



POLES APART - A Tale of Two Early 20th Century Expeditions to the Ends of the Earth

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By the late 19th century, there was not much left to “discover” on this earth in terms of geography. Since Columbus sailed west across the Atlantic 400 years before and others such as Magellan, Vasco de Gama, Drake, and latterly Cook had voyaged to unknown part of our planet and discovered new lands. Only the Polar Regions remained somewhat of a geographic mystery.

In 1913 two polar expeditions were planned, one going south the other north. These expeditions had many similarities but had different leadership styles and quite different outcomes.

The Imperial Trans-Antarctic Expedition, organized and led by Ernest Shackleton went south, while The Canadian Arctic Expedition, organized by Vilhjalmur Stefansson went north

Both these expeditions lost there ships early in their endeavours; in one, all survived and the other had considerable loss of life: one failed to achieve any of its objectives while the other was successful in reaching its primary goal

This address will compare and contrast these two events and attempt to draw conclusions which may still be relevant for today's Arctic activities

Two poles – two ships – two leaders – two outcomes.....