

# TERRA NOVA



AT THE SOUTH POLE  
(Bowers pulls the string)

By Robert Poppe, copyright 2006

## GAME CHEF NOTES

This game was written for the 2006 Game Chef competition, and I thank you for reading it. Qualifying theme and ingredients are as follows:

For theme, I've chosen time and session option two - Terra Nova is completely playable in one two-hour session. This session length is mechanically reinforced in the rules.

For ingredients, I've chosen three ingredients from package two - steel, team, and law.

Robert Falcon Scott continually referred to his men as hard - these were seasoned polar veterans who volunteered for a journey into the most dangerous and inhospitable terrain on earth. Their resolve, their toughness, their *steel* is, in retrospect, astonishing. They walked to the south pole. In 1912. And almost returned alive.

The four of them were chosen as much for their compatibility as for their physical prowess and technical expertise. A year of laying depôts, working with sledge and ski, had galvanized them into a tightly-knit *team* of single-minded professionals. Although each had a role and specialty, by necessity they thought and acted as one when it counted.

The Terra Nova expedition was governed by two sets of contradictory but immutable *laws*. The first were the laws of nature - merciless and implacable, utterly inimical to human survival, and incontrovertible. The second were the laws of civilization - more specifically, the laws of His Majesty King George V. The men who followed Scott to the south pole lived and died by a moral code that ignored the harsh realities of Antarctica when they interfered with the prerogatives and obligations of an English gentleman. In the end, it could be argued that this is what killed them all.

*Where the Queen's Law does not carry, it is irrational to exact an observance of other and weaker rules.* -  
Rudyard Kipling; written in Robert Falcon Scott's notebook, Tuesday June 27, 1911

## NOTES

This game shares the name Terra Nova (and subject matter) with the excellent play by Ted Tally; no connection or challenge is implied. The name of Scott's expedition is wonderfully evocative and the obvious choice for any project touching on his last days.

I've made liberal use of Captain Scott's journal entries, including minor editing, concatenating certain dates, and changing details to suit the game. The real thing, as noted in the bibliography, makes gripping reading.

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## ON THE COVER

Wednesday, January 17, 1912. Oates, Bowers (seated), Scott, Wilson (seated), and Evans at the south pole. Photo by Henry R. Bowers.

## INTRODUCTION

Terra Nova is a game about the disastrous end of Captain Robert Falcon Scott's 1912 Antarctic expedition, which claimed the lives of Scott and his four companions en route from the south pole. In it, the players will assume the roles of Scott's team, beginning on January 18, 1912 and ending with their destruction several months later. In the interim they will be forced to make brutal decisions that balance survival with humanity, the immutable laws of nature with the facile laws of men. In the end, they will fall one by one.

Scott had been to Antarctica before, reaching 82°17' south on December 31, 1902 with Edward Wilson and Ernest Shackleton before turning back. A fiercely competitive man, Scott was determined to be the first to reach the south pole - ahead of friend and foreigner alike. The deed would secure his future, as honors and riches would certainly be heaped upon the victor in the contest.

Shackleton led an expedition in 1909 that reached 88°23' south; about 100 miles from the pole, before sensibly turning back - *better a live donkey than a dead lion*, he said, and Shackleton was knighted for his efforts. To Scott this was merely a failure, and he set his own plans in motion to best his old companion and capture the south polar prize.

Roald Amundsen of Norway was not even considered a competitor - although he too had been to Antarctica (in 1899), all his attention prior to 1910 had been focused northward. Amundsen was an accomplished explorer and a keen student of the natives of the arctic - happily adapting the tools and techniques of the Greenland Inuit, something beneath Scott's dignity. With his ship, the Fram, Amundsen set out in 1910 with the stated intention of exploring the north polar region. This was a ruse - he and his team headed instead for Antarctica, with the goal of beating Scott at his own game, a move that infuriated the British as unsporting in the extreme. The two teams would be competing, more or less, head to head in the winter of 1911.

The Norwegians were better prepared, to put it mildly.

Where Scott was struggling with knock-kneed Siberian ponies (which he had to abandon for man-hauling), Amundsen had dogs from Greenland and knew how to use them.

While the British slowly starved themselves to death on a 4,500 calorie diet, the Norwegians ran their dogs to exhaustion and methodically slaughtered them for meat.

Where Scott's paraffin-sealed containers failed, allowing precious fuel to evaporate in the dry Antarctic, Amundsen's fuel's hermetic seals would last for decades.

Where Scott's team had barely even seen skis, every one of Amundsen's men was an expert and one was a national champion.

Scott's sledges weighed over 150 pounds each; the Norwegian versions - bought from the same source and heavily modified - weighed a third of this.

Amundsen's team rushed to the pole over a new route and arrived 35 days before the British. They returned unharmed to the Fram, their legacy secured. For Scott's part, the demoralizing arrival at the pole on Wednesday, January 17 1912 - too late, too exhausted, and already in deadly peril - is where this game begins.

# **PART ONE: "IT IS QUITE IMPOSSIBLE TO SPEAK TOO HIGHLY OF MY COMPANIONS"**

## **WHAT YOU NEED TO PLAY**

There is no GM in Terra Nova, but you really should have a total of five participants. Although there are rules included for playing with fewer, if at all possible play with five.

You need a single deck of 52 cards and, ideally, the character sheets provided. Playing by candle- or lamp-light is particularly appropriate. There's not much to keep track of and the cards are easy to read.

## **BEFORE YOU BEGIN**

Note the time. Game play concludes in one hour and fifty minutes with the reading of the epilogue. Including preparation and wrap-up, you should be finished in two hours. Each scene should last about ten minutes.

Figure out who is playing who - I encourage you to hand out characters randomly.

Set aside twelve cards from the deck, drawn at random. These are compassion - give them to Captain Scott's player, who can hand them out or keep them as he chooses.

Captain Scott's player should read the prologue, and then you can immediately plunge into scene one by drawing your first cards.

## **THE 1912 TERRA NOVA EXPEDITION POLAR TEAM**

Each player will play a member of Scott's team - Evans, Bowers, Oates, Wilson, or Captain Scott himself. Here are brief biographical sketches and their game-related information.

### **Edgar Evans, Petty Officer, Royal Navy.**

An enlisted man among officers, Evans was considered the strongest of the team. Back in civilization he had a reputation as a womanizer and general wild man, but on the polar march he is a confident veteran. Although Evans has no one in particular to write to beyond his Welsh parents, he certainly has a girl in every port.

*Evans, a giant worker with a really remarkable headpiece. It is only now I realise how much has been due to him. Our ski shoes and crampons have been absolutely indispensable, and if the original ideas were not his, the details of manufacture and design and the good workmanship are his alone. He is responsible for every sledge, every sledge fitting, tents, sleeping-bags, harness, and when one cannot recall a single expression of dissatisfaction with any one of these items, it shows what an invaluable assistant he has been. Now, besides superintending the putting up of the tent, he thinks out and arranges the packing of the sledge; it is extraordinary how neatly and handily everything is stowed, and how much study has been given to preserving the suppleness and good running qualities of the machine. On the Barrier, before the ponies were killed, he was ever roaming round, correcting faults of stowage. - Robert Falcon Scott*

*Edgar Evans has proved a useful member of our party; he looks after our sledges and sledge equipment with a care of management and a fertility of resource which is truly astonishing - on 'trek' he is just as sound and hard as ever and has an inexhaustible store of anecdote. - Robert Falcon Scott*

Evans' discipline is 3 - he is almost fanatic in his loyalty to Captain Scott. His strength is 2 - he badly cut himself on the way to the pole and has concealed this fact from the team. His hope is 1 - Evans knows he's now the weak link, with an infected hand.

