

EVIDENCE A: SIR JOHN FRANKLIN



- Sir John Franklin was 59 years old when he became the commander of this expedition
- He was an experienced officer who had fought in many navy battles before
- He had commanded two previous trips to the Arctic before. On his first trip to the Arctic in 1819-22, he experienced many extreme hardships and had to fight to survive
- He became known as “the man who ate his boots”, because after they ran out of food he had to eat the leather boots he was wearing to survive
- Throughout his career he was an accomplished navigator and scientist, and he made detailed maps of all his trips.
- His colleagues and crew all seemed to like him and spoke favourably about him
- He was very religious (Christian) and was known for his concern about the safety and well-being of his crew

Was Sir John Franklin the right man for the job? Not everyone thought so at the time. Several officials expressed concern about Franklin’s age at the time (59 years old), his physical health, and his hatred of cold climates. During the winter of 1844-45 Franklin had been very ill with influenza, which he was still suffering from even after the expedition departed in May 1845.

EVIDENCE B:

COMMANDER JAMES FITZJAMES



- He was third in command on the Arctic expedition, and his experience at sea was military rather than exploration
- Served on different British naval campaigns in Syria, Egypt and China
- When Fitzjames was appointed to the Arctic expedition, Franklin gave him responsibilities for overseeing the magnetic observations that they were supposed to collect information on
- He was in charge of recruitment and staffing of the people going on the trip (70 men signed up for *HMS Erebus* and 69 for the *HMS Terror*)
- He hired mix of men with some prior experience on Arctic expeditions and many former shipmates with no Arctic experience
- Overall, it was one of the least experienced expeditions ever sent, in terms of polar service, to the Arctic

EVIDENCE C: FRANCIS CROZIER



- He was second in command on the Franklin expedition, and very experienced sailor
- He served as an officer in the British Royal Navy
- He participated in 5 successful Arctic expeditions before the Franklin expedition, which would be his final trip
- Crozier was skilled in studying geomagnetism, which is one of the reasons he was selected to go on this journey
- It is believed that Crozier had to take on responsibility for the rest of the crew once Franklin died, and he allegedly fought to keep them alive and to survive as long as possible
- Crozier and one other unnamed crewmember are believed to be the last survivors of the Terror and Erebus and were the last to be seen alive; several Inuit people reported seeing him and another man sometime between 1852-1858
- Crozier and the other crew member was apparently spotted traveling many miles from the location of the ships, and were described as looking as though they were 'starving'

EVIDENCE D: THE OFFICERS OF THE 2 SHIPS



EVIDENCE E: HMS TERROR AND HMS EREBUS



Aboard the HMS Erebus and HMS Terror, there was:

- 134 people serving as officers and crew, but 5 were fired before leaving port (129 total men left for the journey)
- provisions (preserved food) in an amount to last the crew three years — including 60,000 kg of flour, 8,000 cans of preserved meat, vegetables and soup; 500 kg of tinned pemmican; 4,000 kg of chocolate; and 1000 liters of wine
- research instruments for studying animals, the landscape, plants, and the earth's magnetism

- camera equipment, hand organs (musical instrument), and a library with almost 3,000 books

