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2014 Search for lost Franklin Expedition Vessels Targets New Location

New partners bring new resources, technologies and expertise to the search for *HMS Erebus* and *HMS Terror* in their last reported location

Ottawa, July 16, 2014 —

The mystery surrounding the disappearance of the 1845 British Arctic Expedition commanded by Sir John Franklin is the most enduring in polar exploration history. This summer, the Government of Canada's search for the lost Franklin ships, the *HMS Erebus* and *HMS Terror*, will be enhanced by the inclusion of Canadian leaders in exploration, assembled with the help of The Royal Canadian Geographical Society (RCGS).

This unique partnership, which includes The W. Garfield Weston Foundation, One Ocean Expeditions, Shell Canada and the Arctic Research Foundation, will add resources, technologies and expertise to the hunt and focus on the Victoria Strait, which up to this point has largely not been targeted by search teams. The focus on the Victoria Strait is significant, as the area includes the last reported location of the missing vessels and crews.

The W. Garfield Weston Foundation has been a catalyst for the innovative partnership. With the support of The W. Garfield Weston Foundation, the Society has partnered with One Ocean Expeditions to provide an Arctic-rated vessel (*One Ocean Voyager*) that will enhance the many projects underway by all partners. It will enable experts, researchers, and others to be in the search area for a 10-day period during the field season. It will also enable the RCGS to analyze and communicate the important links between the original Franklin expedition, the modern search efforts led by Parks Canada, and a host of issues currently facing the Canadian Arctic.

"The W. Garfield Weston Foundation is delighted to be a part of the hunt for the *Erebus* and *Terror*. The Franklin Expedition discovery will raise awareness and increase understanding of the North and Canada's rich history," says Geordie Dalglish, Director of The W. Garfield Weston Foundation. "We are proud to support scientists as they uncover such an important piece of Canada's history."

With the addition of the *One Ocean Voyager*, the search capabilities of the expedition team will be significantly enhanced. "One Ocean Expeditions will fly the Canadian and RCGS flags with great enthusiasm, whilst exploring the waterways of Canada's high Arctic as we've done for almost a quarter century," explained Andrew Prossin, Managing Director of One Oceans Expeditions. "This will be a very proud Canadian effort at exploration, discovery, and scientific survey. It would be a very special Canadian moment indeed, to rewrite one of polar history's most storied chapters. This would showcase Canadian know-how and innovation to the world. "

The search for Franklin's lost ships has opened a unique window into the history and heritage that has defined the Canadian experience, and the research provides a strong learning opportunity for Canadians across the country. With the vital support of its partners, The W. Garfield Weston Foundation, One Ocean Expeditions, Shell Canada and the Arctic Research Foundation, the RCGS will be developing and disseminating an educational program to Canadian schools, so that educators and students can develop a stronger knowledge base and engagement with the Arctic, linking this great historical mystery to important contemporary themes such as Northern science and Arctic sovereignty.



“Exploration has been important to the success of our business for over 100 years,” said Lorraine Mitchelmore, President and Country Chair of Shell Canada and Executive Vice President Heavy Oil. “We are proud to lend our support to the recovery of these vessels and look forward to sharing our experience along with our country’s rich history of exploration with Canadian students.”

In its 2013 Speech from the Throne, the Government of Canada announced an expanded partnership would join the Parks Canada-led initiative to locate the Franklin vessels. Leona Aglukkaq, Minister of the Environment and Minister responsible for Parks Canada, announced the 2014 Victoria Strait Expedition on June 20. The Royal Canadian Geographical Society and its partners are key to the plans for this summer. “As Canada’s pre-eminent leader in exploration and geographical education, we are proud and honoured to join with Parks Canada, other federal and Nunavut government partners, and our private sector and non-profit colleagues and take up the call,” stated The Royal Canadian Geographical Society’s CEO, John Geiger.