Evans' suit is DIAMONDS.

### **Henry R. Bowers, Lieutenant, Royal Navy.**

Called "Birdie" because of his beak-like nose, the likeable Bowers is Scott's impulsive, last-minute addition to the team. Bowers is so short that breaking trail is a special hardship for him.

*Bowers is all and more than I ever expected of him. He is a positive treasure, absolutely trustworthy and prodigiously energetic. He is about the hardest man amongst us, and that is saying a good deal--nothing seems to hurt his tough little body and certainly no hardship daunts his spirit. I shall have a hundred little tales to tell you of his indefatigable zeal, his unselfishness, and his inextinguishable good humour. He surprises always, for his intelligence is of quite a high order and his memory for details most exceptional. You can imagine him, as he is, an indispensable assistant to me in every detail concerning the management and organisation of our sledging work and a delightful companion on the march. - Robert Falcon Scott*

*Little Bowers remains a marvel – he is thoroughly enjoying himself. I leave all the provision arrangement in his hands, and at all times he knows exactly how we stand, or how each returning party should fare. It has been a complicated business to redistribute stores at various stages of re-organisation, but not one single mistake has been made. In addition to the stores, he keeps the most thorough and conscientious meteorological record, and to this he now adds the duty of observer and photographer. Nothing comes amiss to him, and no work is too hard. It is a difficulty to get him into the tent; he seems quite oblivious of the cold, and he lies coiled in his bag writing and working out sights long after the others are asleep. – Robert Falcon Scott*

*Bowers insists on doing all camp work; he is a positive wonder. I never met such a sledge traveler. – Robert Falcon Scott*

Bowers' discipline is 1 - he is over-enthusiastic and tends to take unnecessary risks. His strength is 3 - he's tough as nails. His hope is 2 - he really lives for the mission, and has nothing to return home to.

Bowers' suit is CLUBS.

### **Lawrence E. G. Oates, Captain Sixth Inniskilling Dragoons.**

Called "Titus", Oates is the only Army man surrounded by a sea of Navy. Taciturn, and a specialist in handling the supply expeditions Siberian ponies, he was surprised (and perhaps dismayed) to be selected for the final push to the pole. Oates is devoted to his mother and sister, and writes them nightly.

*There is far more than meets the eye -- or the ear either, for that matter -- in his rather amused taciturnity.... There's a delightful suppressed geniality in him which bubbles over now and again. When it comes to hard and heavy work, he will be a great standby. – Edward Wilson*

*Of these three it is a matter for thought and congratulation that each is sufficiently suited for his own work, but would not be capable of doing that of the others as well as it is done. Each is invaluable. Oates had his invaluable period with the ponies; now he is a foot slogger and goes hard the whole time, does his*



*share of camp work, and stands the hardship as well as any of us. I would not like to be without him... -*

Robert Falcon Scott

*'The Soldier' is very popular with all--a delightfully humorous cheery old pessimist. - Robert Falcon*

Scott

Oates' discipline is 2 - he is an old horse soldier. His strength is 2 - a leg wound from the Boer war was returned to bother him on the march. His hope is 2 - he neither expected or desired to be chosen for the pole.

Oates' suit is SPADES.

### **Edward Adrian Wilson, M.A., M.B. Scientist.**

The team's doctor and naturalist, "Uncle Bill" Wilson is closest to Scott in temperament and enthusiasm. A man of boundless curiosity, Wilson is also a competent polar traveler, having gone as far as 88°23' south with Scott in 1902. His wife, Oriana, has been his constant companion and unpaid assistant (whenever he is not in the Antarctic) for years.

*...Wilson, first as doctor, ever on the lookout to alleviate the small pains and troubles incidental to the work, now as cook, quick, careful and dexterous, ever thinking of some fresh expedient to help the camp life; tough as steel on the traces, never wavering from start to finish. - Robert Falcon Scott*

*Words must always fail me when I talk of Bill Wilson. I believe he really is the finest character I ever met--the closer one gets to him the more there is to admire. Every quality is so solid and dependable; cannot you imagine how that counts down here? Whatever the matter, one knows Bill will be sound, shrewdly practical, intensely loyal and quite unselfish. Add to this a wider knowledge of persons and things than is at first guessable, a quiet vein of humour and really consummate tact, and you have some idea of his values. I think he is the most popular member of the party, and that is saying much. - Robert Falcon Scott*

*I believe he really is the finest character I ever met--the closer one gets to him the more there is to admire. Every quality is so solid and dependable; cannot you imagine how that counts down here? - Robert Falcon Scott*

Wilson's discipline is 2 - Although he's a scientist, he's an experienced polar traveler. His strength is 1 - he's pulled a muscle in his leg while man-hauling. His hope is 3 - he implicitly trusts Scott.

Wilson's suit is HEARTS.

### **Robert Falcon Scott, Captain, Royal Navy, C.V.O.**

The moral compass for his team, equally loved and despised, Scott is the quintessential British officer - demanding, distant, and driven. The Captain is aloof from his team, constantly committing observations to his notebook. He desperately wants to return from the south pole but knows the odds are impossibly long. Even above that goal, he wants his men to acquit themselves like gentlemen. The Norwegians may have beaten the British expedition to the pole, but they did it without the slightest pretense of scientific inquiry, and they lied about their intentions and ate dogs in the process. In the end, dying like proper Englishmen is what Terra Nova is about. Scott is very much in love with his wife Kathleen, a sculptor and free-thinker of some renown.

*He (Scott) cried more easily than any man I have ever known. What pulled Scott through was character, sheer good grain which ran over and under and through his weaker self and clamped it all together. -*

Apsley Cherry-Gerard

*Myself, I dislike Scott intensely and would chuck the whole thing if it were not that we are a British expedition.... Scott is not straight, it is himself first, the rest nowhere... - Lawrence Oates*

Scott's qualities are always one higher than the fittest member of his team. No matter what, he dies last.

### **ABOUT CAPTAIN SCOTT'S PLAYER**

The player who chooses the role of Captain Scott has unusual duties. Unlike the other player characters, his character has no qualities. Scott's player functions more as score-keeper and scene framer, and he does not participate in the normal way. That said, he has no adjudicatory role in play and is not really a "game master" in any accepted sense of the word. The only time he will directly interact with the other player characters is when he chooses to use his compassion.

Before play, Scott's player allocates compassion to the team, including himself. His choice of distribution will directly impact the nature of the game.

Scott's player reads the introductory text for each scene, which is pulled directly from Scott's actual expedition notebook.

During each scene, he must note any occasion in which a character, in his judgment, behaves in an exemplary fashion. Each mention in his final notebook entry on March 29 is a point of merit for the character so noted. The player of the character mentioned the most is likely to win the game.

