

Shackleton's Incredible Journey

TIMELINE OF THE IMPERIAL TRANS-ANTARCTIC EXPEDITION

August 1914 - August 1916

August 1, 1914

Endurance departs London the same day Germany declares war on Russia

August 4

Shackleton offers his ship and crew to British government for war effort

August 8

After Shackleton receives one-word telegram from Admiralty ("Proceed"), *Endurance* departs Plymouth

October 26

With final crew on board, *Endurance* leaves Buenos Aires, Argentina for South Georgia

December 5

Departs Grytviken whaling station, South Georgia - last time crew would touch land for 497 days

December 7

Enters the Antarctic pack ice

December 30

Endurance crosses Antarctic Circle

January 10, 1915

First sighting of Antarctic continent (Coats Land)

January 18

Endurance becomes locked in the pack ice

February 22

Drifts to 77th parallel in Vahsel Bay, farthest south the ship will reach

February 24

Shackleton orders halt to ship routine



May 1

Sun vanishes for season, not to reappear for four months

October 27

At 5 p.m., Shackleton gives order to abandon the *Endurance*

November 1

After futile, three-day attempt to march over the ice, Shackleton has crew erect Ocean Camp

November 21

With a single cry of "She's going, boys!" Shackleton and his crew watch *Endurance* sink

December 23

Crew again begins march toward open water, averaging just a mile and a half a day.

January 21, 1916

Blizzard blows the camp north across Antarctic Circle

March 31

The ice floe they are on splits in two, separating them from the three lifeboats, but they get them back

April 7

Elephant Island appears on the horizon

April 9

Crew goes to sea in the three lifeboats, the *James Caird*, the *Dudley Docker*, and the *Stancomb Wills*

April 16

After seven grueling days at sea, lifeboats land safely on Elephant Island

April 20

Shackleton announces that he will attempt to sail the 22-and-a-half-foot *James Caird* 800 miles to South Georgia

April 24

Shackleton and five others depart for South Georgia in *James Caird*



May 10

After 17 days in stormy seas, and with superior navigation by Frank [Worsley](#), the *James Caird* miraculously arrives on the west coast of South Georgia

May 19

Shackleton, Worsley, and Crean set off to cross South Georgia's glacier-clad peaks to east-coast whaling stations

May 20

Having trekked without a break for 36 hours over glacier-clad mountains thousands of feet high, Shackleton, Worsley, and Crean arrive at Stromness whaling station

May 23

Shackleton, Worsley, and Crean depart on the English-owned *Southern Sky* to rescue men on Elephant Island, but are stopped by ice 100 miles short of the island

June 10

Uruguayan government loans the survey ship *Instituto de Pesca No 1*, which comes within sight of Elephant Island before pack ice turns it back

July 12

Chartered by the British Association, the schooner *Emma* sets out from Punta Arenas, but gets to within 100 miles of Elephant Island before storms and ice force it to return

August 25

Chilean authorities loan the *Yelcho*, a small steamer, which sets sail with Shackleton, Worsley, and Crean for Elephant Island

August 30

"I felt jolly near blubbing for a bit & could not speak for several minutes," Wild wrote about seeing Shackleton arrive with the *Yelcho*, which rescued the party on this day, 22 months after they'd set out from South Georgia.

Chief source: *The Endurance: Shackleton's Legendary Antarctic Expedition*, by Caroline Alexander (Knopf, 1998).