

Letter from the chair

Greetings, Antarctic explorers! My name is Devin Cox, and I'm from Framingham, Massachusetts. I am a freshman at The George Washington University studying International Affairs with a concentration in Security Policy. I'm a member of the George Washington Model United Nations Team, and I did Model UN and Model Congress throughout high school as well. I'm also active in the GW International Affairs Society as a Freshman Representative, and I was the Vice Chair of DISEC at GWCIA, our middle school conference. Outside of school, I enjoy reading science fiction, going to concerts, and playing guitar in my metal band.

For me, the draw of the Race to South Pole was the sheer determination and willpower it took for Roald Amundsen and his crew to brave the harsh elements and travel where no person had set foot before. I'm excited to see how you all will work together to reach the South Pole in the face of extreme cold, supply shortages, and a number of other challenges.

I can't wait to see what will happen, and I hope you are all just as excited as I am. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to email me and I'd be happy to clarify. Good luck!

Sincerely,

Devin Cox

devin.cox@gwu.edu

Introduction to the Committee

The hidden ravines and extreme temperatures of the South Pole make it a deadly place to explore, yet after claims that American explorers have finally conquered its Northern counterpart, the vast and icy Antarctic stands alone as the last place on Earth untouched by man. The Norwegian explorer Roald Amundsen, having already planned and secured financial support for an expedition to the North Pole, now desperately pivots to the South Pole in a bid to resolve “the last great problem” of Polar exploration. Amundsen’s team now seeks to achieve what no other has done before: reach the South Pole and return to tell the tale. All before the rival British expedition does so.

In this committee, you must work together to brave not only the harsh climates of Antarctica, but also the severe isolation and deprivation of such a lonely expedition. Will you succeed in conquering the last great polar frontier, claiming glory for your country and securing your place in history? Or, will you fail, losing the race to your British rivals, or worse—perishing in a cold, lonely death in Antarctica. Your legacy as explorers, the prestige for king and country, the sheer achievement of being the first human beings to ever set foot at the South Pole, and your very lives, are all on the line. It is up to you to use your resources, historical knowledge, diplomatic ability, and teamwork skills to win the race to the South Pole.

As a historical/specialized committee, this committee will be run as a fusion of a traditional GA and Crisis Committee. Delegates will engage in moderated debate and write, debate, and vote on Directives. There will be crisis staffers who will provide crisis updates in response to directives, but no traditional backroom or crisis arcs.

This committee will start on January 14th 1911, the day the *Fram* landed in Antarctica. The goal of this committee is to safely reach the South Pole and return home before Scott’s

expedition does so. Delegates will receive a crisis update at the start of the first committee session and from there, must pass directives to safely reach the South Pole before Scott. Additional crisis updates will be provided throughout the conference in response to directives passed (or failed to pass) by the committee. The events of this committee are likely to diverge from those of real life; however, delegates must take care that their directives are within the realm of reason. Creativity is highly encouraged, but magical or fantastical elements will not be accepted in this committee.

Finally, respect and consideration of your fellow delegates is paramount. Ultimately, we are all here to learn and have fun. I expect you to show leadership and strongly advocate for your position, but compromise and diplomacy are essential.

Historical Context

The Heroic Age of Antarctic Exploration

While the existence of the Antarctic continent may have been known to Polynesian explorers since the 7th century, the first confirmed sighting of Antarctica was in January of 1820, although the exact first sighting is disputed between sailors Thaddeus von Bellingshause and Edward Bransfield. However, actual exploration of the continent remained unattempted until Great Britain sent an expedition, led by Carsten Borchgrevink, to Antarctica.¹ This expedition kicked off what is known as the ‘Heroic Age of Antarctic Exploration’, so called because the explorers had to brave the harsh environment without the aid of modern technology such as airplanes.

¹ “History of Antarctic Explorers,” History of Antarctic explorers | Royal Museums Greenwich, accessed December 19, 2024, <http://www.rmg.co.uk/stories/topics/history-antarctic-explorers>.

The Heroic Age of Antarctic Exploration took place in the context of a time of both increasing scientific advancement as well as increasingly pronounced nationalism. Thus, the heroic age had dual goals of advancing scientific knowledge and bringing prestige upon one's home country.² While exact dates differ, the Heroic Age is typically considered to have lasted from Borchgrevink's expedition in 1897 until the ill-fated Shackleton-Rowett expedition in 1922.³

Subsequently, several Antarctic expeditions were attempted. The British, supported by the Royal Geographic Society, set off first. British Explorer Robert Falcon Scott, who would later race Amundsen to the Pole, set off on his first expedition in 1901.⁴ While it was ultimately unsuccessful in reaching the South Pole, Scott and his party managed to reach 530 miles from their destination.⁵ The British tried again with the *Nimrod* expedition from 1907 until 1909. The group, led by Ernest Shackleton, reached closer to the Pole than ever before—within 97 miles.⁶ However, the expedition party was forced to turn back before they reached its ultimate destination. The Heroic Age also saw attempts at expeditions by other European powers, but the British and Norwegian expeditions were the most successful.⁷ Thus, by 1910 when Amundsen and Scott set off, the South Pole remained unreachable.⁸

² Lize-Marié van der Watt, "Antarctica," Encyclopædia Britannica, December 19, 2024, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Antarctica>

³ Cynthia Smith, "Reaching the South Pole during the Heroic Age of Exploration: Worlds Revealed," The Library of Congress, September 21, 2021, <https://blogs.loc.gov/maps/2021/09/reaching-the-south-pole-during-the-heroic-age-of-exploration/>.

