

Tom Crean's Story

Hello my name is Tom Crean

You might have heard of me. But if not, let me introduce myself.

I was born in 1877 in Annascaul, Co. Kerry. It's a small village on the Dingle Peninsula, between Dingle and Tralee. I came from a farming family with ten children and money was tight. I wanted to explore the world and I loved the sea, so I joined the Royal Navy at the age of 15.

For seven years I worked hard and learned all about sailing on the seas. I moved up the ranks and in 1901 I seized my chance to sail on Captain Robert Falcon Scott's ship "Discovery". She was headed for Antarctica, the most Southern continent, with the British National Expedition.

Disaster struck in the winter of 1902 when the "Discovery" was trapped in the ice. I headed a trip inland with a few others. We carried all we needed with us; food, medicine, and camping gear. We were exhausted in the freezing cold and many of us suffered from frostbite.

We tried everything to free our ship, but didn't succeed until spring 1904. We headed home and I returned to normal duty in the Navy. In 1910 Captain Scott asked me to join him on his second expedition to the South Pole, this time onboard "Terra Nova". But now a Norwegian team, lead by Rolf Amussen, was racing us to the Pole!

Captain Scott did make it to the South Pole this time, but the Norwegian expedition beat us to it. On the return leg of our journey, tragedy struck. Scott and four of my crewmates died in the freezing cold. The remaining team returned to England in 1913 to a huge welcome. King George presented us with Polar Medals. I got the Albert Medal with another shipmate, for saving the life of our friend Lt. Evans. We were just doing our duty.

One year later, I made my final voyage to Antarctica on the "Endurance" with Sir. Ernest Shackleton. This fellow Irishman and explorer was known to all of us on the crew as "The Boss". We aimed to cross continental Antarctica from coast to coast. Unfortunately this wild land defeated us again when our ship was sunk by ice floes in 1915.

The entire crew of 28 men set out across the endless ice seeking safety and survival. Eventually we were rescued, and I returned to England in 1916 and continued to sail with the Navy, until 1920 when I returned to my native Kerry.

Just as I embarked on journeys full of excitement, challenges, and personal growth when I joined Scott and Shackleton in Antarctica, you too are about to embark on an amazing Scouting Journey. You'll learn new skills, experience exciting challenges, make a difference in your community, new friends, and create special memories of your voyage.

Throughout your Journey, you can collect awards and badges. These are the outward sign of honour and achievement for any explorer. And remember, adventures can begin anywhere...