### **DISCIPLINE, HOPE, AND STRENGTH**

As mentioned in their descriptions, characters (with the exception of Captain Scott) have three qualities - discipline, hope, and strength. When these are lost, they become, respectively, madness, despair, and helplessness, and all three conditions are equally fatal. Captain Scott's qualities can always be assumed to be one higher than the fittest member of his team. This means that no matter what the game's outcome, Scott is the last to perish. Scott's player does not need to keep track of qualities during the game.

### **COMPASSION**

Compassion is a sort of fourth quality, which when abandoned becomes indifference or, perhaps, cruelty. Captain Scott's player has twelve playing cards that represent acts of compassion, and he allocates these before the game begins, in any way he wishes, to any player at all. Captain Scott's player can use any compassion he assigns himself freely - it is his only way of becoming involved in scenes directly. How compassion is divided will have an important impact on the tenor of the game - if Scott's player keep sit all, the outcome will be very different than if he gives it all away.

### **EXAMPLE**

Ray, playing Captain Scott, briefly considers giving all twelve cards to his girlfriend Sally, but instead decides to divide compassion more or less equitably. He gives two cards to each player and retains four for himself. The burden of command and all that ... he wants to be able to occasionally weigh in during the game, but he also wants to give everyone else the opportunity to show him what their characters are really made of.

## **PART TWO: "PRAY GOD WE HAVE FINE WEATHER TOMORROW"**

### **TURN SEQUENCE**

At any time, a player may elect to use compassion to change the outcome of a quality loss for their own character or another. This includes Captain Scott's player.

1. Captain Scott's player reads the notebook entry for the new scene.
2. Each of the other four players draw a card and displays it.
3. Anyone drawing a card of the color opposite their character's suit immediately loses one point in the quality of their choice due to exhaustion, frostbite, doubt, etc. A descriptive statement is all that is called for.
4. In every scene, one or more characters will experience hardship. The high card drawn determines which character will have a crisis - each corresponds to a suit. The low card drawn determines the quality effected by the crisis.
5. The players whose cards turn up high and low must involve their characters in the ensuing scene somehow, along with the victim of hardship. Briefly play out the scene for Captain Scott's benefit, describing the character's actions.
6. If anyone has a quality that has been reduced to zero through hardship, they have the privilege of narrating the results of their breakdown. If it is a destructive breakdown, they must choose a target.
7. If any characters remain at zero and no one is willing to assist them, they die. If any character has two qualities reach zero, they are dead. Players of dead characters continue to draw cards and may continue to play compassion cards for the duration of the game. An entire scene should take no longer than ten minutes.

Repeat these steps until the end of scene ten, or until one hour and fifty minutes have passed. For the epilogue, Captain Scott's player reads his final notebook entry, along with statements of merit he has written for the four other player's characters. After this, the game is scored and a winner is determined.

### **USING THE CARDS**

After Captain Scott's player has read from his notebook at the beginning of each scene, each player draws a card and lays it in front of them. Aces are high. Somebody is going to be in trouble.

Each character has a suit. The first thing you must do is check the card each player drew to see if there is any deterioration of their character - a red card for Bowers' or Oates' player (clubs or spades), or a black card for Wilson's or Evans' player (hearts or diamonds) means the reduction of one point from the quality of the player's choice.

Next, determine hardship. The *highest card* indicates which of the team is experiencing hardship:

Hearts: Wilson

Diamonds: Evans

Clubs: Bowers

Spades: Oates

The character of the player holding the high card is the observer of the hardship, and narrates the outcome in conjunction with the player effected. It is possible for the harm to be self-inflicted, or for a player to narrate for their own character. Flashbacks are always appropriate, and can be particularly heart-rending.

The *lowest card* indicates the nature of the hardship, and the player holding this card narrates the circumstances. Every hardship hinges on either discipline, hope, or strength, and both the quality and the degree of seriousness are indicated on the hardship table. The victim of the hardship reduces the associated quality (determined by the low card) by one.

A scene is framed involving at least these two characters, and possibly all four. Captain Scott is not involved unless he chooses to use compassion, in which his player may narrate the Captain's timely intercession.

Ties result in hardships that involve multiple characters, or that have multiple causes. When the low card is also a face card, the hardship effects everyone in the team.

If an indicated quality is already at zero (perhaps due to the drawing of an off-color card), the player must choose a different quality to lower. No quality can drop below zero.

### **HARDSHIP TABLE**

<b>LOW CARD</b>	<b>HARDSHIP</b>	<b>AT ZERO?</b>
2	Discipline	Hallucinations
3	Hope	Fantasy
4	Strength	Deception
5	Discipline	Paranoia
6	Hope	Suicidal thought
7	Strength	Collapse
8	Discipline	Destruction
9	Hope	Self Destruction
10	Strength	Consumption
J	Group Discipline	Chaos
Q	Group Hope	Despair
K	Group Strength	Desperation

If the low card is an ace (which means that every card drawn was an ace), the game ends immediately in some abrupt catastrophe. Perhaps the entire party falls into a crevasse.

### **EXAMPLE**

Bill, Sally, Pete, and Leland are playing Terra Nova as Wilson, Evans, Bowers, and Oates respectively. They each draw a card as follows:

**BILL/WILSON:** 6 of Clubs

SALLY/EVANS: 7 of Spades

PETE/BOWERS: 4 of Hearts

LELAND/OATES: Jack of Hearts

Leland has the high card, a heart, so the character in crisis is Dr. Wilson. His character, Oates, will be involved somehow - either as instigator or observer. Pete has the low card, a 4, which means the hardship will revolve around Dr. Wilson's strength.

Bill, whose character is Wilson, whose suit is hearts, drew a black card, and must therefore reduce the quality of his choice by one. Leland, as Oates, drew a red card and must also suffer.

Sally, as Evans, drew a spade and suffers no penalty. Bowers also suffers no penalty.

### **MORE ABOUT COMPASSION**

Players can look at any compassion cards Captain Scott has given them and use them whenever they like during the game. They are free to reveal them or keep them secret, but they cannot trade, share, or give them away. Compassion cards can be used to do one of two things:

1. If played on the character of the indicated suit (hearts for Wilson, etc) it serves as some act of kindness or sacrifice that completely restores the quality indicated on the hardship table for the card's number. If you play a six of hearts on Wilson, for example, you can restore his hope to its initial level. If you do this and provide a compelling narrative to go with it, Captain Scott is surely going to mention it in his notebook.
2. If played on any other character (including one's own character, which is a viable option), it increases any one quality by one point. This is true even for the character of the card's suit, if the quality to be raised does not correspond to the hardship table. This isn't nearly as good a deal as option one, but it may be necessary, particularly if you find yourself in a situation where your team-mates are prepared to abandon you.

A compassion card can be played at any time, but you cannot play a compassion card on a character who has not lost a point in a quality during the scene. Once compassion is used, it is gone forever. You can play multiple cards during a single scene if you wish.

An Ace, when used as compassion, is a "wild card" that can refresh any of the qualities of the character it references.