⁴ "History of Antarctic Explorers," History of Antarctic explorers | Royal Museums Greenwich

⁵ Smith, "Reaching the South Pole during the Heroic Age of Exploration: Worlds Revealed,"

⁶ Smith, "Reaching the South Pole during the Heroic Age of Exploration: Worlds Revealed,"

⁷ van der Watt, "Antarctica," Encyclopædia Britannica

⁸ "History of Antarctic Explorers," History of Antarctic explorers | Royal Museums Greenwich

The Amundsen Expedition: In Detail

Originally, the *Fram* was meant to sail to the Arctic, as it had twice before, and Amundsen's goal was to attempt to be the first to reach the North Pole. However, in 1909 Robert Peary claimed that he successfully reached the North Pole, and while this claim is now viewed with suspicion, Amundsen accepted it at the time, and secretly made preparations to sail to the South Pole.⁹ While the crew had suspicions at first (many wondered why, if the *Fram* would first pass Cape Horn to reach the Bering Strait, they were carrying sled dogs from the beginning of the trip as opposed to picking them up later in Russia) Amundsen successfully kept his plans hidden.¹⁰ Amundsen justified this decision because, as he was planning to sail south around Cape Horn anyways (in order to reach the Bering Strait)—then Antarctica would be 'On the way' to the North Pole.

After Amundsen had decided on his secret plan, he needed to prepare for the unprecedented trek. He was granted use of the *Fram*, a ship that was specifically designed for polar expeditions. It had previously been used by Amundsen's colleagues Fridtjof Nansen and Otto Sverdrup on two northern expeditions, to great success. Amundsen was meticulous in his preparations. The *Fram* was loaded up with ammunition and explosives, sled dogs, preserved food (mostly dried fish), skis, and sleds.¹¹

Just before the start of the voyage, Amundsen informed Thorvald Nilsen, Hjalmar Fredrik Gjertsen, and Kristian Prestrud of the expedition's true destination. He informed the rest

⁹ "The Third Fram Expedition (1910-1914)," The Fram Museum, July 10, 2019, <https://framuseum.no/polar-history/expeditions/the-third-fram-expedition-1910-1914/>.

¹⁰ "Timeline: Amundsen Expedition to the South Pole," American Museum of Natural History, accessed December 19, 2024, <https://www.amnh.org/exhibitions/race-to-the-end-of-the-earth/amundsen/timeline>.

¹¹ "The Third Fram Expedition (1910-1914)," The Fram Museum

of the crew on the island of Madeira, which was their last stop before Antarctica, and the crew was enthusiastic about the prospect of being the first to reach the South Pole. Leon Amundsen, Roald's brother, had met the crew in Madeira, and was dispatched back to Norway to deliver letters from Amundsen and the rest of the crew explaining their decision to journey to the South Pole. Leon also sent a telegram to Scott (whose expedition was in Australia at the time) informing him that Amundsen was vying for the South Pole as well.¹²

In the four months it took the Fram to reach Antarctica, the crew spent time preparing for their journey. They ensured that all the equipment was in order, the sled dogs were healthy, and each crew member knew their role. The Fram finally reached the Antarctic Bay of Whales on January 14th, 1911, after traveling nearly 10,000 miles.¹³

Once they reached Antarctica, Amundsen split his party into two groups. One, led by Amundsen himself, would set up a basecamp and stay on Antarctica. The other, led by Thorvald Nilsen, would stay on the Fram and carry out oceanographic research. One advantage that Amundsen had over Scott was that Amundsen had set up his base 60 miles closer to the Pole than Scott, who had landed farther North on Ross Island ten days prior.¹⁴ They quickly got to work using the prefabricated base made by Jorgen Stubberud to build a shelter, which they named Framheim. It consisted both of buildings and tents above ground, as well as underground tunnels and rooms dug under the ice. They also hunted seals, which were highly abundant in Antarctica, for food.

¹² "The Third Fram Expedition (1910-1914)," The Fram Museum

¹³ "The Third Fram Expedition (1910-1914)," The Fram Museum

¹⁴ "1910–1912 Fram Expedition," Amundsen, August 22, 2022, <https://amundsen.mia.no/en/resource/1910-1912-fram-expedition-2/>.

While Scott's party mostly kept their distance from Amundsen's, the two groups did meet up on February 4th, 1911. The British, heretofore unaware of the extent of the Norwegian's preparations, are impressed with the scale of their expedition.¹⁵

In order to prepare for the long trek to the South Pole, a key aspect of Amundsen's plan was to set up various supply depots on the route to the South Pole. Throughout the next months, three depots were set up, each containing hundreds of pounds of supplies and clearly demarcated by cairns and flags.¹⁶ The use of sled dogs proved invaluable in transporting the supplies to the depots—another advantage Amundsen had over Scott, who decided not to use them.¹⁷ They also further adjusted their equipment to better accommodate the Antarctic environment, such as modifying the sled harnesses to reduce weight, and experimenting with different types of cold-weather gear.