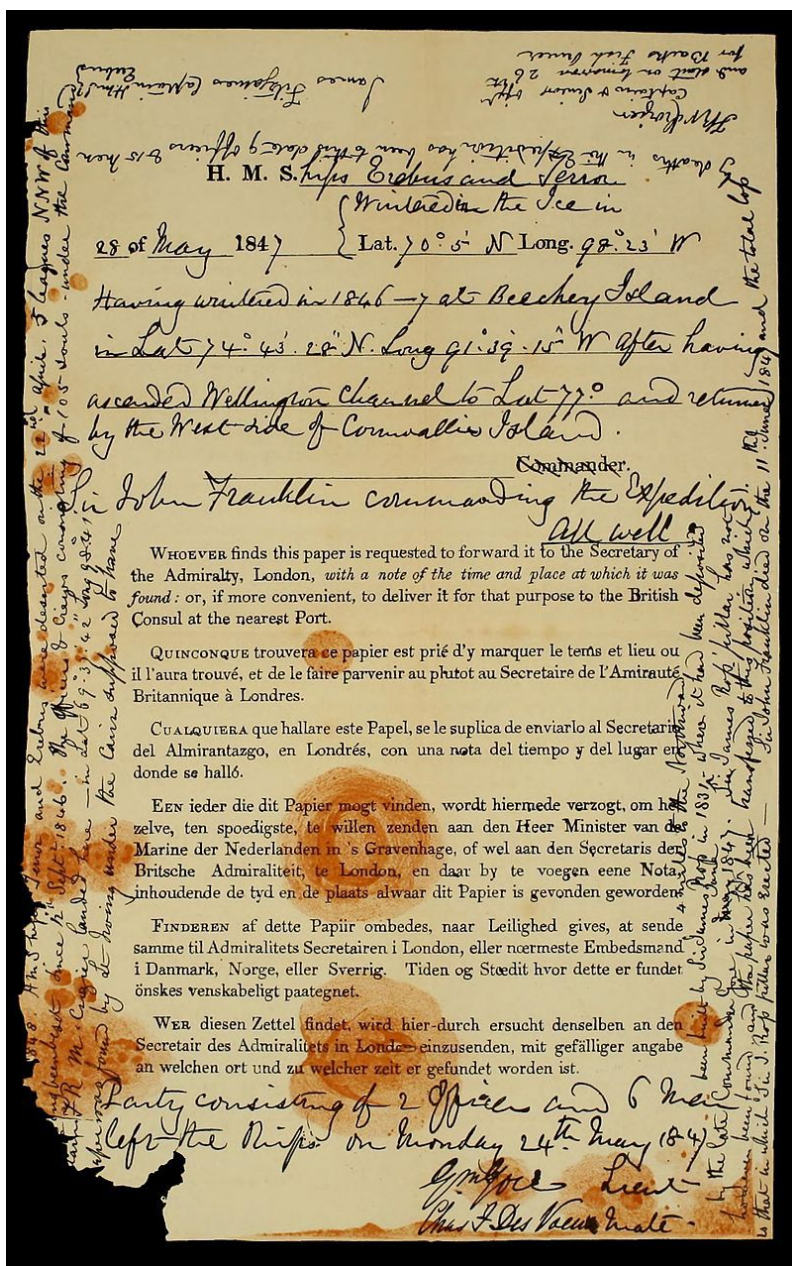
Both ships were built/modified to survive in the Arctic:

- the bows were strengthened with sheet iron to withstand ice and steam engines were added for use in emergency situations.
- equipped with desalinators, which could distill drinking water from seawater, and with boilers

The ships also brought a few animals with them as pets, including a dog named Neptune, a cat to help catch rats, and a monkey named Jacko. In short, it was a well-packed and well-equipped expedition.

The general belief of the crew and the officers was that they would find the Northwest Passage in a year. However, after sailing into Baffin Bay, where it was spotted by whaling ships on 26 July, the expedition was never heard from again.

SUPPLIES ON THE SHIPS



EVIDENCE & THE FRANKLIN EXPEDITION TIMELINE

In 1845, when Sir John Franklin left Britain in command of the Royal Navy's most ambitious Northwest Passage expedition, no one could have imagined that one of the world's greatest mysteries was about to unfold.

May 19, 1845: The Franklin Expedition departed from near London, England.

July 4, 1845: The ships arrived at the Whale Fish Islands, Greenland, after a stormy Atlantic crossing.

July 12, 1845: Officers and crew members mailed their last letters home.

July 29 or 31, 1845: HMS *Erebus* and *Terror* were sighted in Baffin Bay by whaling ships. This was the last time the ships and their crews were seen by Europeans.

Winter 1845 to 1846: The expedition spent its first winter in the Arctic off Beechey Island. Three members of the crew died, and were buried on Beechey Island.

Summer 1846: The expedition headed south into Peel Sound.

September 1846 to Spring 1848: The ships were beset — surrounded and stuck in ice — northwest of King William Island.

June 11, 1847: Sir John Franklin died. He was 61 years old and had served in the Royal Navy for 47 years.

April 22, 1848: The expedition had been stuck off of King William Island for over a year and a half. Fearing they would never escape, the men deserted the ships.

April 25, 1848: The men landed on King William Island. Nine officers and 15 seamen had already died. There were 105 survivors. Officers left a note stating their plan to trek to the Back River.

January 20, 1854: Franklin's Expedition is missing for more than eight years. The Admiralty announce that its officers and men will be declared dead as of March 31, 1854.

1847–1880: More than 30 expeditions sailed, steamed or sledged into the Arctic from the east, west and south. Very few found any trace of the expedition. There are rumours that Inuit people encountered Crozier at some point in the late 1850s.

2008: A renewed search for Franklin's ships began under the leadership of Parks Canada.

September 1, 2014: An important clue is found on an island in Wilmot and Crampton Bay: an iron davit pintle (fitting). Parks Canada refocuses its efforts near that island.

September 2, 2014: 167 years after the British Admiralty's search began, the first wreck, HMS *Erebus*, was found.

2016: Almost two years to the day after the discovery of *Erebus*, *Terror* is located in Terror Bay, off the southern coast of King William Island.