### **EXAMPLE**

Sally, playing Evans, has the seven of clubs as one of her compassion cards. With this card, at any point in the game, she can completely refresh Bowers' strength (Bowers' suit is clubs; seven on the hardship table is strength), or she can use it to raise any other quality in the game of any character by one. If Bowers' discipline fell to zero, she could use the seven of clubs to raise it to one. If Bowers' strength fell to zero, she could use the same card to pump it back up to its starting value.

### **FRAMING SCENES**

The "role-playing" portion of each scene is built up with information provided by the card draw - whose character was hurt by an off-color draw? Around whom does the hardship revolve? What is the nature of the hardship, and who is intervening with compassion? Together, these elements provide the frame upon which the players can step into their roles and interact with one another. This portion of each scene should be reasonably brief - to get through all ten scenes, you'll need to keep each scene, all told, down to about ten minutes.

### **DEATH**

A character dies when one of two criteria are met. Either they have two qualities reduced to zero, in which case they immediately die, or they have one quality reduced to zero and are left behind by their team-mates at the end of the scene.

When a character dies, that character's player continues to draw cards in every scene. If the high card is drawn, the dead player's character must choose a surviving member of the team for it to affect instead. If the low card is drawn, the player contributes to framing the scene, and must inject the reason why the hardship is the result of their absence.

This mechanism provides excellent motivation for keeping all the characters alive. Once a character dies, things spiral downhill rapidly - there are fewer characters to share the burden of hardship.



In addition to drawing a card at the beginning of each scene, the player of a dead character can still play his compassion cards throughout the game. Compassion, in this case, includes cherished memories or perhaps artifacts of the dead man that prove inspirational. Flashbacks are certainly encouraged.

### **WINNING THE GAME**

Player interaction ends after scene ten, at which time Captain Scott's player reads the epilogue, complete with mentions of noteworthy deeds by his compatriots. At the end of the epilogue, add up all your character's remaining quality points (dead men have zero) and combine them with the number of times you were mentioned in Scott's final notebook entry. Subtract any remaining compassion cards. The highest total wins the game. Survival until the bitter end counts for something, but acquitting yourself with honor counts for more.

Ties are not uncommon - in the event of a tie, the character with the higher merit wins. If merit itself is tied, a dead character beats a living character. If you still have a tie, put it to a group vote among the other three players.

Note that the fact that remaining compassion is counted against you is an incentive to spend those cards. Spending them thoughtfully can raise your score and possibly earn you some merit at the same time.

### **WHAT CONSTITUTES MERIT?**

This is subjective, of course. The ideals of the era are paramount - certainly duty, honor, loyalty, perseverance, self sacrifice and denial, good cheer in the face of horrible adversity, these sorts of things all deserve mention. Usually, the player who draws the low card will be in the strongest position to earn merit, but it is highly variable. Perhaps the character who wanders off into the storm to ease his companion's burden (as the real-world Oates did) is the most meritorious of all.

Viewed through a contemporary lens it all seems like madness, but for the men who followed Scott south it was as real as the ice.

In the best English tradition, Captain Scott's player should be scrupulously even-handed in recognizing merit among his subordinates.

*It is sad that we have been forestalled by the Norwegians, but I am glad that we have done it by good British man-hauling. That is the traditional British sledging method, and this is the greatest journey done by man...if ever a journey has been accomplished by honest sweat, ours has. - Henry R. Bowers*

## **PART THREE: "THINGS LOOKING VERY BLACK INDEED"**

### **HARDSHIPS**

When the physical, mental, or social pressure becomes intolerable, hardship follows. Sometimes a man will keep his dangerous impulses well in hand, and other times he'll be pushed over a precipice of insanity, lashing out. In these cases, the underlying raving and scheming was obviously well-hidden from the team by pride, vanity, and a sense of duty. If Captain Scott's player is particularly perceptive, he'll recognize this is gentlemanly behavior in extremis.

When a quality falls to zero, the character is faltering, exhausted and unable to continue. Without aid from other characters, anyone with a quality at zero cannot march on their own. They will need to be carried or pulled.

When a character descends to this state of affairs, one of three things can happen.

1. Someone can spend a point of compassion to raise the quality above zero. In this case, the character can function normally.
2. Another character can sacrifice a point in the same quality that has reached zero in their teammate, lowering their own by one, in order to bring the degraded character along on the journey. With this option, the poor wretch remains at zero.
3. If no one is able to - or wishes to - assist, the degraded character must be abandoned, and dies immediately.

The player of a character past the breaking point has the privilege of narrating their descent into the pit.

### **EXAMPLE**

Bill, playing Wilson, is forced to lower his hope to zero. The card that caused the crisis was a nine, which indicates self destruction - Bill narrates Wilson breaking down and walking out into the blizzard in his underclothes, determined to die.

Leland, playing Oates, has a six of hearts as one of his compassion cards. If he plays it, he can completely restore Wilson's hope to its original level. Unfortunately Leland and Bill have made a show of their character's dislike for one another, and Oates isn't about to help the poor doctor.

Pete, playing Bowers, doesn't want to see the doctor die. He's out of compassion cards - if he had one, he could use it to raise Wilson's hope to one and save him. Instead, Pete narrates charging out into the storm to retrieve the suicidal doctor, sacrificing a point of his own hope just to drag him along and keep him alive another week. It's a fool's bargain, but the right thing to do.

### **SLIPPING DISCIPLINE**

The quintessential stiff upper lip will carry the burden only so far. Discipline can refer to general misbehavior - refusing to obey an order, for example - but it can also indicate a lapse in self-discipline. When the heavy hand keeping a character's terror in check begins to shake, all hell can break loose.

If the low card is a two, hallucinations creep in. Perhaps he...

...Thought he put new hay in everyone's finnesko boots, but he didn't.

...Saw a pony, or a dog, or a Norwegian darting among the nunataks.

...Ignores his hand, hideously blistered with frostbite, claiming it "doesn't hurt at all".

...Continually sees the depôt flags where there are none.

If the low card is a five, there is a breakdown involving paranoia. Perhaps he...

...Insists on sleeping by the tent door, "so he can get away".

...Second guesses every command with great acrimony.

...Checks the team supply of morphia before every meal "so he won't be poisoned".

...Bitterly complains about the conspiracy that has destroyed him by making him do more work than anyone else.

If the low card is an eight, something valuable will be destroyed. The player whose character is experiencing the hardship must choose to involve another character in his narration, and that player must lower a quality of his own choice (it need not be discipline) by one. Perhaps he...

...Lost his sledgeometer (a device for gauging distance traveled) on the march; it is lost in the snow forever.

...Carelessly cracked a sledge runner dragging it over rock-hard sastrugi.

...Used pages ripped from the geologic notebook to prime the stove.

...Threatened someone with a knife, ruining any trust the team had in him.

If the low card is a Jack, group discipline fails, and chaos ensues. This is a rare and serious problem. Everyone is involved in the scene, and everyone loses a point of discipline. A wave of frantic chaos washes over the entire team - perhaps panic, perhaps terror, perhaps lunatic insubordination.

### **FADING HOPE**

If the low card is a three, a character slips into fantasy. Perhaps he...

...Talks endlessly about chocolate bars.

...Has an impassioned conversation with an imaginary companion.

...Obsesses over the details of his wife's daily life.

...Sees absurdly good tidings where there is only horror.

