

MEDIA RELEASE

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WWII era submarine torpedo arrives at Cockatoo Island

SYDNEY, Australia – A submarine torpedo of the type that was used during the Second World War and later by Australia’s Oberon class submarines, will leave the Spectacle Island military base today and make its way to Sub Base Platypus via Cockatoo Island.

The decommissioned torpedo - a Mark VIII - will arrive on Cockatoo Island, where it will be prepared for display at Sub Base Platypus later on this year, when the Torpedo Factory renewal project is complete.

Harbour Trust Executive Director Janet Carding said: “We are thrilled to bring back the Mark VIII torpedo, which was the type widely used during the Second World War, to where they were assembled and maintained.

“This is a piece of Australian history that will be put on display at Sub Base Platypus as a reminder of the work and dedication of thousands of workers, Navy personnel and local tradespeople during one of the darkest periods in global history.”

Sub Base Platypus was a key part of the Allied Powers war time supply route, and the Torpedo Factory serviced and maintained Mark VIII torpedos for the British Navy during the war.

The Sydney Harbour Federation Trust will put the torpedo on display at Sub Base Platypus to give Australians a sense of what the Torpedo Factory assembled at its peak.

Mark VIII torpedos caused substantial damage to German battlecruiser KN Gneisenau, the ‘Pocket Battleship’ KM Lutzow, and the heavy cruiser KM Prinz Eugen, and while it was most widely used during the Second World War, its history stretches beyond that and it was later used by both the German and Norwegian navies as well as by the Oberon class Australian submarines

The Mark VIII was last deployed against Argentina during the Falklands War.

The torpedo has been decommissioned and will be temporarily displayed in Building 137 on Cockatoo Island. It will be available for the public to view until it makes its final move to Sub Base Platypus.

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ABOUT SUB BASE PLATYPUS

Formerly a torpedo factory, submarine base and gasworks, Sub Base Platypus is a community recreation and work hub in North Sydney, homeland of the Cammeraygal People.

From 2016 to 2019, Sub Base Platypus underwent stage one of its transformation – seeing the site go from former naval base to recreational urban park and community space. Currently, Sub Base Platypus is undergoing stage two of its transformation, known as the Torpedo Factory Renewal Project. This project comprises demolition of the harbour-facing portion of the former Torpedo Factory building to create a new foreshore park and public domain spaces that explore the site’s history.

When Sub Base Platypus was opened by the Harbour Trust in May 2018, it marked the first time the site – formerly a gasworks, torpedo factory and submarine base – had been accessible to the public in 150 years.

ABOUT THE HARBOUR TRUST

Located in First Nations Countries at the entrance to Sydney Harbour, the Harbour Trust’s visitor destinations are places of natural beauty. They also feature heritage structures and other significant remnants from the nation’s colonial, maritime, and military narratives.

The Harbour Trust’s destinations include Cockatoo Island / Wareamah, North Head Sanctuary in Manly, Sub Base Platypus in North Sydney, and Headland Park in Mosman. They also protect Woolwich Dock and Parklands, Macquarie Lightstation in Vaucluse, and the Former Marine Biological Station at Camp Cove.

Through its management of these places, the Harbour Trust provides residents of – and visitors to – Australia’s largest city with access to precious bushland, parks, and open spaces. Their vision is to create, amplify, and make accessible the values of their protected places and, through storytelling, foster a sense of place and belonging.

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