

News Release

The 2015 Malirualik Expedition:

Inuit students learn the traditional ways that helped find the *Erebus* a year ago

Ottawa, September 10, 2015 – It took Louie Kamookak, the famous Inuit historian from Gjoa Haven, more than 30 years to painstakingly research the journey of Franklin’s men and ships in Canada’s North. His research using Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge (ATK) methods contributed to one of the most celebrated events of 2014: the discovery of Franklin’s ship, *Erebus*, by Parks Canada’s underwater archeology team. “Finding the *Erebus* proved to the world that Aboriginal Traditional knowledge does bring results,” said Kamookak. “The [Malirualik Expedition](#) helped teach our youth the basics of ATK so they, in turn, can share our history and stories the Inuit way. I am happy that Canadian Geographic Education will share the Expedition’s teachings with Canadian students which could be a first.”

Louie Kamookak led the Malirualik Expedition from Gjoa Haven, Nunavut, with educator Josephine Kamookak, Inuk elder Jimmy Qirqqut, and four 15 to 17-year-old students to visit and learn about the places Franklin’s men and ships were seen by their ancestors. The [five-day expedition](#) left on Saturday, September 5th and traveled to Todd Island, then on to an area of the Simpson Strait known as Malirualik, which is rich in Franklin lore and Inuit history. The adults shared the stories connected to targeted geographical sites, and demonstrated how their oral tradition requires the precise passing down, from generation to generation, of place-names, stories and cultural traditions. The beauty of this expedition is that Franklin’s story will now be preserved through these students.

Canadian students from coast to coast to coast will also benefit by learning about the ATK techniques that helped the Franklin search through Canadian Geographic Education (Can Geo Ed)’s soon to be developed Malirualik Expedition classroom activities. These resources will be available in English, French, and Inuktitut and distributed to Can Geo Ed’s over 15,000 teacher members. The expedition’s story will also be featured in the January/February 2016 edition of *Canadian Geographic*. The expedition and educational materials are supported by the generosity of the Cloverleaf Foundation and Canadian North airlines.

“In the last 20 years alone, the RCGS has backed more than 70 expeditions and 100 research projects, all leading to greater knowledge and understanding of Canada’s vast geographical heritage, and bringing Canadians closer to their land,” said John Geiger, CEO of The Royal Canadian Geographical Society. “The Malirualik Expedition expands this tradition by broadening Canadians’ awareness of ATK and the significant role it played in guiding decades of Franklin searches culminating with last year’s discovery of *Erebus* by the Parks team.”

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The RCGS is dedicated to imparting a broader knowledge and deeper appreciation of Canada — its people and places, its natural and cultural heritage and its environmental, social and economic challenges. The Society is one of Canada’s largest non-profit educational organizations and, as part of its mandate to make Canada better known, publishes *Canadian Geographic* magazine.

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