

SHACKLETON'S FORGOTTEN MEN

The Endurance Voyage-The Weddell Sea Party

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| Endurance left Plymouth (without Shackleton) | 8 Aug 1914 |
| Left Grytviken, South Georgia | 5 Dec 1914 |
| First entered pack-ice | 14 Dec 1914 |
| Close to destination (Vahsel Bay) 76° 34' S | end Jan 1915 |
| Furthest south (beset in ice) 76° 58' S | 21 Feb 1915 |
| Drifting north, beset in ice | Feb – Oct 1915 |
| Abandoned ship | 27 Oct 1915 |
| Moved 3 ships boats and supplies north | Oct 1915-April 1916 |
| Launched boats and sailed to Elephant Island | 9 – 15 April 1916 |
| “James Caird” voyage | 24 Apr- 8 May 1916 |
| South Georgia crossing | 18 – 20 May 1916 |
| Rescue of men left on Elephant Island | 30 Aug 1916 |



The Aurora Voyage –The Ross Sea Party

Australia and Arrival in the Ross Sea

The Ross Sea Party, most of the 19 men, 18 dogs and supplies, led by Aeneas Mackintosh, left England in Aug 1914 on the liner “Ionic”, bound for Sydney.

Shackleton had bought “Aurora” in Sydney without a survey and she was in a very poor state. Much of her equipment had been stripped out. Funds were short, and Mackintosh had to “beg and borrow” to fit her out.

“Aurora” left Sydney on 15 Dec 1914, 3 weeks later than planned, with a “scratch” crew.(little Antarctic experience, some with no seafaring experience)

After a stop at Hobart they finally sailed for Ross Island on 24 Dec, arriving on 16 Jan 1915.

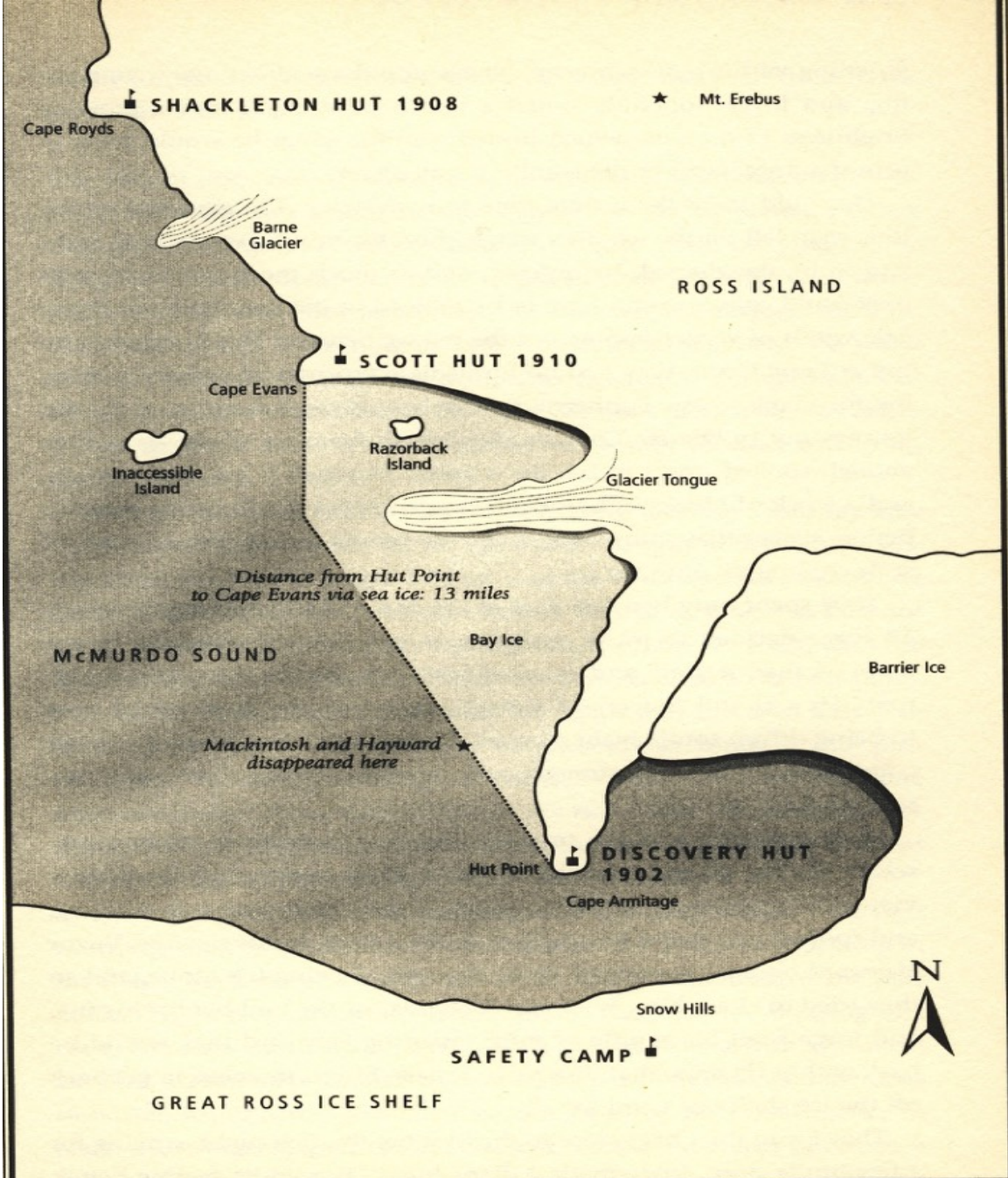
Macintosh decided to have his shore base at Cape Evans (Scott’s base in 1910-13) and over-winter Aurora close by.