While they were preparing, Amundsen began to worry that Scott would beat him to the South Pole. Amundsen was aware that Scott had brought with him motorized tractors as opposed to sled dogs, and grew concerned that this technology would be the key to a Scott victory (unbeknownst to Amundsen, Scott's tractors broke down in the Antarctic cold).¹⁸ After all, the crew reasoned, what would the point of the expedition even be if they weren't the first to reach the Pole?¹⁹ Thus, Amundsen decided to set off for the Pole earlier than he had originally planned to.

¹⁵ "1910–1912 Fram Expedition," Amundsen

¹⁶ "The Third Fram Expedition (1910-1914)," The Fram Museum

¹⁷ "1910–1912 Fram Expedition," Amundsen

¹⁸ "The Third Fram Expedition (1910-1914)," The Fram Museum

¹⁹ "1910–1912 Fram Expedition," Amundsen

After waiting for the temperatures to get a bit warmer, on the morning of September 8th, a party consisting of Amundsen, Kristian Prestrud, Hjalmar Johansen, Helmer Hanssen, Olav Bjaaland, Oscar Wisting, Jorgen Stubberud, and Sverre Hassel set off for the South Pole. This first attempt started off well, however the temperatures soon dropped once again. The extreme cold and risk of severe frostbite forced them to turn back after a few days of travelling.²⁰

Once all the men were back at Framheim, a fight broke out between Amundsen and Hjalmar Johansen. This was due to the fact that, after Amundsen set off ahead of the rest of the party to return back, Kristian Prestrud almost died due to the cold and Johansen had to rush back to save him. Johansen accused Amundsen of abandoning the rest of the group, and in retaliation Amundsen removed him from the Pole team, and sent him off on a research expedition with Prestrud.²¹

Finally, on the 20th of October, Amundsen, Wisting, Bjaaland, Hanssen, and Hassel set off for the South Pole. Until 82° S, they were able to follow the established path, but beyond, it was completely unexplored territory. On November 30th, they passed the point Shackleton had reached in 1907 making them the closest that anyone has reached to the South Pole. Then, on December 14, 1911, after eight weeks, the group of five Norwegians became the first people in human history to reach the South Pole.²²

After circling the pole and taking measurements to offer interconvertible evidence that they had been the first to reach the Pole, they departed on the night of December 18. They left behind a tent with the Norwegian flag, some unneeded supplies, and two letters. After briefly losing track of their course, Amundsen and the others returned to Framheim on January 26,

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ "Timeline: Amundsen Expedition to the South Pole," American Museum of Natural History

²² "1910–1912 Fram Expedition," Amundsen

1912.²³ In total, the trip to the South Pole took 99 days and over 1800 miles. The Fram returned from a trip to Argentina the next day, and on the 30th of January Amundsen's party left Antarctica after staying there for 381 days.²⁴

The Legacy of the Expedition

After Amundsen's party reached the Pole, Scott's expedition was still trekking towards their destination. When they arrived, they were dismayed to find the Norwegians had reached the finish line first. They found Amundsen's tents left behind, the Norwegian flag, and two letters: one addressed to Scott, and the other to the King of Norway. Dejected, Scott's party stayed a few days before departing. In the midst of their return journey, Scott and the four other members of his expedition perish due to exposure. Scott's body, those of two others, and the letters from Amundsen are later recovered by a search party. The bodies of the two remaining members of Scott's party are never found.²⁵

Upon returning to Norway, Amundsen and the crew of the *Fram* were received with a hero's welcome, although the tragedy of the Scott expedition occasionally overshadowed him, particularly in Scott's home country of Britain. He gave lectures, and wrote and published a book accounting the journey to the South Pole.²⁶ While it was well-received and generally popular, it did leave some things out, most notably his falling out with Hjalmar Johansen.²⁷

²³ "1910–1912 Fram Expedition," Amundsen

²⁴ "The Third Fram Expedition (1910-1914)," The Fram Museum

²⁵ "1910–1912 Fram Expedition," Amundsen

²⁶ "Timeline: Amundsen Expedition to the South Pole," American Museum of Natural History

²⁷ "1910–1912 Fram Expedition," Amundsen

After the South Pole expedition, Amundsen continued to explore. He became a pilot in 1914, and set off on an expedition through the Northwest passage in 1918. He sets his sights on the North Pole, and after reaching 88° N in 1925 by airship, becomes the first person verified to reach the North Pole in 1926 aboard the airship *Norge*.²⁸ In 1928, Amundsen led an expedition attempting to locate any survivors of the crashed airship *Italia* in the Arctic Circle. However, his plane crashed, and neither Amundsen nor his compatriots were ever found.²⁹

Issues the expedition may face:

The biggest challenges the expedition will face in Antarctica are due to the climate and how isolated it is. Per the United States Antarctic Program, in the winter at the South Pole, temperatures can reach below -76 degrees Fahrenheit in the winter, and while the summers are warmer, the average is still -18 degrees.³⁰ However, Amundsen's expedition at the time did benefit from unseasonably warm temperatures, although 'unseasonably warm' for Antarctica is still around 3 degrees Fahrenheit at warmest.³¹ Additionally, while Antarctica may be freezing cold, it's also a desert. The extreme dryness of the Antarctic climate can easily lead to dehydration if you're not careful.³² The unique nature of Antarctica also makes it extremely

²⁸ "Roald Amundsen's Life, in Brief," Amundsen, March 25, 2021, <https://amundsen.mia.no/en/resource/roald-amundsens-life-briefly/>.

