh winter environment in remote areas of the High Arctic; and enhance its capability to respond to any situation in Canada's North.

Quotes

"Connecting Canada's youth to our Arctic past will ensure the incredible history of the north will continue to be celebrated and passed on to future generations. Today's live dive presented a unique opportunity to personally connect with the discovery of HMS *Erebus*; one of the most important and fascinating scientific and historical accomplishments of 2014 and defining moment for our nation."

*The Honourable Tony Clement
President of the Treasury Board*

"The discovery of the HMS *Erebus* was an important milestone for Canadian history and I'm proud of the important role that Inuit oral history played in its discovery. Through the combination of Canadian technology and Inuit traditional knowledge, we are connecting Canadians of all ages with our rich Arctic history, while providing significant benefits in the areas of Arctic marine safety, environmental protection, science and technology, and history and culture."

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

"Today's event shows how deeply committed our Government is to Canada's Arctic, and we are very pleased to be able to share this ground-breaking historical find with the world. Military exercises such as Operation NUNALIVUT allow us to not only assert our sovereignty in the region, but enable us to showcase a part of Canada that is ingrained in our collective identity."

*The Honourable Julian Fantino
Associate Minister of National Defence*

"The Franklin research continues to allow Canadians across the country and people from around the world to learn about and enjoy the mysteries of the Franklin Expedition. Our Government shares the pride in this incredible achievement made possible by the work of many partners and looks forward to further discoveries in 2015 and to helping Canadians experience and learn about this important chapter in Canadian history."

*Dr. Colin Carrie
Parliamentary Secretary for the Minister of the Environment*

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[The Discovery of Sir John Franklin's Flagship HMS Erebus: A Significant Scientific and Historical Accomplishment in 2014](#)

[Harper Government and Royal Ontario Museum Formalize Partnership to Bring the Story of the Franklin Expedition to Canadians](#)

[Harper Government Announces the Recovery of the HMS Erebus Bell](#)

[PM announces HMS *Erebus* as the discovered Franklin Expedition ship](#)

[Governments of Canada and Nunavut celebrate Franklin Expedition Discoveries in Gjoa Haven](#)

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

Associated Links

Parks Canada: www.pc.gc.ca

National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces: www.forces.gc.ca

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