If the low card is a six, someone begins to have suicidal thoughts. Perhaps he...

...Spends more and more time alone in the snow.

...Begins to make dangerous mistakes, like leaving his snow goggles in his pocket instead of wearing them.

...Begins to talk openly about ending his misery.

...Encourages the others to leave him behind in his weakness.

If the low card is a nine, a character engages in self destruction. The player whose character is experiencing the hardship must choose to involve another character in his narration, and that player must lower a quality of his own choice (it need not be hope) by one. Perhaps he...

- ...Tries to end his life by stealing morphine from the medical kit.
- ...Deliberately cuts his foot "to keep from having to haul any more".
- ...Walks out into the polar night unannounced and unequipped.
- ...Tries to slash his wrists "to end the suffering".

If the low card is a Queen, the entire team falls into an orgy of self-destruction. Perhaps, in despair, Scott simply stops pushing them - they set up camp and spend a day in utter, despondent silence. Everyone is involved in the scene, and everyone loses a point of hope.

### **WANING STRENGTH**

If the low card is a four, the character deceives his team. Perhaps he...

- ...Denies the obvious agony his injuries are causing him.
- ...Lies to them about their elapsed march distance "to give them hope".
- ...Covers up for his exhausted lagging with elaborate stories.
- ...Criticizes any expression of concern for his health as unpatriotic.

If the low card is a seven, the character collapses. Perhaps he...

- ...Has a gruesomely frostbitten extremity - finger, knuckle, toe or nose.
- ...Is, literally, worn to the bone and horrendously undernourished, or has scurvy and is badly dehydrated.
- ...Has gone painfully, cripplingly snow blind.
- ...Has torn a major muscle and any movement is agony.

If the low card is a ten, the character consumes resources he shouldn't. The player whose character is experiencing the hardship must choose to involve another character in his narration, and that player must lower a quality of his own choice (it need not be strength) by one. Perhaps he...

...Secretly takes medicine "to stay on an even keel".

...Burns extra fuel the team can ill afford to lose, maybe to make extra water to drink to quench his thirst.

...Sneaks extra food whenever he can.

...Has developed a hobbling gait that causes excessive wear on his finnesko and pants, wearing them thin and freezing his legs.

If the low card is a King, everyone abandons pretense and tears into the supplies like the starving, desperate men that they are. Everyone is involved in the scene, and everyone loses a point of hope.

## **PART FOUR: "I DO NOT THINK I CAN WRITE MORE"**

### **THE SCENES**

Terra Nova is played out across a prologue, ten scenes and an epilogue, each a snapshot of a week in the last desperate days of the expedition. At the end of the epilogue, everyone still alive will die, including Captain Scott.

A scene should take about ten minutes to play out and resolve.

### **NOTEBOOK ENTRIES FOR SCENES**

#### **PROLOGUE**

*(To be read by Captain Scott's player immediately prior to play, while people are settling in and after compassion has been allocated)*

Wednesday, January 17. Camp 69. T. -22° at start. Night -21°. The Pole. Yes, but under very different circumstances from those expected. We have had a horrible day - add to our disappointment a head wind 4 to 5, with a temperature -22°, and companions labouring on with cold feet and hands. We have been descending again, I think, but there looks to be a rise ahead; otherwise there is very little that is different from the awful monotony of past days. We have just arrived at this tent, 2 miles from our camp, therefore about 1 1/2 miles from the Pole. In the tent we find a record of five Norwegians having been here, as follows:

*Roald Amundsen*

*Olav Olavson Bjaaland*

*Hilmer Hanssen*

*Sverre H. Hassel*

*Oscar Wisting.*

*16 Dec. 1911.*



The following articles have been left in the tent: 3 half bags of reindeer containing a miscellaneous assortment of mitts and sleeping socks, very various in description, a sextant, a Norwegian artificial horizon and a hypsometer without boiling-point thermometers, a sextant and hypsometer of English make. Great God! This is an awful place and terrible enough for us to have laboured to it without the reward of priority ... now for the run home and a desperate struggle. I wonder if we can do it.

### **SCENE ONE**

Friday, January 19. Height 9700. T.  $-18.5^{\circ}$ , Minimum  $-25.6^{\circ}$ . Early in the march we picked up a Norwegian cairn and our outward tracks. We followed these to the ominous black flag which had first apprised us of our predecessors' success. Weather very curious, snow clouds, looking very dense and spoiling the light, pass overhead from the South, dropping very minute crystals; between showers the sun shows and the wind goes to the S.W. The fine crystals absolutely spoil the surface; we had heavy dragging during the last hour in spite of the light load and a full sail. Our old tracks are drifted up, deep in places, and toothed sastrugi have formed over them. It is warmer and pleasanter marching with the wind, but I'm not sure we don't feel the cold more when we stop and camp than we did on the outward march. We pick up our cairns easily, and ought to do so right through, I think; but, of course, one will be a bit anxious till the Three Degree Depôt is reached. I'm afraid the return journey is going to be dreadfully tiring and monotonous.

### **SCENE TWO**

Friday, January 26. Temp.  $-17^{\circ}$ . Height 9700, must be high barometer. Started late, 8.50 - for no reason, as I called the hands rather early. We must have fewer delays. There was a good stiff breeze and plenty of drift, but the tracks held. To our old blizzard camp of the 7th we got on well, 7 miles. But beyond the camp we found the tracks completely wiped out. We searched for some time, then marched on a short way and lunched, the weather gradually clearing, though the wind holding. Knowing there were two cairns at four mile intervals, we had little anxiety till we picked up the first far on our right, then steering right by a stroke of fortune, and Bowers' sharp eyes caught a glimpse of the second far on the left. Evidently we made a bad course outward at this part. There is not a sign of our tracks between these cairns, but the last, marking our night camp of the 6th, No. 59, is in the belt of hard sastrugi, and I was comforted to see signs of the track reappearing as we camped. I hope to goodness we can follow it to-morrow. We marched 16 miles to-day, but made good only 15.4.

### **SCENE THREE**

Friday, February 2. 9340. Temp.: Lunch -19°, Supper -17°. We started well on a strong southerly wind. Soon got to a steep grade, when the sledge overran and upset us one after another. We got off our ski, and pulling on foot reeled off 9 miles by lunch at 1.30. Started in the afternoon on foot, going very strong. We noticed a curious circumstance towards the end of the forenoon. The tracks were drifted over, but the drifts formed a sort of causeway along which we pulled. In the afternoon we soon came to a steep slope--the same on which we exchanged sledges on December 28. All went well till, in trying to keep the track at the same time as my feet, on a very slippery surface, I came an awful 'purler' on my shoulder. It is horribly sore to-night and another sick person added to our tent--three out of five injured, and the most troublesome surfaces to come. We shall be lucky if we get through without serious injury. At the bottom of the slope this afternoon we came on a confused sea of sastrugi. We lost the track. Later, on soft snow, we picked up E. Evans' return track, which we are now following. We have managed to get off 17 miles. The extra food is certainly helping us, but we are getting pretty hungry. The weather is already a trifle warmer and the altitude lower, and only 80 miles or so to Mount Darwin. It is time we were off the summit--Pray God another four days will see us pretty well clear of it. Our bags are getting very wet and we ought to have more sleep.