²⁹ "Timeline: Amundsen Expedition to the South Pole," American Museum of Natural History

³⁰ "About the Continent," The USAP Portal, accessed December 19, 2024, <https://www.usap.gov/aboutthecontinent/>.

³¹ Lauren Lipuma, "Extraordinary Antarctic Weather May Have Influenced Race to South Pole," AGU Newsroom, October 11, 2017, <https://news.agu.org/press-release/extraordinary-antarctic-weather-may-have-influenced-outcome-of-early-20th-century-race-to-south-pole/>.

³² Tom Wagner, "Tips for Surviving in Antarctica," The New York Times, March 28, 2008, <https://www.nytimes.com/2008/03/28/nyregion/28teacherbox.html>.

windy, with wind speeds regularly exceeding 60 miles per hour and lasting for several days, and gusts can reach over 100 miles per hour, according to the Australian Antarctic Program.³³

Finally, due to its extreme southerly location, for most of the year Antarctica experiences either one extremely long polar day or night, in other words, it is either totally shrouded in darkness or continuously lit by the sun.³⁴

Furthermore, the Antarctic continent is extraordinarily desolate. Very little plant and animal life exists in Antarctica, and what little there is mostly resides along the comparatively temperate coastal regions.³⁵ The surrounding Southern Ocean is home to much life, including the seals that Lindstrom used for food, and the numerous penguins that call the Antarctic coast home. The interior of the continent is essentially lifeless.³⁶ Because of this, all food for the pole expedition had to be brought along on sleds or set up in the supply depots ahead of time.

Because of these extreme factors, Antarctica can be very dangerous and even deadly for ill-prepared explorers. The possibility of hypothermia and frostbite is always a concern. In Antarctic temperatures, exposed skin can develop frostbite in minutes. The extreme winds of Antarctica cause the already frigid temperatures to become more extreme due to wind chill.

In addition to these physical challenges, the expedition will be pushed to its limits mentally. The constant brightness or darkness of the polar day/night cycle can have serious effects, including disruption of natural sleep schedules leading to diminished energy.³⁷

³³ “Antarctic Weather – Australian Antarctic Program,” Australian Government | Australian Antarctic Program, February 18, 2019, <https://www.antarctica.gov.au/about-antarctica/weather-and-climate/weather/>.

³⁴ “About the Continent,” The USAP Portal

³⁵ Lize-Marié van der Watt, “Antarctica,” Encyclopædia Britannica, December 19, 2024, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Antarctica>

³⁶ “About the Continent,” The USAP Portal

³⁷ Kieran Mulvaney, “What Is Polar Night?,” National Geographic, February 1, 2024, <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/environment/article/polar-night-arctic-antarctic>.

Additionally, the isolation from outside social contact can lead to severe stress and possibly even depression.³⁸

³⁸ John Bennett, "How Antarctic Isolation Affects the Mind," Canadian Geographic, September 15, 2016, <https://canadiangeographic.ca/articles/how-antarctic-isolation-affects-the-mind/>.

Questions to consider:

1. Should the expedition make a safer but slower journey to the South Pole, or should they make a riskier but possibly faster journey to beat Scott?
2. How much scientific research should the expedition engage in at the cost of speed?
3. How will the expedition deal with the extreme weather and other environmental challenges of the South Pole?
4. How will the expedition deal with the mental and emotional drain of the Antarctic expedition?
5. How will disputes among expedition members be settled?
6. If the Pole expedition team does not return, what should the other members do?
7. What will those in Framheim or the *Fram* itself do while the Pole team is traveling?

Further reading

Lists of supplies taken on the *Fram* expedition:

[Equipment](#)

[Clothing](#)

[Provisions](#)

[Information](#) about the *Fram* ship itself

[More *Fram* information](#)

[Information](#) about *Framheim* - the expedition's temporary home on Antarctica

Positions

Once the *Fram* arrived in Antarctica, Amundsen split the expedition up into three groups. One group (the Sea party), would stay on the *Fram* and sail back to Argentina for supplies, before returning to make oceanographic measurements. A second group would make landfall and construct a base camp on the coast and do further research there. The third group—a small team of five people, including Amundsen—would be the ones to actually make the journey to the South Pole.

Roald Amundsen

Shore party (pole team)

An experienced explorer who had already been on several successful expeditions, Amundsen has been fascinated by the Arctic since he was young. He began his career as a first mate on another explorer's Antarctic expedition but as his fame and reputation grew, he eventually came to lead his own expedition to the Northwest Passage. His skill and expertise earned him the support of the king of Norway, as well as financial support from Parliament, to undertake yet another expedition - one to the North Pole. Inspired by the legendary explorer and his fellow countryman Fridtjof Nansen, Amundsen relied heavily on Nansen for advice - even gaining the usage of his prized ship, *Fram*.³⁹

Fridtjof Nansen

Mentor - Not in expedition

³⁹ “Amundsen, Roald (1872-1928),” The Fram Museum, August 21, 2019, <https://framuseum.no/polar-history/explorers/roald-amundsen-explorer/>.