Believing that Shackleton might try his crossing in the 1914-15 season Mackintosh wanted to rush into laying some depots, against the will of Joyce (the most experienced Antarctic man).

In fact, Shackleton had decided that he could do nothing in 1914-15 before leaving South Georgia but the cable was never sent!



Aurora held up by ice



HUT POINT TO CAPE EVANS: DIRECT ROUTE

The Aurora Voyage –The Ross Sea Party

Depot Laying early 1915 and the Drift of Aurora

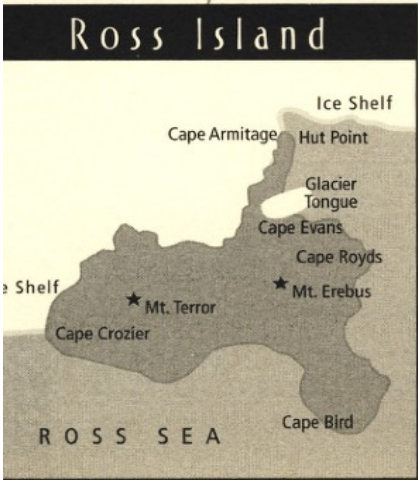
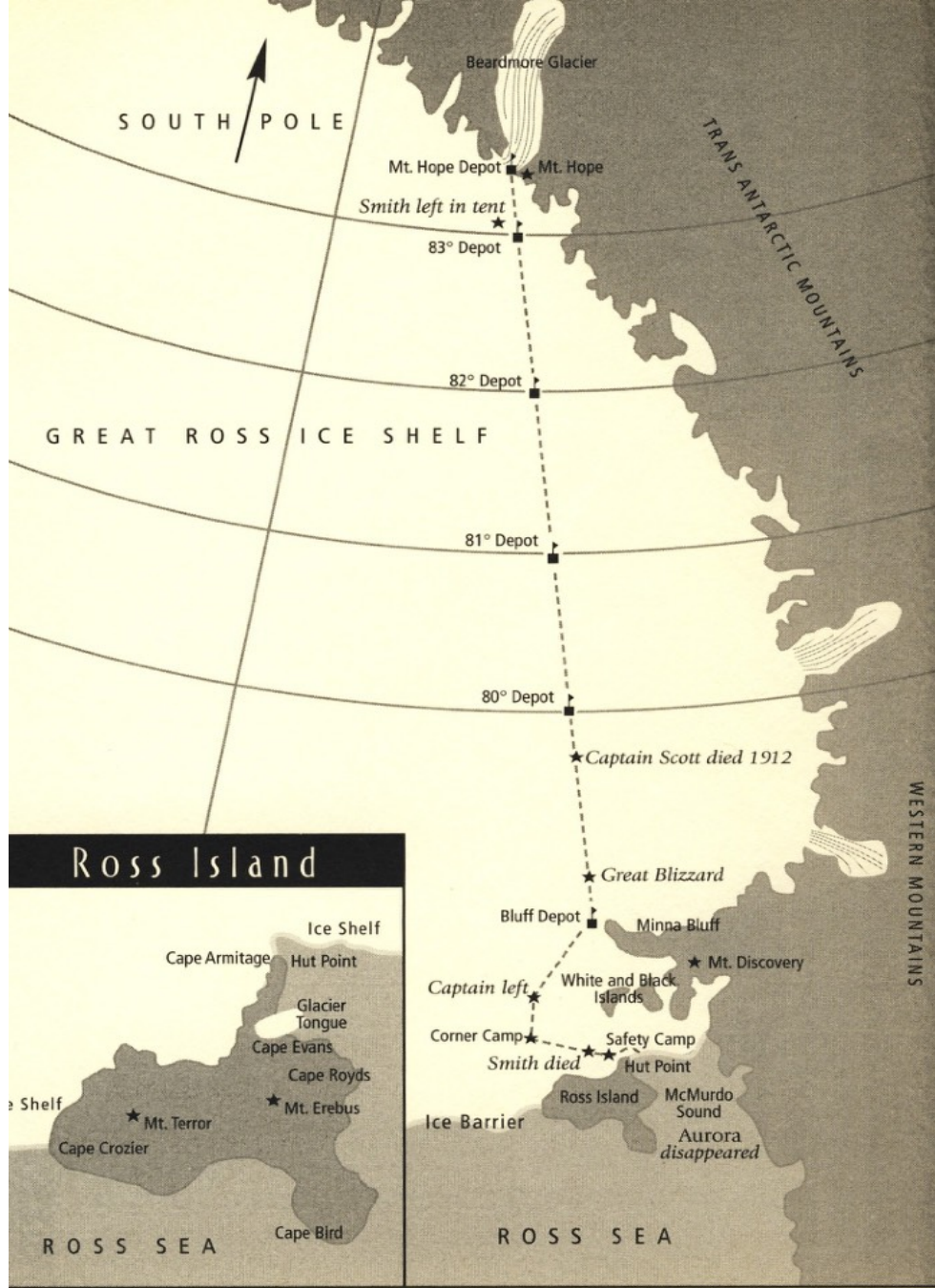
Due to the late arrival of Aurora in the Ross Sea, neither men nor dogs were acclimatised but Mackintosh's view prevailed and they rushed into depot laying.