### **SCENE FOUR**

Friday, February 9. Height 5,210 ft. Lunch Temp. +10°; Supper Temp. +12.5°. About 13 miles. Kept along the edge of moraine to the end of Mt. Buckley. Stopped and geologised. Wilson got great find of vegetable impression in piece of limestone. Too tired to write geological notes. We all felt very slack this morning, partly rise of temperature, partly reaction, no doubt. Ought to have kept close in to glacier north of Mt. Buckley, but in bad light the descent looked steep and we kept out. Evidently we got amongst bad ice pressure and had to come down over an ice-fall. The crevasses were much firmer than expected and we got down with some difficulty, found our night camp of December 20, and lunched an hour after. Did pretty well in the afternoon, marching 3 3/4 hours; the sledge-meter is unshipped, so cannot tell distance traversed. Very warm on march and we are all pretty tired. To-night it is wonderfully calm and warm, though it has been overcast all the afternoon. It is remarkable to be able to stand outside the tent and sun oneself. Our food satisfies now, but we must march to keep in the full ration, and we want rest, yet we shall pull through all right. We are by no means worn out.

## SCENE FIVE

Friday, February 16. 12.5 m. Lunch Temp. -6.1°; Supper Temp. -7°. A rather trying position. One of our number has nearly broken down in brain, we think. He is absolutely changed from his normal self-reliant self. This morning and this afternoon he stopped the march on some trivial excuse. We are on short rations with not very short food; spin out till to-morrow night. We cannot be more than 10 or 12 miles from the depôt, but the weather is all against us. After lunch we were enveloped in a snow sheet, land just looming. Memory should hold the events of a very troublesome march with more troubles ahead. Perhaps all will be well if we can get to our depôt to-morrow fairly early, but it is anxious work with the sick man. But it's no use meeting troubles half way, and our sleep is all too short to write more.

## SCENE SIX

Friday, February 24. Lunch. Beautiful day - too beautiful - an hour after starting loose ice crystals spoiling surface. Saw depôt and reached it middle forenoon. Found store in order except shortage oil - shall have to be *very* saving with fuel--otherwise have ten full days' provision from to-night and shall have less than 70 miles to go. Note from Meares who passed through December 15, saying surface bad; from Atkinson, after fine marching (2 1/4 days from pony depôt), reporting Keohane better after sickness. Short note, not very cheerful, saying surface bad, temperature high. Think he must have been a little anxious. It is an immense relief to have picked up this depôt and, for the time, anxieties are thrust aside. There is no doubt we have been rising steadily since leaving the Shambles Camp. The coastal Barrier descends except where glaciers press out. Undulation still but flattening out. Surface soft on top, curiously hard below. Great difference now between night and day temperatures. Quite warm as I write in tent. We are on tracks with half-march cairn ahead; have covered 4 1/2 miles. Some of our party had a fearful attack snow-blindness consequent on yesterday's efforts. Wish we had more fuel.

Night camp. Temp. -17°. A little despondent again. We had a really terrible surface this afternoon and only covered 4 miles. We are on the track just beyond a lunch cairn. It really will be a bad business if we are to have this pulling all through. I don't know what to think, but the rapid closing of the season is ominous. It is great luck having the horsemeat to add to our ration. To-night we have had a real fine 'hoosh.' It is a race between the season and hard conditions and our fitness and good food.

### **SCENE SEVEN**

Friday, March 2. Lunch. Misfortunes rarely come singly. We marched to the Middle Barrier depôt fairly easily yesterday afternoon, and since that have suffered three distinct blows which have placed us in a bad position. First we found a shortage of oil; with most rigid economy it can scarce carry us to the next depôt on this surface (71 miles away). Second, some of the men are not faring well, exhausted and ill. The third blow came in the night, when the wind, which we had hailed with some joy, brought dark overcast weather. It fell below  $-40^{\circ}$  in the night, and this morning it took 1 1/2 hours to get our foot gear on, but we got away before eight. We lost cairn and tracks together and made as steady as we could N. by W., but have seen nothing. Worse was to come-- the surface is simply awful. In spite of strong wind and full sail we have only done 5 1/2 miles. We are in a very queer street since there is no doubt we cannot do the extra marches and feel the cold horribly.

### **SCENE EIGHT**

Thursday, March 8. Lunch. Worse and worse in morning; time over foot gear something awful. Have to wait in night foot gear for nearly an hour before I start changing, and then am generally first to be ready. Many feet giving trouble now. We did 4 1/2 miles this morning and are now 8 1/2 miles from the depôt--a ridiculously small distance to feel in difficulties, yet on this surface we know we cannot equal half our old marches, and that for that effort we expend nearly double the energy. The great question is, What shall we find at the depôt? If the dogs have visited it we may get along a good distance, but if there is another short allowance of fuel, God help us indeed. We are in a very bad way, I fear, in any case.

### **SCENE NINE**

Friday, March 16 or Saturday 17. Lost track of dates, but think the last correct. Tragedy all along the line. I take this opportunity of saying that we have stuck to our sick companions to the last. I can only write at lunch and then only occasionally. The cold is intense,  $-40^{\circ}$  at midday. My companions are unendingly cheerful, but we are all on the verge of serious frostbites, and though we constantly talk of fetching through I don't think anyone of us believes it in his heart. We are cold on the march now, and at all times except meals. Yesterday we had to lay up for a blizzard and to-day we move dreadfully slowly. We are at No. 14 pony camp, only two pony marches from One Ton Depôt. We leave here our theodolite, a camera, and Oates' sleeping-bags. Diaries, &c.,

and geological specimens carried at Wilson's special request, will be found with us or on our sledge.

#### **SCENE TEN**

Friday, March 23. Blizzard bad as ever - to-morrow last chance - no fuel and only one or two of food left - must be near the end. Have decided it shall be natural - we shall march for the depôt with or without our effects and die in our tracks.

#### **EPILOGUE**

Thursday, March 29. Since the 21st we have had a continuous gale from W.S.W. and S.W. We had fuel to make two cups of tea apiece and bare food for two days on the 20th. Every day we have been ready to start for our depôt 11 miles away, but outside the door of the tent it remains a scene of whirling drift. I do not think we can hope for any better things now. We shall stick it out to the end, but we are getting weaker, of course, and the end cannot be far.

*(Mentions of merit for other player characters - Wilson, Evans, Bowers, and Oates - are included here)*

It seems a pity, but I do not think I can write more.

*R. SCOTT.*

For God's sake look after our people.

## **ALTERNATE RULES**

### **CHARACTER GENERATION**

If you've played Terra Nova and want to freshen it up a bit, try defining your own quality scores. Instead of going with the pre-generated numbers, divide six points among the three in any way you choose. The resulting range is between one and five, with a five being remarkable and a one being dangerously feeble. A 2/2/2 combination is safest, but other choices can make powerful statements and earn you the favorable attention of Captain Scott.

### **PLAYING WITH FOUR: ONE MAN DOWN**

If you can't find a fifth player, Terra Nova is still playable. First, assume one of the party is already dead (remove Scott from the mix and randomly discard one character sheet). During the game, whenever the dead character's card comes up high, use a six-sided die to determine which player character will experience the hardship.