A Norwegian explorer of international renown turned diplomat, Nansen has brought fame to Norway through his daring expeditions. After a record-breaking Farthest North in his Fram expedition, he returned to Norway as a national hero to retire and focus on his professorship at The Royal Frederick University, where he is a prominent oceanographer. Despite his retirement, Nansen still retains significant influence amongst explorers of all countries, as well as in the diplomatic sphere. Nansen also serves as a mentor to Amundsen - standing behind his sudden decision to pivot to the South Pole as well as lending him his specially designed ship, Fram.⁴⁰

Thorvald Nilsen

Sea party

Nilsen, a former naval lieutenant who had commandeered several successful voyages to South America, was handpicked to be the captain and deputy commander of the expedition. Nilsen was first to be told of the change in destination to the South Pole and given orders to take over total leadership should Amundsen become incapacitated at any point during the journey. In the midst of financial troubles right before the final leg of their sea journey to the South Pole, Nilsen's ability to gain funds for the expedition as a whole as well as personal funds for each individual crew member, earned him the trust of his fellow crew members.⁴¹

Hjalmar Gjertsen

Sea party

The son of a shipowner, Gjertsen spent his childhood on the seas and was a top student of the

⁴⁰ "Nansen, Fridtjof (1861-1930)," The Fram Museum, August 23, 2019, <https://framuseum.no/polar-history/explorers/fridtjof-nansen-1861-1930/>.

⁴¹ "Nilsen, Thorvald (1881-1940)," The Fram Museum, August 21, 2019, <https://framuseum.no/polar-history/explorers/thorvald-nilsen-1881-1940/>.

Norwegian Naval Academy. As a first lieutenant, he was recommended for the Antarctic expedition and taken on as a scientific assistant for oceanography work. The expedition was also in desperate need of a doctor and Gjertsen was sent to the national hospital in Oslo for a crash course on surgery. Gjertsen is a man of many titles but only one true desire: to join the land party of the expedition. Gjertsen was informed earlier than his crewmates of their revised destination yet angered to find that he would not be joining the actual expedition effort, but rather staying behind to conduct oceanographic work.⁴²

Kristian Prestrud

Shore party (non-pole team)

Born to a farmer and distillery manager father in a small Norwegian parish town, Prestrud felt drawn to adventure at a young age and left school to attend the Naval Academy. Now a naval lieutenant, he was only brought on to the expedition after a chance encounter helping test expedition equipment for the expedition at a naval base. What Prestrud lacks in experience he makes up for in enthusiasm as first officer of the ship, attending oceanography courses with his crewmates and training in navigation techniques. This expedition, should they prove successful, may be just the adventure that Prestrud is seeking.⁴³

Oscar Wisting

Shore party (pole team)

⁴² “Gjertsen, Hjalmar Fredrik (1885-1958),” The Fram Museum, February 5, 2021, <https://framuseum.no/polar-history/explorers/hjalmar-fredrik-gjertsen-1885-1958/>.

⁴³ “Prestrud, Kristian (1881-1927),” The Fram Museum, September 23, 2019, <https://framuseum.no/polar-history/explorers/kristian-prestrud-1881-1927/>.

The eldest of 13 children, Wisting went to work as a seaman as a young teenager in order to provide for his family. Years later, he met Amundsen whilst working as a naval gunner and the two formed a close friendship. After accepting an invitation to join the Antarctic expedition, Wisting hesitantly left behind his pregnant wife and five children. A capable tailor whose work making tents, sledges, and clothing for the crew is absolutely vital to their survival and success, Wisting is an indispensable member of the expedition crew. Despite this, he sorely misses his family and wants nothing more than to see them again.⁴⁴

Olav Olavsén Bjaaland

Shore party (pole team)

Bjaaland grew up in a small skiing town and began competing at a young age. Prior to joining the expedition, he was known as one of the best skiers of his time, even winning the most famous nordic skiing competition and representing Norway in international competitions amongst the very best of the best. Bjaaland, who had founded Norway's Ski Federation just a few years earlier, was invited on the expedition for his unparalleled skill, which would prove instrumental to their ability to navigate the endless snow of the South Pole. Also a skilled carpenter, Bjaaland often made his own skis and sledges.⁴⁵

Helmer Hanssen

Shore party (pole team)

⁴⁴ "Wisting, Oscar (1871-1936)," The Fram Museum, August 21, 2019, <https://framuseum.no/polar-history/explorers/oscar-wisting-1871-1936/>.

⁴⁵ "Bjaaland, Olav Olavsén (1873-1961)," The Fram Museum, November 8, 2019, <https://framuseum.no/polar-history/explorers/olav-olavsén-bjaaland-1873-1961/>.

