

JAMES COOK



EARLY LIFE

James Cook was born in Marton, England on October 27, 1728. His father was a farmer, but James was called to the sea. He became an apprentice to a merchant seaman around age 18 old. He was successful and advancing in the merchant navy, but decided to enlist in the Royal Navy when he was 26 at the beginning of the Seven Years War. During that war he became a master map maker. Cook impressed his superiors in the Navy with his surveying, navigating, and cartography skills.

THE ENDEAVOUR

England's Royal Society appointed Cook as the commander of the *Endeavour*, a ship typically used for carrying coal. The ship was durable and carried many supplies, but lacked speed. Captain Cook kept his crew healthy and safe by introducing rigid and innovative rules. He required his men to bathe daily, kept the ship extremely clean, and bedding had to be aired twice a week. To prevent scurvy, Cook had fresh fruit served to his men. Cook's planning and rules helped his men stay healthy throughout their long voyages.

COOK'S FIRST EXPEDITION

On August 26, 1768, Cook set off on his first journey with the purpose of observing the planet Venus as it passed between the Earth and the Sun. This helped astronomers calculate the distance between the Sun and the Earth. Cook hoped to find the fabled southern continent. Cook explored Tahiti, the Society Islands, and New Zealand during this expedition. He mapped a large portion of New Zealand's main islands, where he ended up fighting with the Maori natives. Next, they explored the east coast of Australia where Cook and his crew observed many interesting animals and plants, like the kangaroo. The ship was damaged on some coral though, causing delays while repairs were done. Much of Cook's crew got malaria from mosquitoes while they were stopped and over 30 men died. In July of 1771, nearly three years from departure, they returned home.

COOK'S SECOND EXPEDITION

Cook took his second expedition from 1772 to 1775. He took two ships this time- the *Adventure* and the *Resolution*. He set out with the goal of either discovering the southern continent or to prove that it did not exist. They went below 70 degrees latitude, the furthest south any European had explored and visited Easter Island.

COOK'S THIRD EXPEDITION

In 1776, Cook left on his third expedition with the goal of finding a northwest passage across North America to Asia. He and his crew searched Alaska's coast to no avail, but found the Hawaiian Islands, known as the Sandwich Islands then. Captain Cook and his men got along well with the natives of Hawaii at first, but then things went badly when the natives stole a sailboat from Cook's ship. Angered, Cook tried to kidnap the chief and hold him ransom for the boat, but a fight broke out and Cook was killed by the natives on February 14th, 1779.

COOK'S LEGACY

Cook was the first British ship commander to circumnavigate the globe in a lone ship. He chartered many areas and recorded several islands and coastlines on European maps. He provided information about the Pacific Ocean and the natives who lived in the region. A NASA space shuttle was named after Cook's ship, the HMS Endeavour