



## Search for sunken Centaur to begin in December

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**The search for the torpedoed hospital ship, the Centaur, sunk in Queensland waters during World War II, will start next month.**

Prime Minister Kevin Rudd and Premier Anna Bligh have released a statement saying the hunt for the Centaur is expected to start in mid-December.

A Japanese submarine torpedoed the hospital ship off south-east Queensland in May 1943, killing 268 people.

Ms Bligh said a Defence Maritime Services vessel, the Seahorse Spirit, would play a critical role in the search.

She said deep-sea side-scan sonar equipment and a remotely operated submersible vessel capable of being operated at depths of up to 6,000 metres were among the specialised equipment sourced from two US-based firms.

"This is highly specialised equipment operated by only a handful of companies worldwide, with the majority based in the USA," Ms Bligh said.

"As the search is expected to be very challenging, with initial indications that the sub-sea terrain in the search area is steep and rugged, we need the best equipment and best people available to help us achieve success on this mission."

Mr Rudd said he hoped the search would be successful and bring some closure for the families of the victims.

"The discovery of this vessel would allow us to honour those people who were killed and hopefully better understand what happened on that very sad day," he said.

David Mearns, from British-based Blue Water Recoveries, is managing the search.

The company set a world record for the deepest shipwreck when it found the Rio Grande, a German blockade runner sunk in World War II, at a depth of 5.76 kilometres.

- AAP