

Endurance (1912 ship)

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The ***Endurance*** was the three-masted barquentine in which Sir Ernest Shackleton sailed for the Antarctic on the 1914 Imperial Trans-Antarctic Expedition. She was launched in 1912 from Sandefjord in Norway and was crushed by ice, causing her to sink, three years later in the Weddell Sea off Antarctica.

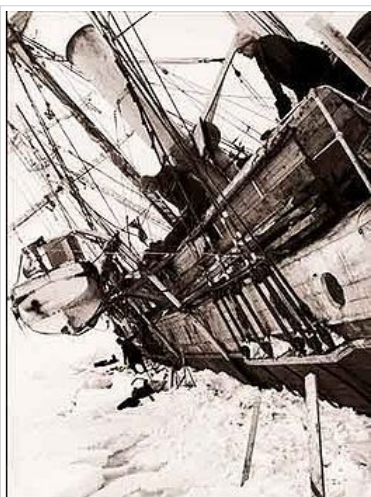
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Design and construction

Designed by Ole Aanderud Larsen, the *Endurance* was built at the Framnæs shipyard in Sandefjord, Norway and launched on December 17, 1912. She was built under the supervision of master wood shipbuilder Christian Jacobsen, who was renowned for insisting that his employees be experienced seafarers as well as skilled shipwrights.

Initially christened the *Polaris* (eponymous with Polaris, the North Star), *Endurance* was launched on December 17, 1912, 144 feet (43.9 m) long, with a 25 foot (7.6 m) beam and weight of 350 tons (356 metric tons). Though her black hull appeared similar to other vessels of a comparable size, her construction was designed for durability in polar conditions. Each joint and fitting cross-braced each other for maximum strength. Her keel members were four pieces of solid oak, one above the other, adding up to a thickness of 7 feet, 1 inch, while her sides were between 2 1/2 feet and 18 inches thick, with twice as many frames as normal and the frames being of double thickness. She was built of planks of oak and Norwegian fir up to two and one half feet thick, sheathed in greenheart, a notably strong and heavy wood. Her bow, where she would meet the ice head-on, had been given special attention. Each timber had been made from a single oak tree chosen for its shape so that its natural shape followed the curve of her design. When put together, these pieces had a thickness of 4 feet, 4 inches.



Shackleton looking overboard at the *Endurance* being crushed by the ice

Of her three masts, the forward one was square-rigged, while the after two carried fore and aft sails, like a schooner. As well as sails, *Endurance* had a 350 hp (260 kW) coal-fired steam engine capable of driving her at speeds up to 10.2 knots (19 km/h).

At her launch, *Endurance* was perhaps the strongest wooden ship ever built, with the possible exception of the *Fram*, the vessel used by Fridtjof Nansen and later by Roald Amundsen. The *Fram* was bowl-bottomed, which meant that if the ice closed in against her she would be squeezed up and out and not be subject to the pressure of the ice compressing around her. But since the *Endurance* was designed to operate in relatively loose pack ice, she was not constructed to rise out of pressure to any great extent.

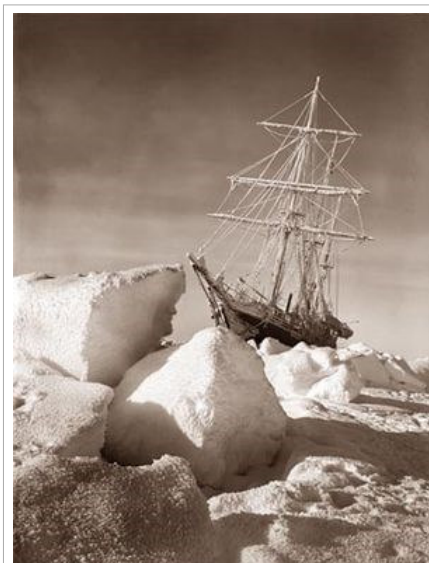
Ownership

Endurance was built for Adrien de Gerlache and Lars Christensen, who intended to use her to take tourists on polar cruises to hunt polar bears. Financial problems led to de Gerlache pulling out of the venture; Christensen sold the boat to

Ernest Shackleton for GBE11,600 (approx US\$67,000), less than cost. He is reported to have been happy to take the loss to further the plans of an explorer of Shackleton's stature.^[1] Shackleton re-christened the ship *Endurance* after his family motto, "*Fortitudine vincimus*" (By endurance we conquer).