### **PLAYING WITH FOUR: SCOTT-LESS**

Another option for four person play is to remove the role of Scott. If you opt to try this, someone must read Scott's notebook entries (consider rotating this function among players). In addition, everyone must take notes of action deserving merit. After the epilogue, everyone shares their notes - any action mentioned by two or more players is worth a point of merit in determining the final score.

### **PLAYING WITH THREE**

Terra Nova really won't be much fun with three players, but if you are determined to try it, combine both four person rules above for a one man down, Scott-less game.

## **CHARACTER SHEETS**

Character sheets for each of the five player characters follow this page.

Lt. Henry R. "Birdie"  
**BOWERS**

**DISCIPLINE**



*Over-enthusiastic,  
 taked unnecessary risks*

**HOPE**

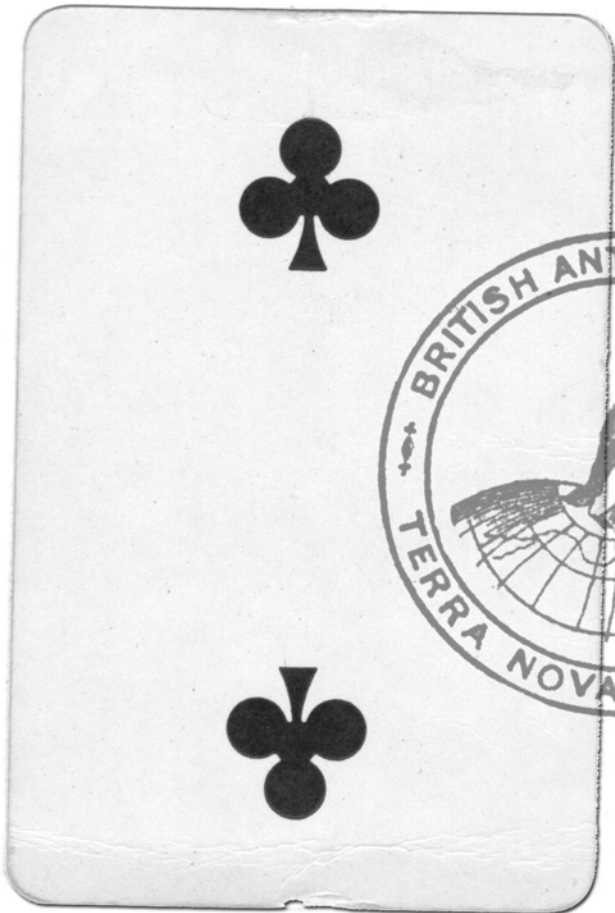


*Nothing much to  
 return home to*

**STRENGTH**



*Tough as nails -  
 an absolute beast*



**HARDSHIP**

- |    |                              |                  |
|----|------------------------------|------------------|
| 2  | Discipline                   | Hallucinations   |
| 3  | Hope                         | Fantasy          |
| 4  | Strength                     | Deception        |
| 5  | Discipline                   | Paranoia         |
| 6  | Hope                         | Suicidal thought |
| 7  | Strength                     | Collapse         |
| 8  | Discipline                   | Destruction      |
| 9  | Hope                         | Self Destruction |
| 10 | Strength                     | Consumption      |
| J  | Group Discipline (Chaos)     |                  |
| Q  | Group Hope (Despair)         |                  |
| K  | Group Strength (Desperation) |                  |

# Petty Officer Edgar EVANS

## DISCIPLINE

3

*Almost fanatic in his loyalty to Capt. Scott*

## HOPE

1

*Knows he's the weakest link.*

## STRENGTH

2

*Evans cut his hand on a sledge runner and has not told his team.*



## HARDSHIP

- |    |                  |                  |
|----|------------------|------------------|
| 2  | Discipline       | Hallucinations   |
| 3  | Hope             | Fantasy          |
| 4  | Strength         | Deception        |
| 5  | Discipline       | Paranoia         |
| 6  | Hope             | Suicidal thought |
| 7  | Strength         | Collapse         |
| 8  | Discipline       | Destruction      |
| 9  | Hope             | Self Destruction |
| 10 | Strength         | Consumption      |
| J  | Group Discipline | (Chaos)          |
| Q  | Group Hope       | (Despair)        |
| K  | Group Strength   | (Desperation)    |





# Capt. Lawrence E. G. OATES

"Titus"