Between 24 Jan and 25 March incomplete depots were layed at Minna Bluff and 80°S by 9 men. The price was high because all 10 dogs taken on the journey died. The breaking up of sea ice in McMurdo Sound meant that most of the men taking part were stranded at Hut Point until 1 June.

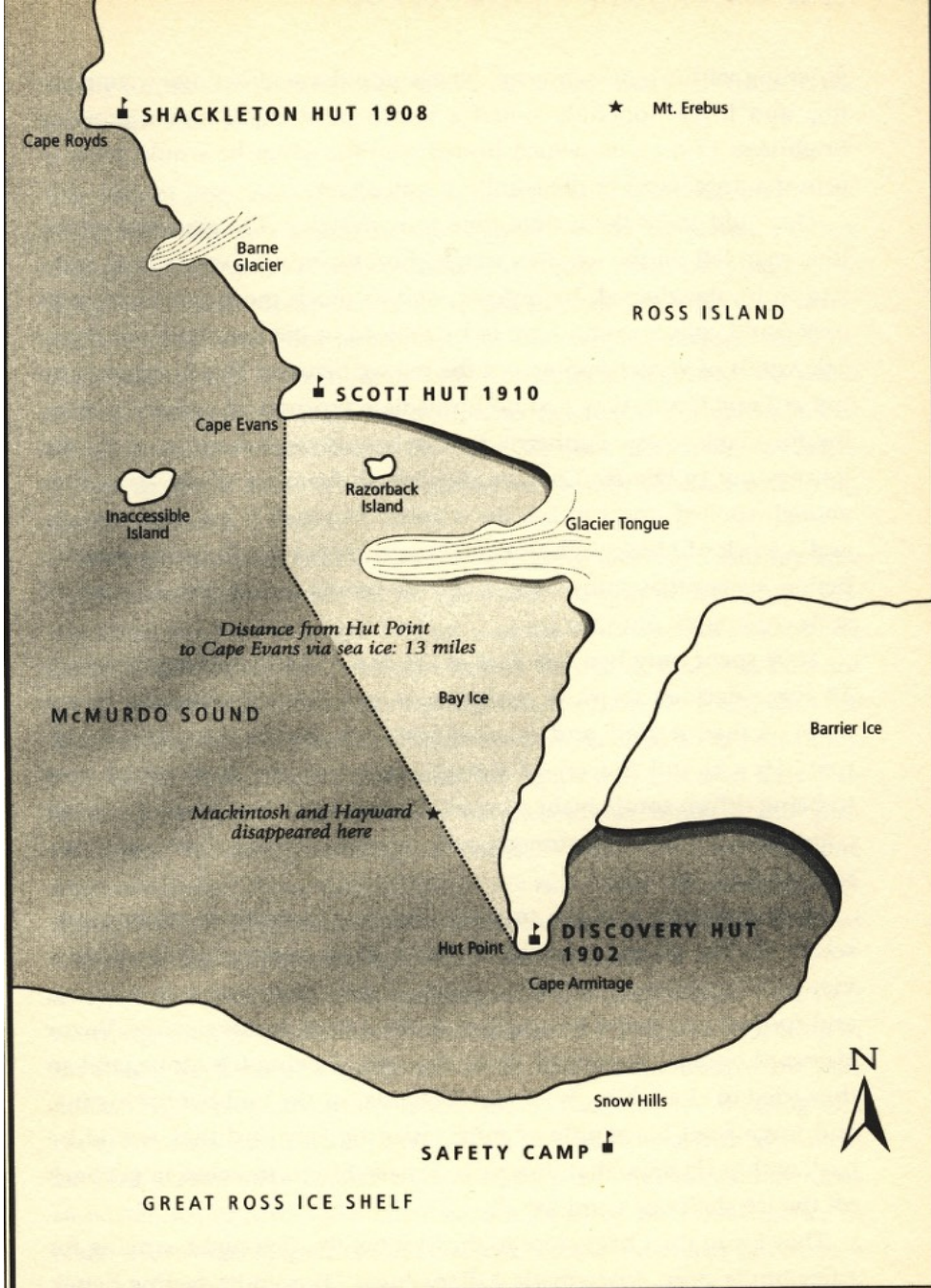
When Mackintosh left with the depot laying parties, Stenhouse the First Officer was in charge of Aurora. He was to moor the vessel in a safe spot for the southern winter. In March he chose to bring her close to the Cape Evans and secured her with anchors ashore and steel hawsers.