Hansenn grew up farming and fishing for his family in the north of Norway, before starting a career on the sea at the age of 27. He had previous experience with Amundsen on his expedition to the Northwest Passage. On this expedition, he became proficient in inuit dog sledding, a skill that would prove invaluable in crossing the Antarctic ice sheets. As his sled carried the main compass for navigation, his role in the expedition was essential. He is a loyal member of the expedition party, although positions of power can go to his head.⁴⁶

Sverre Hassel

Shore party (pole team)

A sailor from a young age, Hassel was a graduate of the *Cristiana*, a renowned training ship for sailors. His experience there instilled in him discipline and a sense of duty, in addition to the practical skills of sailing. Hassel would later attest that the harsh training he received on the *Cristiana* prepared him well for the Antarctic expedition. Hassel had previous experience on the *Fram* during its 1898-1902 voyage mapping northern Greenland and Canada, and on this expedition he became an expert dogsledder. Hassel was hired for his dog driving expertise, and he was driving one of the sleds that first reached the south pole.⁴⁷

Jorgen Stubberud

Shore party (non-pole team)

Raised as a farmer and a carpenter, Stubberud was always drawn to the sea. Stubberud knew Amundsen through his brothers, and was asked to join the expedition. While his wife Sofie

⁴⁶ “Hanssen, Helmer Julius (1870-1956),” The Fram Museum, August 21, 2019, <https://framuseum.no/polar-history/explorers/helmer-julius-hanssen-1870-1956/>.

⁴⁷ “Hassel, Sverre Helge (1876-1928),” The Fram Museum, February 11, 2021, <https://framuseum.no/polar-history/explorers/sverre-helge-hassel-1876-1928/>.

needed some persuading, eventually he was able to join the expedition. An experienced carpenter, Stubberud was tasked with constructing the prefabricated buildings of the basecamp. Skilled with his hands, Stubberud always preferred manual labor to a supervisory role.⁴⁸

Adolf Lindstrøm

Shore party (non-pole team)

The cook of the *Fram* expedition, Lindstrøm was highly respected and valued by his shipmates. He had been a galley cook for many years, and had Polar experience on the *Gjøa* expedition to Greenland. His shipmates regarded Lindstrøm as a large and friendly man, and his culinary skills were held in very high regard. Specifically, his previous experience in the Arctic allowed him to hone his craft of using local wildlife in his meals. While he stayed behind in the basecamp, he was responsible for hunting, cooking, and repair work.⁴⁹

Hjalmar Johansen

Shore party (non-pole team)

A champion gymnast in his youth, Johansen spent his adulthood working odd jobs before joining Fridtjof Nansen's Arctic expedition in 1893, and reaching the North Pole with Nansen in 1895. Subsequently, his wife left him and he turned to alcoholism. Wanting to help his friend, Nansen persuaded Amundsen to take Johansen with him on the *Fram* expedition. Unfortunately, a falling out led to him being dismissed from his position in the Pole group.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ "Stubberud, Jørgen (1883-1980)," The Fram Museum, August 21, 2019, <https://framuseum.no/polar-history/explorers/jorgen-stubberud-1883-1980/>.

⁴⁹ "Lindstrøm, Adolf Henrik (1866-1939)," The Fram Museum, January 12, 2021, <https://framuseum.no/polar-history/explorers/adolf-henrik-lindstrom-1866-1939/>.

⁵⁰ "Johansen, Fredrik Hjalmar (1867-1913)," The Fram Museum, October 22, 2019, <https://framuseum.no/polar-history/explorers/fredrik-hjalmar-johansen-1867-1913-2/>.

Alexander Kutchin

Sea party

Born in Russia, Kutchin grew up helping his father (a mariner) on his ships. After staying abroad in Norway for a year when he was 16, Kutchin returned to Russia and enrolled in the prestigious Arkhangelsk Navigation College. While he was almost expelled for (allegedly) being a marxist agitator, he evaded expulsion and graduated with honors. He then moved back to Norway to study oceanography, and it was there that he became acquainted with Fritjolf Nansen, who then connected him to Amundsen, who hired Kutchin as the oceanographer of the expedition. He stayed behind on the *Fram* doing oceanographic research while Amundsen trekked to the pole.⁵¹

Knut Sundbeck

Sea party

A Swede, Sundbeck served as the *Fram*'s engineer, even designing a new engine for the ship in 1909. Prior to joining the expedition he worked for AB Diesel Motorer, an engine manufacturing company. In addition to his engineering genius, he played the mandolin and designed scientific instruments. As engineer, he was responsible for the maintenance and proper operation of the engine and related components of the ship. He took great pride in his work, and displayed great concern that the engine was working properly.⁵²

Andreas Beck

⁵¹ “Kutschin, Alexander Stepanovich (1888 -1912),” The Fram Museum, August 21, 2019, <https://framuseum.no/polar-history/explorers/alexander-stepanovich-kutschin-1888-1912/>.

⁵² “Sundbeck, Knut (1883 – 1967),” The Fram Museum, August 21, 2019, <https://framuseum.no/polar-history/explorers/knut-sundbeck-1883-1967/>.