## DISCIPLINE

2

An old horse soldier

## HOPE

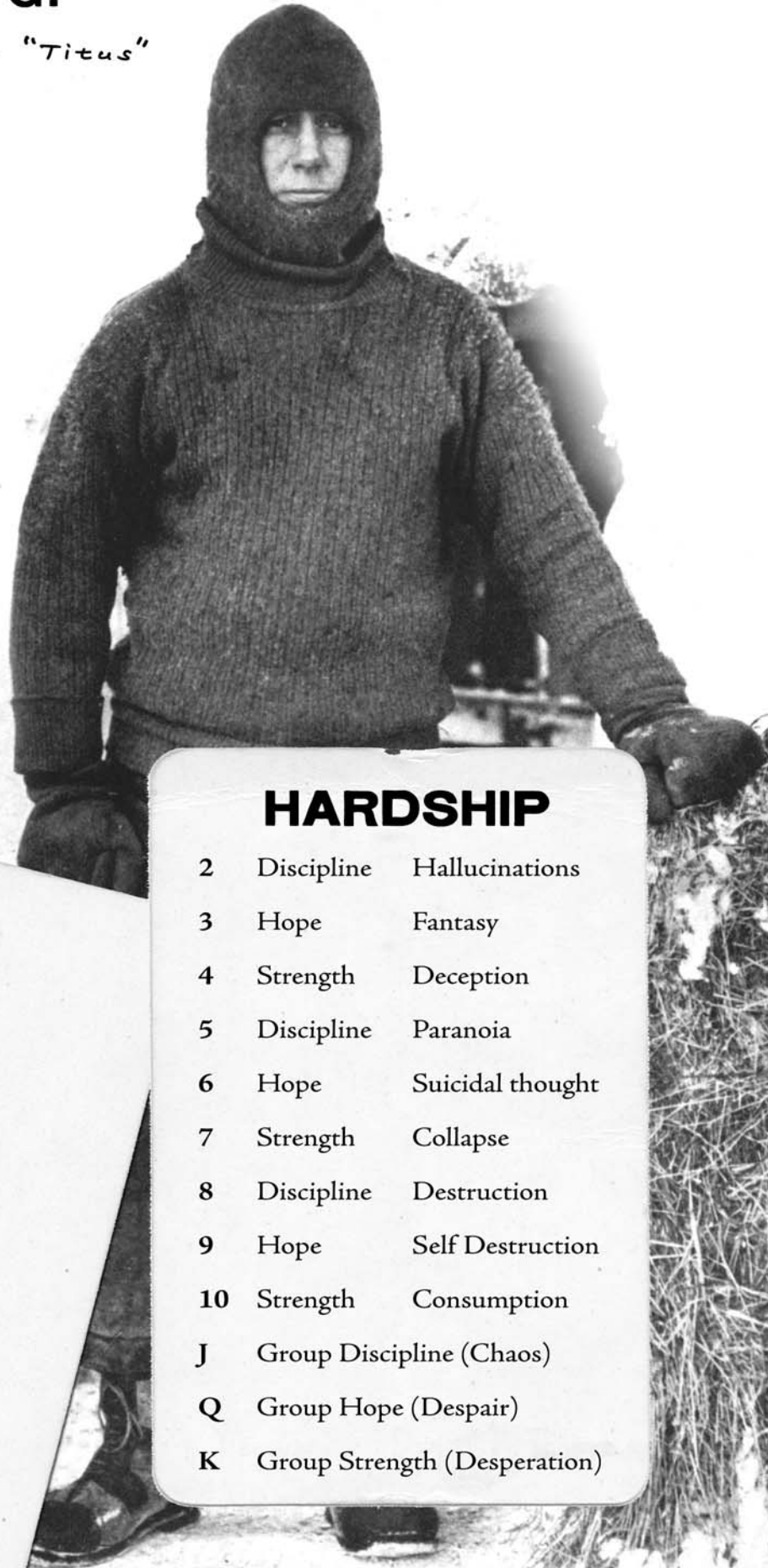
2

Didn't want or expect to be chosen for the polar trek.

## STRENGTH

2

A bothersome leg wound from the Boer war



## HARDSHIP

- |    |                  |                  |
|----|------------------|------------------|
| 2  | Discipline       | Hallucinations   |
| 3  | Hope             | Fantasy          |
| 4  | Strength         | Deception        |
| 5  | Discipline       | Paranoia         |
| 6  | Hope             | Suicidal thought |
| 7  | Strength         | Collapse         |
| 8  | Discipline       | Destruction      |
| 9  | Hope             | Self Destruction |
| 10 | Strength         | Consumption      |
| J  | Group Discipline | (Chaos)          |
| Q  | Group Hope       | (Despair)        |
| K  | Group Strength   | (Desperation)    |



Edward Adrian *"Uncle Bill"*  
**WILSON**



**DISCIPLINE**

*A scientist, not a military man*

2

**HOPE**

3

*Polar veteran who trusts Scott implicitly*

**STRENGTH**

1

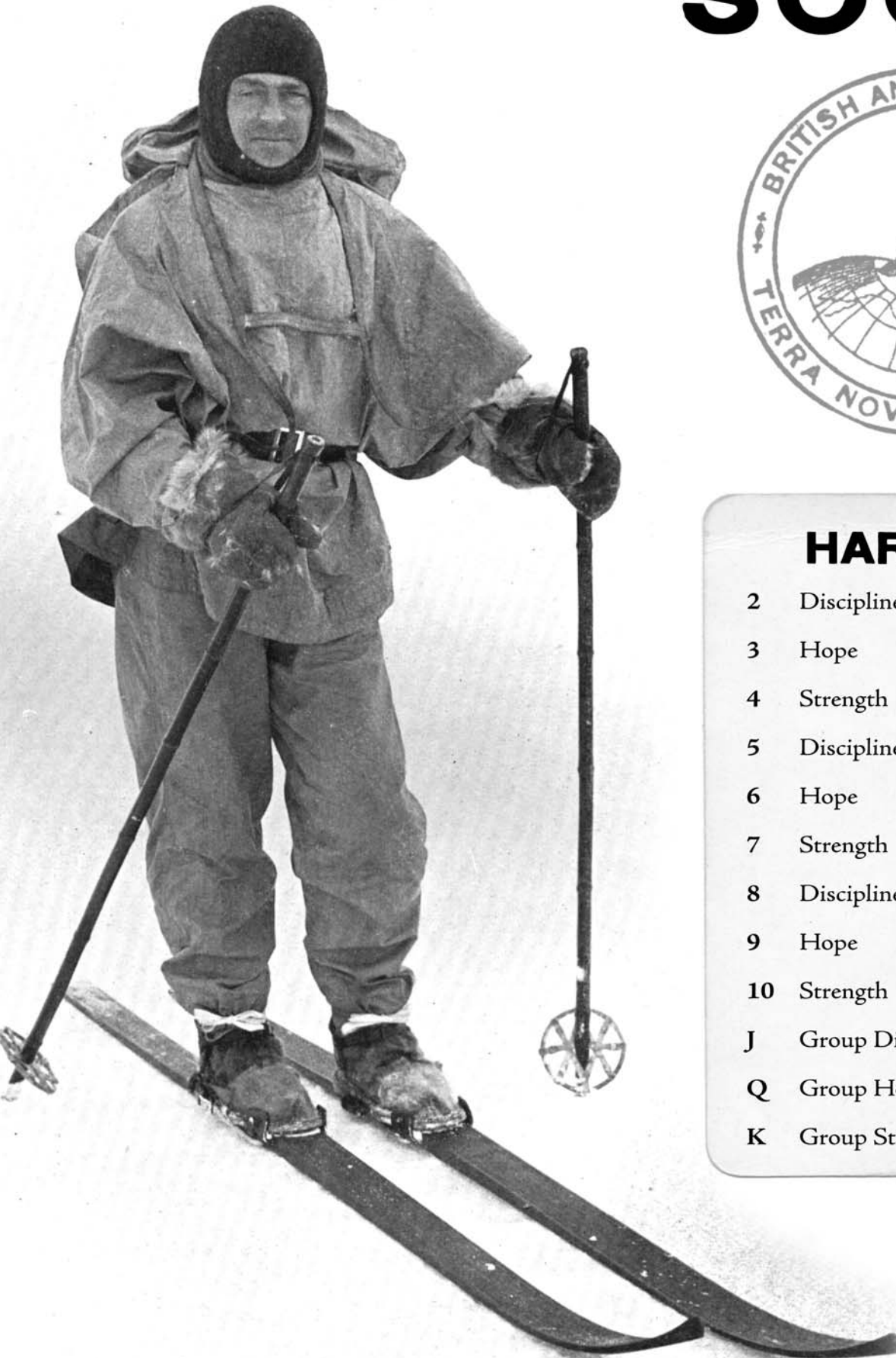
*pulled a muscle in his leg...*

**HARDSHIP**

- 2 Discipline Hallucinations
- 3 Hope Fantasy
- 4 Strength Deception
- 5 Discipline Paranoia
- 6 Hope Suicidal thought
- 7 Strength Collapse
- 8 Discipline Destruction
- 9 Hope Self Destruction
- 10 Strength Consumption
- J Group Discipline (Chaos)
- Q Group Hope (Despair)
- K Group Strength (Desperation)



# Capt. Robert Falcon **SCOTT**



## **HARDSHIP**

- |    |                              |                  |
|----|------------------------------|------------------|
| 2  | Discipline                   | Hallucinations   |
| 3  | Hope                         | Fantasy          |
| 4  | Strength                     | Deception        |
| 5  | Discipline                   | Paranoia         |
| 6  | Hope                         | Suicidal thought |
| 7  | Strength                     | Collapse         |
| 8  | Discipline                   | Destruction      |
| 9  | Hope                         | Self Destruction |
| 10 | Strength                     | Consumption      |
| J  | Group Discipline (Chaos)     |                  |
| Q  | Group Hope (Despair)         |                  |
| K  | Group Strength (Desperation) |                  |