

Robert Falcon Scott

Born: 6th June 1868, Davenport, England
Died: 29th March 1912 (Aged 44)



Robert Falcon Scott was born on the 6th of June 1868 in his family home just outside of Davenport, England. He grew up as the middle of five children and was often found daydreaming, which upset his mother, as daydreaming was a bad habit. As a child, he was very uneasy around blood and could not stand the suffering of animals; these were traits that he never grew out of.

His family had a strong naval background on both his mother and his father's side. He followed this family tradition by joining the Royal Navy in 1880, being promoted to the first lieutenant by 1897. In 1901 until 1904 he commanded and led an Antarctic expedition on the HMS Discovery where he demonstrated his skills as a scientific investigator and on his return was promoted to captain. The Discovery had been specially built for this voyage as a research ship and for travelling through the icy seas. This expedition was the first time someone had landed in the Antarctic with the aim of exploring the land exclusively for zoological and geological purposes.

In June 1910, Scott led another expedition, this time on a ship, which was originally a whaler, called the Terra Nova. This expedition was done with the main aim of studying the Ross Sea area as well as being the first explorer to reach the South Pole.

They began their expedition from Cape Evans on the 24th of October 1911, with 12 men, motor-sledges, ponies and dogs. Soon after they began, the motor sledges broke down and the ponies had to be shot. From here they also decided to send the dog teams back to camp and carry on with man-hauled sledges.

By the 31st of December, seven men had returned to base, leaving the five, Robert Scott, E.A. Wilson, H.R. Bowers, L.E.G Oats and Edgar Evans to carry on. On the 17th of January 1912, they reached the South Pole, 37 days behind Roald Amundsen, leaving them not only exhausted but also disappointed.

On their return to camp, they were met with exceptionally bad weather. Evans passed away on February the 17th, believed to be from an injury caused by a fall that no one witnessed.

With low food supplies and with dwindling strength, Oats, so weak from frostbite that he could barely walk, decided the team would be able to succeed more without him, so on the 17th of March he crawled out into the blizzard and passed away. The three remaining of the team, Scott, Wilson and Bowers, carried on for another 16kms before being forced to camp and getting trapped in their tent due to another blizzard that lasted for nine days. This is where they passed away. They were only 17kms from their destination.

On 12th of November 1912, searchers came upon their tent with the men still inside, along with Scott's records and diaries, with full documentation of their journey.

In January 1913, the remaining members of the team left the Antarctic and travelled to New Zealand where they were able to send news to Britain of their expedition. A memorial service was organised for the lives lost and was held by the King at St Paul's Cathedral, attended by more than 10,000 people.

Scott was regarded as a hero for his courage and patriotism and his widow was given the knighthood that would have gone to Scott should he have survived.