Sea party

The pilot of the *Fram*, Beck had many years of experience on several different shipping expeditions previously. His father before him was a captain, and Beck carried on his legacy, serving as a harpooner, captain, and ice pilot on various occasions. His experience granted him an air of wisdom, and every member of the expedition listened to his advice. It was said his skill as a pilot was such that it was as if he could hear the ice moving. A man of many talents, Beck also played the violin.⁵³

Ludvig Hansen

Sea party

A seaman since 17, Hansen was no stranger to Arctic voyages, making him a natural choice for the *Fram's* original destination. He had much experience at sea, including a brief stint in the US Navy. He served as a pilot along with Andreas Beck. His father being a tinsmith, he had some experience as a metalworker, which proved useful to make or repair various items along the way.⁵⁴

Halvardus Kristensen

Sea party

Kristensen was a sailor and navy man. He had military experience, as well as experience sailing through the Strait of Magellan. Through Kristian Prestrud, whom he knew as a Lieutenant in the Navy, he was invited to join the *Fram* expedition. He was trained as a machinist on the voyage,

⁵³ “Beck, Andreas (1864-1914),” The Fram Museum, August 21, 2019, <https://framuseum.no/polar-history/explorers/andreas-beck-1864-1914/>.

⁵⁴ “Hansen, Ludvig Anton (1871-1955),” The Fram Museum, August 21, 2019, <https://framuseum.no/polar-history/explorers/ludvig-anton-hansen-1871-1955/>.

although he also helped out as a general crew member, and stayed behind on the *Fram* while others went to shore. He received a hero's welcome with Olav Bjaaland when they returned to their hometown of Skien.⁵⁵

Jacob Nodtvedt

Sea party

Jacob Nodtvedt was raised as a farmer and blacksmith, and his metallurgical skills were useful on the *Fram* expedition, where his official title was as second engineer. On the *Fram*, Nodtvedt's role was as a machinist and blacksmith, and his smithing skills were held in high regard, being compared favorably to the sewing ability of Martin Ronne.⁵⁶ Overall, he was responsible for making and maintaining all of the many metal objects on the *Fram*, even including the cutlery, as well as having some responsibility with Sundbeck for the engine.⁵⁷ A sickly man, Nodtvedt eventually had to depart the *Fram* expedition due to ill health when they arrived in Argentina in September of 1911.

Karenius Olsen

Sea party

The youngest member of the crew, Olsen was only 20 when he set off with the *Fram*. After Lindstrom stayed in Framheim, he became the cook aboard the *Fram*.⁵⁸ He was a modest man,

⁵⁵ "Kristensen, Halvardus (1879 – 1919)," The Fram Museum, August 21, 2019, <https://framuseum.no/polar-history/explorers/halvardus-kristensen-1879-1919/>.

⁵⁶ "Jacob Nødtvedt," Amundsen, May 26, 2022, <https://amundsen.mia.no/en/person/jacob-nodtvedt-2/>.

⁵⁷ "Nødtvedt, Jacob (1857-1918)," The Fram Museum, August 21, 2019, <https://framuseum.no/polar-history/explorers/jacob-nodtvedt-1857-1918/>.

⁵⁸ "Olsen, Karenius (1890-1973)," The Fram Museum, August 21, 2019, <https://framuseum.no/polar-history/explorers/karenius-olsen-1890-1973/>.

although his cremates said of him that Olsen was so diligent that they wished they had twenty of him.⁵⁹

Martin Ronne

Sea party

A navy veteran, Ronne was a highly experienced seaman. When he joined the expedition, he was employed as a sail maker in a shipyard. He had responsibility for all the sailcloth equipment, which included things such as tents and dog harnesses. In fact, Ronne was the one who made Amundsen's tent which he left at the pole. He worked diligently at his sewing machine.⁶⁰

⁵⁹ “Karenus Olsen,” Amundsen, March 9, 2022, <https://amundsen.mia.no/en/person/karenus-olsen-2/>.

⁶⁰ “Rønne, Martin (1861-1932),” The Fram Museum, August 21, 2019, <https://framuseum.no/polar-history/explorers/martin-ronne-1861-1932/>.

Bibliography

- “1910–1912 Fram Expedition.” Amundsen, August 22, 2022.
<https://amundsen.mia.no/en/resource/1910-1912-fram-expedition-2/>.
- “About the Continent.” The USAP Portal. Accessed December 19, 2024.
<https://www.usap.gov/aboutthecontinent/>.
- “Amundsen, Roald (1872-1928).” The Fram Museum, August 21, 2019.
<https://frammuseum.no/polar-history/explorers/roald-amundsen-explorer/>.
- “Antarctic Weather – Australian Antarctic Program.” Australian Government | Australian Antarctic Program, February 18, 2019.
<https://www.antarctica.gov.au/about-antarctica/weather-and-climate/weather/>.
- “Beck, Andreas (1864-1914).” The Fram Museum, August 21, 2019.
<https://frammuseum.no/polar-history/explorers/andreas-beck-1864-1914/>.
- Bennett, John. “How Antarctic Isolation Affects the Mind.” Canadian Geographic, September 15, 2016.
<https://canadiangeographic.ca/articles/how-antarctic-isolation-affects-the-mind/>.
- “Bjaaland, Olav Olavsén (1873-1961).” The Fram Museum, November 8, 2019.
<https://frammuseum.no/polar-history/explorers/olav-olavsén-bjaaland-1873-1961/>.
- “Gjertsen, Hjalmar Fredrik (1885-1958).” The Fram Museum, February 5, 2021.
<https://frammuseum.no/polar-history/explorers/hjalmar-fredrik-gjertsen-1885-1958/>.
- “Hansen, Ludvig Anton (1871-1955).” The Fram Museum, August 21, 2019.
<https://frammuseum.no/polar-history/explorers/ludvig-anton-hansen-1871-1955/>.
- “Hanssen, Helmer Julius (1870-1956).” The Fram Museum, August 21, 2019.
<https://frammuseum.no/polar-history/explorers/helmer-julius-hanssen-1870-1956/>.
- “Hassel, Sverre Helge (1876-1928).” The Fram Museum, February 11, 2021.
<https://frammuseum.no/polar-history/explorers/sverre-helge-hassel-1876-1928/>.
- “History of Antarctic Explorers.” History of Antarctic explorers | Royal Museums Greenwich. Accessed December 19, 2024.
<http://www.rmg.co.uk/stories/topics/history-antarctic-explorers>.
- “Jacob Nødtvedt.” Amundsen, May 26, 2022.
<https://amundsen.mia.no/en/person/jacob-nodtvedt-2/>.
- “Johansen, Fredrik Hjalmar (1867-1913).” The Fram Museum, October 22, 2019.
<https://frammuseum.no/polar-history/explorers/fredrik-hjalmar-johansen-1867-1913-2/>.

