

ANTARCTIC EXPEDITIONS

Since the 18th century, Antarctica has been the ultimate destination for explorers around the world. Numerous expeditions claim to have seen the land or landed on an ice shelf first, but the first documented landing on mainland Antarctica was Mercator Cooper in 1853. Since then, the destination has moved southward to the South Pole.

On January 17, 1912, the Terra Nova Expedition, led by Robert Falcon Scott of Britain, reached the South Pole, believing they were the first people to ever attain the pole. However, when they arrived, they found that a Norwegian expedition team, led by Roald Amundsen, had preceded them by 34 days, reaching the center of the Southern Hemisphere on December 14, 1911.

However, though Amundsen's successful South Pole expedition was widely applauded, it was also overshadowed by the tragic deaths of every member of Scott's team. Today, the permanent scientific base at the pole bears both Amundsen and Scott's name.

Over the next half century, several major accomplishments occurred on the continent. On November 28, 1929, Admiral Richard Byrd, an American naval officer, led the first flight to the South Pole, totaling over 18 hours from the Ross Ice Shelf to the Pole and back. Nearly 20 years later, Sir Vivian Fuchs, an English explorer, completed the first overland crossing of Antarctica on a 100-day, 2,158-mile journey.

PROJECTIONS

Since maps are flat representations of the spherical Earth, it is impossible to display its surface without some distortion. To solve this problem, cartographers use different representations of the globe called projections. Each projection preserves some qualities, such as areas, distances, or angles, while distorting others.

This map uses a South Pole Azimuthal Equidistant projection. Azimuthal Equidistant projections preserve distances from a specific point to every other point on the map, in this case from the South Pole. This is a fitting projection for a map depicting the routes of explorers to the South Pole. With this projection, the relative distances you perceive on the map are true in real life.