On of 7 May a severe southerly gale blew up and Aurora broke the hawsers and drifted out of McMurdo beset in ice. 10 men were left stranded on-land. (Some in the Scott Hut, some not returned from depot laying)

Aurora was beset in ice until 12 Feb 1916 (9 months) and then limped back to New Zealand.



TRACK OF THE DEPOT-LAYING PARTY



HUT POINT TO CAPE EVANS: DIRECT ROUTE

The Aurora Voyage –The Ross Sea Party

The Stranded Team and Depot Laying Sep 1915 – Mar 16

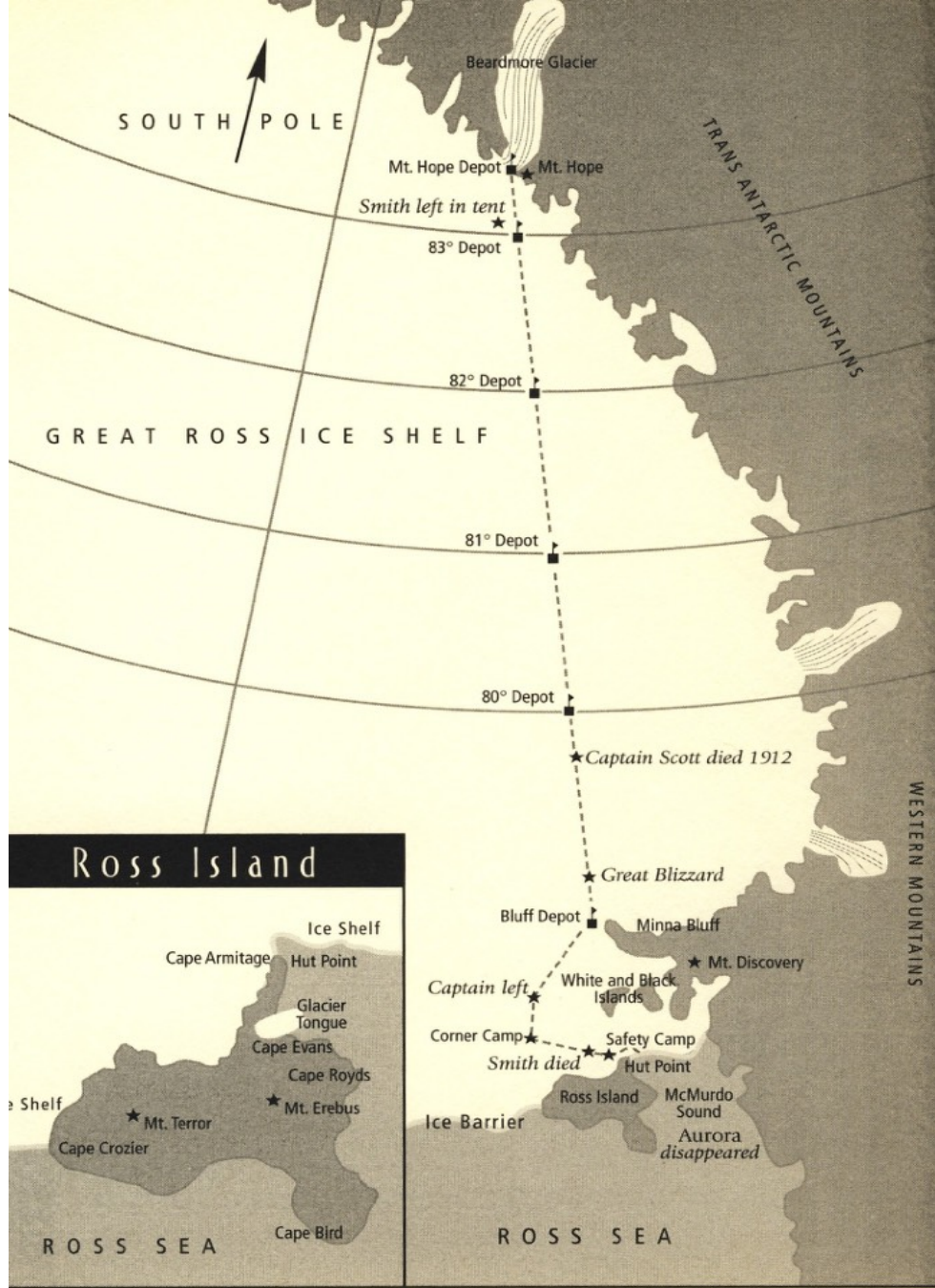
Aurora was the main living quarters for the whole team whilst at base, The sledging rations for the depots had been landed but the 10 stranded men were only left with the clothes they were wearing! The saving factor was the food and materials left in the huts by Scott and Shackleton. Much of the clothing and footwear they used subsequently was sewn from old tents and sails.