- “Karenien Olsen.” Amundsen, March 9, 2022.
<https://amundsen.mia.no/en/person/karenien-olsen-2/>.
- “Kristensen, Halvardus (1879 – 1919).” The Fram Museum, August 21, 2019.
<https://framuseum.no/polar-history/explorers/halvardus-kristensen-1879-1919/>.
- “Kutschin, Alexander Stepanovich (1888 -1912).” The Fram Museum, August 21, 2019.
<https://framuseum.no/polar-history/explorers/alexander-stepanovich-kutschin-1888-1912/>.
- “Lindstrøm, Adolf Henrik (1866-1939).” The Fram Museum, January 12, 2021.
<https://framuseum.no/polar-history/explorers/adolf-henrik-lindstrom-1866-1939/>.
- Lipuma, Lauren. “Extraordinary Antarctic Weather May Have Influenced Race to South Pole.” AGU Newsroom, October 11, 2017.
<https://news.agu.org/press-release/extraordinary-antarctic-weather-may-have-influenced-outcome-of-early-20th-century-race-to-south-pole/>.
- Mulvaney, Kieran. “What Is Polar Night?” National Geographic, February 1, 2024.
<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/environment/article/polar-night-arctic-antarctic>.
- “Nansen, Fridtjof (1861-1930).” The Fram Museum, August 23, 2019.
<https://framuseum.no/polar-history/explorers/fridtjof-nansen-1861-1930/>.
- “Nilsen, Thorvald (1881-1940).” The Fram Museum, August 21, 2019.
<https://framuseum.no/polar-history/explorers/thorvald-nilsen-1881-1940/>.
- “Nødtvedt, Jacob (1857-1918).” The Fram Museum, August 21, 2019.
<https://framuseum.no/polar-history/explorers/jacob-nodtvedt-1857-1918/>.
- “Olsen, Karenien (1890-1973).” The Fram Museum, August 21, 2019.
<https://framuseum.no/polar-history/explorers/karenien-olsen-1890-1973/>.
- “Prestrud, Kristian (1881-1927).” The Fram Museum, September 23, 2019.
<https://framuseum.no/polar-history/explorers/kristian-prestrud-1881-1927/>.
- “Roald Amundsen’s Life, in Brief.” Amundsen, March 25, 2021.
<https://amundsen.mia.no/en/resource/roald-amundsens-life-briefly/>.
- “Rønne, Martin (1861-1932).” The Fram Museum, August 21, 2019.
<https://framuseum.no/polar-history/explorers/martin-ronne-1861-1932/>.
- Smith, Cynthia. “Reaching the South Pole during the Heroic Age of Exploration: Worlds Revealed.” The Library of Congress, September 21, 2021.
<https://blogs.loc.gov/maps/2021/09/reaching-the-south-pole-during-the-heroic-age-of-exploration/>.

- “Stubberud, Jørgen (1883-1980).” The Fram Museum, August 21, 2019.
<https://frammuseum.no/polar-history/explorers/jorgen-stubberud-1883-1980/>.
- “Sundbeck, Knut (1883 – 1967).” The Fram Museum, August 21, 2019.
<https://frammuseum.no/polar-history/explorers/knut-sundbeck-1883-1967/>.
- “The Third Fram Expedition (1910-1914).” The Fram Museum, July 10, 2019.
<https://frammuseum.no/polar-history/expeditions/the-third-fram-expedition-1910-1914/>.
- “Timeline: Amundsen Expedition to the South Pole.” American Museum of Natural History.
Accessed December 19, 2024.
<https://www.amnh.org/exhibitions/race-to-the-end-of-the-earth/amundsen/timeline>.
- van der Watt, Lize-Marié. “Antarctica.” Encyclopædia Britannica, December 19, 2024.
<https://www.britannica.com/place/Antarctica>.
- Wagner, Tom. “Tips for Surviving in Antarctica.” The New York Times, March 28, 2008.
<https://www.nytimes.com/2008/03/28/nyregion/28teacherbox.html>.
- “Wisting, Oscar (1871-1936).” The Fram Museum, August 21, 2019.
<https://frammuseum.no/polar-history/explorers/oscar-wisting-1871-1936/>.