Final voyage

Endurance left Plymouth, England on August 6, 1914, when it set course for Buenos Aires, Argentina, under the command of Captain Frank Worsley.



Endurance trapped in pack ice during the Imperial Trans-Antarctic Expedition

Career (UK)



Builder:	Framnæs shipyards, Sandefjord, Norway
Launched:	December 17, 1912
Christened:	<i>Polaris</i>
Fate:	Crushed by pack ice in the Weddell Sea in 1915

General characteristics

Class and type:	Three-masted Barquentine Hull: Reinforced Wood
Tonnage:	350 tons
Length:	144 ft (44 m)
Beam:	25 ft (7.6 m)
Draught:	— ft (— m)
Propulsion:	350 hp Coal fired steam and sail
Speed:	10.2 knots
Crew:	28



Endurance final sinking November 1915

Shackleton joined the ship later in Buenos Aires, with other crew members. The ocean crossing was *Endurance's* first major cruising since her completion and amounted to a shakedown cruise. The difficult trip across the Atlantic took more than two months. Built for the ice, her hull was considered by many of its crew too rounded for the open ocean.

On October 26, 1914 *Endurance* sailed from Buenos Aires to her last port of call, the Grytviken whaling station on the island of South Georgia off the southern tip of South America, where she arrived on November 5. She departed from Grytviken for her final voyage on December 5 towards the southern regions of the Weddell Sea.

Two days after leaving from South Georgia, *Endurance* encountered polar pack ice and progress slowed down. For weeks *Endurance* twisted and squirmed her way through the pack, averaging less than 30 miles per day. By January 15, 1915, *Endurance* was within 200 miles of its destination, Vahsel Bay. The following day, heavy pack ice was sighted in the morning and in the afternoon a blowing gale developed. Progress could not be made under these conditions, and *Endurance* took shelter under the lee of a large grounded berg. For the next two days, *Endurance* dodged back and forth under the sheltering protection of the berg.

On January 18, the gale began to moderate and *Endurance*, one day's sail from her destination, set the topsail with the engine at slow. The ice pack had blown away, and progress was made slowly until *Endurance* encountered the pack once more. Shackleton decided to move forward and work through the pack, and the *Endurance* entered the ice pack at 5:00 P.M.

The crew soon noted that this ice was different. The ship was soon beset by thick but soft ice floes, a soupy sea of mushy, brash ice. The gale regained intensity and blew for another six days from a northerly direction towards land. By January 24, the wind had completely compressed the ice in the whole Weddell Sea against the land - and around *Endurance*. All that could be done was to wait for a southerly gale that would decompress and open the ice in the other direction. but there were no southern gales in the Weddell Sea only moderate winds. Time passed, yet the ice remained unchanged.

Trapped in the ice, *Endurance* drifted in the Weddell Sea until her hull succumbed to the ice pack's relentless pressure on October 27, 1915. She finally sank bow first on November 21, 1915, the last ship of her kind.

