



Did you know...

- HMS *Erebus* and *Terror* were Royal Navy bomb vessels. They were altered and further strengthened for use in sea ice. Notable additions included iron plating on the bows, which were reinforced with solid wood up to 8 feet (2.4 metres) thick. A furnace pushed warm air through the lower deck while a new system, using lead pipes, distilled fresh drinking water.
- HMS *Erebus* and *Terror* underwent additional modifications in 1845. Each was equipped with a 25-horsepower locomotive engine, connected to a retractable screw propeller. Each ship carried enough fuel to power the engines for 12 days.
- “HMS” is the abbreviation for “His/Her Majesty’s Ship,” indicating that the ship is part of the Royal Navy.
- Bomb vessels were specially designed to fire mortars during bombardments. Traditionally, their names were meant to evoke volcanoes or hellfire. Bomb vessels used in polar exploration included HMS *Hecla*, *Fury*, *Terror*, and *Erebus*. *Erebus* is the ancient Greek god of darkness, son of Chaos. *Hecla* is the name of an active Icelandic volcano.
- HMS *Erebus* and *Terror* were equipped with libraries containing approximately 1,200 religious, scientific and leisure books, as well as the written accounts of earlier polar explorers.
- The Franklin Expedition was equipped with a daguerreotype camera — an innovative technology. The camera was used to take portraits of some of the officers before the Expedition left London.
- The Expedition took 70 slates and 200 slate pencils, as well as schoolbooks. Classes were typically organized aboard icebound ships to improve the crew’s literacy.
- HMS *Erebus* and *Terror* were equipped with food for three years: enough to carry the Expedition through the summer of 1848 on full rations. Meats (33,289 lbs./15,100 kg), vegetables, flour (136,656 lbs./61,986 kg), and other essentials — packed in casks, crates and tins — were stowed wherever there was space.

- A seaman's daily rum ration was 1/8 of an Imperial pint (71 ml) which, mixed with 2 pints (1.1 L) of water, became "grog." HMS *Erebus* and *Terror* also carried 7,000 lbs. (3,200 kg) of tobacco.
- Off the northern coast of King William Island — from November 25, 1846 to January 17, 1847 — there would have been 53 days when the Sun did not rise, and 59 days — from May 15, to July 27, 1847 — when the Sun did not set.
- The Expedition had a scientific mission, in addition to completing the Northwest Passage. The Admiralty had provided instructions outlining meteorological (weather) and hydrographical (waterways) observations the Expedition should make, in addition to a variety of natural-science pursuits.
- The Expedition was instructed to throw a note overboard, sealed in a metal canister, once the ships passed 65° N. Finders were requested, in six languages, to forward records to the Admiralty. The Expedition was supplied with 200 canisters.
- One of the earliest Royal Navy expeditions under Sir John Barrow's tenure was the most successful, fuelling British confidence that the Northwest Passage could be completed. In 1819, William Edward Parry sailed past 110°W longitude — three-quarters of the way through the Arctic Archipelago — in a single season.
- William Edward Parry and his men spent the winter on board HMS *Hecla* and *Griper*, becoming the first Royal Navy Expedition to overwinter in the Arctic. A recent innovation — the canning process — provide tinned meats and soups for his Expedition.
- The 1845 Expedition was Franklin's third attempt to locate a Northwest Passage. While his overland Expedition in 1819–1822 had been a disaster, costing the lives of 11 men, he was knighted for his more successful 1825–1827 effort.
- More than 30 expeditions, organized or supported by the Royal Navy, the Hudson's Bay Company and private sponsors, sailed, steamed or sledged into the Arctic from 1847 on. Very few found any clues to the Expedition's whereabouts.
- Sent to search for the Franklin Expedition, HMS *Resolute* was abandoned in 1854 and found by whalers in 1855. The ship was refitted by the American government and given back to Britain in 1856. *Resolute's* timbers were used to create the Resolute Desk, presented by Queen Victoria to U.S. President Rutherford B. Hayes in 1880. Many presidents have used the Resolute Desk in the White House.
- The ship's bell was the first artifact recovered from HMS *Erebus*. It is marked with a broad arrow — indicating that it is British government property — and "1845," the year the Franklin Expedition departed Britain.