The fate of the *Erebus* and *Terror* and their crews has become one of the most enduring mysteries in maritime history, and the search for Franklin’s lost ships has over time cemented Canada’s understanding and connection with the North. Moreover, much of Canada’s claim to sovereignty over its Arctic islands can be traced to the significant geographical advances made because of the Franklin search era. This year’s search will continue to strengthen Canadian awareness and understanding of its northern heritage and sovereignty over the land and its resources.

“The RCGS’ unique ability to directly reach classrooms from across Canada will ensure that information about the North will be easily accessible to thousands of Canadian students,” said Jim Balsillie, founder of the Arctic Research Foundation. “The Arctic Research Foundation is pleased to participate in a partnership that will connect young Canadians with information about their country’s Northern communities and heritage.”

For up-to-date information about the Franklin search expedition and much more, visit the Franklin 2014 search website at canadiangeographic.ca/franklin-expedition.

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Backgrounder

The Search for the lost Franklin ships

The loss of the *Erebus* and *Terror* have played an important role in the exploration of Canada's North and its mystique. The vessels were trapped in ice off the northwest coast of King William Island. There was little left behind by the crews after they deserted the ships. No survivors were found alive to tell their tale. The mystery surrounding the missing ships has become the stuff of Canadian lore that has inspired songs, stories and the imaginations of Canadians.

Thanks to a massive search for the ships, much of Canada's Arctic Archipelago was charted. Canada's claim to sovereignty over its Arctic islands can be traced to the significant geographical advances of the Franklin search. Because of their importance, the ships were declared National Historic Sites in 1992, the only such designation applied to sites that remain unknown. Since 2008, the Government of Canada, headed by Parks Canada initiated active searches for the missing ships. Though the ships have not yet been found, more than 1,200 square kilometres of the Arctic seabed has been surveyed during the course of modern searches.

The 2014 search for the Franklin is scheduled to launch sometime in the middle of August and will be a dramatic departure from past expeditions. The Royal Canadian Geographical Society (RCGS), Canada's centre for exploration, has brought together an unprecedented partnership to collaborate with government departments and agencies. The private and non-profit partners include The W. Garfield Weston Foundation, One Ocean Expeditions, Shell Canada and the Arctic Research Foundation, each bringing a unique contribution to the partnership.

The RCGS Partnership

The RCGS partnership brings together a body of organizations from the private and non-profit sector fascinated by the Franklin mystery, and committed to enhancing Canadian knowledge and connectivity with the North. The early commitment of The W. Garfield Weston Foundation was the catalyst for the unique partnerships that have come together for this summer's search.

The W. Garfield Weston Foundation's support has helped make possible The Royal Canadian Geographical Society's expedition involvement in the 2014 Victoria Strait survey, as well as helping to create a broad, multi-year, national public and classroom educational program on the Canadian Arctic.

One Ocean Expeditions will deploy the *One Ocean Voyager* which sports navigation and scanning equipment (including multi-beam sonar). Canada's state-of-the-art autonomous underwater vehicle will be deployed from *One Ocean Voyager*. The ship will fly the RCGS flag. One Ocean Expeditions is also, proudly, a significant contributor to the development of the classroom education program and public awareness effort.

Arctic Research Foundation owns and operates the 64-foot research vessel *Martin Bergmann*. Based in Cambridge Bay, Nunavut, this vessel and its crew have worked with the Canadian government team headed by Parks Canada, providing logistical support on research initiatives on previous search efforts. The *Bergmann* will be participating again in 2014, and the Arctic Research Foundation is also a supporter of the RCGS's expedition contribution and resulting educational program.

Shell Canada is contributing to the expedition and to the development of the classroom educational program designed to excite interest in exploration history but also leverage public interest in broader issues concerning Canada's Arctic. The adventure of exploration has been important to the success of Shell's business for more than 100 years, and continues today.