Working in 3 teams of 3, they started hauling supplies to Hut Point. This went well, but from Hut Point to Minna Bluff proved more difficult. Joyce led a party of 6 with the remaining 4 dogs; Mackintosh man-hauled with Ernest Wild and Arnold Spencer-Smith, the chaplain. Minna Bluff depot was complete by 28 Dec.

On 1 Jan 1916 one Primus stove failed; it was critical to survival and with no replacement, 3 men returned to Cape Evans, leaving only six men to do the haul to the bottom of Beardmore Glacier, Mount Hope.

Suffering from scurvy and malnutrition, they struggled in the extreme. Spencer-Smith collapsed and was left in a tent to be picked on the return.

The Mount Hope depot was layed on 26 Jan 1916.



TRACK OF THE DEPOT-LAYING PARTY

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The Return to Hut Point

The return from Mount Hope, starting on 27 Jan was more traumatic than the outward journey.

Picking up Spencer-Smith, Mackintosh soon collapsed so they had to pull both men on one sledge.

After being tent bound for 5 days in a blizzard, supplies ran out and they could not move Mackintosh and Spencer-Smith. So, leaving the invalids in a tent, they did a round trip of 20 miles, taking a week, to get supplies and then carried on. Hayward collapsed soon, so three men suffering from scurvy, were pulling 3 invalids. On 9 March Spencer-Smith died. The remaining 5 reached Hut Point on 16 March.

They recovered at Hut Point due to a diet of fresh seal meat.



**Mackintosh and Spencer-Smith being hauled back to Hut Point
by Joyce and Wild and the Four Remaining Dogs**

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Conclusion

Arriving at Hut Point on 16 March, the sea ice in McMurdo Sound was too thin to safely walk to Cape Evans. The monotony of the diet and boredom caused Mackintosh and Hayward to set out on 8 May; they were never seen again.

Richards, Joyce and Wild waited until 15 July before making the journey to Cape Evans, where they were re-united with the other four.

Having reached New Zealand in April 1916, Aurora was refitted at the expense of the governments of GB, NZ and Aust. Having seen to rescue of the Weddell Sea party in Aug 1916, Shackleton went to NZ to be involved in the Ross Sea rescue. Because of the chaotic departure of Aurora to Ross Sea, he was not allowed to command the Aurora but sailed as supernumerary on 20 Dec 1916. On 10 Jan 1917 Aurora reached Cape Evans and the 7 survivors learned of the futility of their labours.

Three dogs Oscar, Gunner and Towser survived and returned to NZ, where they finished their lives in Wellington Zoo.

REFERENCES

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