Crew

The crew of the *Endurance* in its final voyage was made up of the 28 men listed below:

- | | | |
|-------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------|
| ■ Sir Ernest Shackleton, Leader | ■ Alexander Macklin, Surgeon | ■ Charles Green, Cook |
| ■ Frank Wild, Second-in-Command | ■ James McIlroy, Surgeon | ■ Walter How, Able Seaman |
| ■ Frank Worsley, Captain | ■ James Wordie, Geologist | ■ William Bakewell, Able Seaman |
| ■ Lionel Greenstreet, First Officer | ■ Leonard Hussey, Meteorologist | ■ Timothy McCarthy, Able Seaman |
| ■ Tom Crean, Second Officer | ■ Reginald James, Physicist | ■ Thomas McLeod, Able Seaman |
| ■ Alfred Cheetham, Third Officer | ■ Robert Clark, Biologist | ■ John Vincent, Boatswain |
| ■ Hubert Hudson, Navigator | ■ Frank Hurley, Photographer | ■ Ernest Holness, Stoker |
| ■ Louis Rickinson, Engineer | ■ George Marston, Artist | ■ William Stephenson, Stoker |
| ■ Alfred Kerr, Engineer | ■ Thomas Orde-Lees, Motor Expert and Storekeeper | ■ Perce Blackborow, Steward |
| | ■ Harry "Chippy" McNish, Carpenter | |

Blackborow was originally refused a post aboard the vessel due to his young age and inexperience and decided to stow away, helped to sneak aboard by William Bakewell, a friend of his, Tim McCarthy and Walter How. By the time he was found, the expedition was far enough out that Shackleton had no choice but to make him a steward. Blackborow eventually proved his worth, earning the Bronze Polar Medal, and the honour of becoming the first human being ever to set foot on Elephant Island. His name is also the matter of some debate - it is sometimes spelled Percy, or Blackboro, or in other ways.

Modern history

Alfred Lansing wrote a book titled *Endurance: Shackleton's Incredible Voyage* about the ordeal that Shackleton and his men endured aboard the ship. It became a bestseller when first published in 1959. Subsequent reprints have made it a recurrent bestseller; the last time being in the late 1990s.

Two Antarctic patrol ships of the Royal Navy have been named *Endurance* in honour of Shackleton's ship. The first HMS *Endurance* (originally named *Anita Dan*) was launched in May 1956 and awarded pennant number A171 sometime later. She acted as an ice patrol and hydrographic survey ship until 1986. The current HMS *Endurance* is a class 1A1 icebreaker, bought from Norway in 1992, where she had been known as MV *Polar Circle*. She is based at Portsmouth but makes annual forays to Antarctica where she can penetrate through 0.9 metres of ice at a speed of 3 knots. She has a complement of 126 marine personnel and carries two Westland Lynx helicopters.

External links

- Website of the Royal Geographical Society (<http://images.rgs.org/search.aspx?EventCategoryID=1>) Holds a large collection of pictures of the *Endurance*.
- American Museum of Natural History (<http://www.amnh.org/exhibitions/shackleton/aboard.html>) Quotes from the diary of Frank Hurley: *Aboard Endurance*.
- American Museum of Natural History (<http://www.amnh.org/exhibitions/shackleton/beset.html>) Quotes from the diary of Henry "Chippy" McNeish about *Endurance* beset on January 18.
- American Museum of Natural History (<http://www.amnh.org/exhibitions/shackleton/beset.html#ship1>) Two Computer animations of *Endurance* beset.
- Information on Alfred Lansing's Book: *Endurance* (ISBN 0-7867-0621-X)
- Trans-Antarctica Expedition 1914 - 1917 (http://www.coolantarctica.com/Antarctica%20fact%20file/History/Ernest%20Shackleton_Trans-Antarctic_expedition.htm)
- British Antarctic Territory stamps honoring *Endurance* (<http://www.falklands.gov.fk/pb/bat/endurance.htm>)
- Royal Navy's website of HMS *Endurance* (<http://www.royal-navy.mod.uk/server/show/ConWebDoc.70/changeNav/3533>)
- *Endurance's* crew (<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/shackletonexped/1914/team.html>)

References

- ^ Lansing, Alfred. (1999) 2nd ed. *Endurance: Shackleton's Incredible Voyage*. Carroll & Graf Publishers. ISBN 0-7867-0621-X

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