About Our Partners

The W. Garfield Weston Foundation is a private Canadian family foundation, established in the 1950's by Willard Garfield Weston, his wife Reta and their children. In 1924 Garfield inherited his father's company and during his life established bakeries and other successful enterprises throughout Canada and in many parts of the world. Today, these businesses include the George Weston Limited and Loblaw Companies Limited, companies in food retailing, processing and distribution. The founders believed that as the funds are generated through the hard work and success of these Canadian companies, grants should be given in Canada for the benefit of Canadians. For three generations, The W. Garfield Weston Foundation has maintained a family tradition of supporting charitable organizations across Canada. Today the Foundation directs the majority of its funds to projects in the fields of land conservation, education, and science in Canada's North. In addition, it provides funds to further Canada's research in neuroscience.

One Ocean Expeditions is a privately owned Canadian company that is uniquely experienced, qualified and logistically talented.

The *One Ocean Voyager* is specifically designed and equipped for this type of search and survey work with navigation and scanning equipment (including multi-beam sonar) designed for the grid pattern searches required for this project. Canada's state-of-the-art autonomous underwater vehicle will be deployed from *One Ocean Voyager*. OOE vessels have been a presence in the Canadian Arctic for over twenty (20) years. Designed for polar exploration, the One Ocean Voyager combines modern comforts and superb amenities with first - class safety features. One Ocean's success, commitment and expertise matched with two of the most capable polar expedition cruise vessels, allows passengers to access remote areas with trained guides. Experiencing wilderness through the OOE program typically results in travelers becoming enthusiastic ambassadors committed to supporting efforts of preservation in both the Arctic and Antarctica. One Ocean Expeditions mandate of 'giving back' takes many forms. In addition to offering life changing experiences to those that travel, OOE continually strives to create and support projects in the regions where operating. These projects span a wide variety of unique endeavours, yet are linked by their commitment to further research, societal support, education and exploration. One Ocean Expeditions directly supports Northern Communities through support of local business, donations, and community outreach programs.

Shell Canada Ltd. has been operating in Canada since 1911 and employs approximately 8,000 people across the country. A leading manufacturer, distributor and marketer of refined petroleum products, Shell produces natural gas, natural gas liquids and bitumen, and is Canada's largest producer of sulphur. Shell is one of Canada's oil sands developers and operates the Athabasca Oil Sands Project on behalf of the joint venture partners. The energy we supply helps support economic growth and development. At our operations we aim to address social concerns and work to benefit local communities. Human ingenuity and advanced technologies are vital to help meet future global energy demands. At Shell we recognise that no single company can develop all of these alone. We work closely with industry partners and experts outside our industry to spark new ideas and share knowledge that helps drive developments forward.

Arctic Research Foundation is a private charitable foundation to support long-term sustainability in the Arctic through innovation in knowledge and research capacity. The Arctic Research Foundation owns and operates the 64-foot research vessel *Martin Bergmann*. Based in Cambridge Bay, Nunavut, this vessel and its crew will provide additional logistical support to research partners including Parks Canada, the Canadian Hydrographic Service and the University of Victoria.

About The Royal Canadian Geographical Society

The Royal Canadian Geographical Society (RCGS): The aim of The Royal Canadian Geographical Society is *"to make Canada better known to Canadians and to the world."* For more than eight decades, exploration has been an abiding and animating theme, leading to the Society's recognition as Canada's centre for exploration. The Society's Expeditions Program encourages a deeper appreciation of our rich geographic inheritance, and advances geographic knowledge. It has funded several Franklin searches in the past. The tradition of exploration is underscored through the Society's Research Grants program which serves to encourage a deeper understanding of the science behind geography. *Canadian Geographic* magazine and *Canadian Geographic Education*, with their network of over 11,000 classroom teachers across Canada, are the tools used by the Society to advance Canadians' geographic knowledge. The Society is one of Canada's largest non-profit educational organizations and is funded primarily by membership fees and donations.