



HMS Resolution II's journey

Voyage duration: 1787 - 1789

A sister ship HMS *Discovery* accompanied the second voyage of HMS *Resolution* (called HMS *Resolution II* in the *Sea Chest Secret* exhibition).

HMS *Resolution* and HMS *Discovery* were Whitby built collier ships. HMS *Resolution* was smaller than HMB *Endeavour*, being 33.5 metres long and 10.7 metres wide across the beam.

Destinations: Plymouth (United Kingdom) – New Zealand – Tahiti – Cook Islands – Christmas Island – smaller Hawaiian islands – north west American coast – Alaskan peninsula – Bering Strait – Arctic Ocean – Hawaii – north west American coast line – Plymouth (United Kingdom).

The purpose of the HMS *Resolution II* journey was to find a northern sea route between the Pacific Ocean and Atlantic Ocean with the sister ship HMS *Discovery* (captained by Charles Clerke). However, it is best known as the voyage in which James Cook was killed in Hawaii. This voyage is also notable in that William Bligh sailed as Master on HMS *Resolution II*.

Explorers sailing home from the Pacific had to travel around the Cape of Good Hope (tip of South America) and across the Atlantic Ocean back up to Europe. Cook was attempting to find a shorter route from the Pacific Ocean, around the north of the American continent and onto the United Kingdom. Commercial traders had attempted the crossing from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific Ocean through Hudson Bay in Canada, finding it was not possible. Cook was instructed to sail further north to search for another possible route.

HMS *Resolution II* sailed down to New Zealand, then onto Tahiti and the Cook Islands, discovering Christmas Island and some of the smaller Hawaiian Islands. They continued onto the north west American coast and north through Bering Strait between Alaska and Russia. They began searching for the possible northern route back to Europe, but only met with ice. Cook was the first navigator of any nation to partly penetrate Antarctic ice and describe the conditions there. He was forced to turn southwards and after eight weeks; they landed back in Kealahou Bay, Hawaii where they replenished supplies for four weeks. They headed northwards again, but bad weather forced them back to Hawaii with a broken mast.

On his first stop in Hawaii, most scholars believe that Cook was welcomed with great hospitality as he arrived during a religious festival and was thought to be a god. He may have been perceived as the god Lonoikamakahiki or Lono – the harvest god. One of HMS *Resolution's* long boats was stolen and (unknown to Cook) burnt to obtain iron. To retrieve the long boat, Cook attempted to take the local Chief hostage. It is reported that the Chief's wife did not want her husband to be taken away and panic started a violent struggle which resulted in Cook being killed on 14 February 1779.

There is no one accepted theory as to how the fight began and how it developed, but the end result (according to the journal of HMS *Resolution II's* James King) was Cook's death at the age of fifty, plus the death of three native Hawaiians and four marines. After Cook's death, Charles Clerke took command of HMS *Resolution*, while first lieutenant John Gore took control of HMS *Discovery*. Then, Cook's successor Clerke died and Gore became captain of HMS *Resolution* and hence, commander of the expedition. HMS *Resolution* and HMS *Discovery* sailed back home to the United Kingdom via the north west American coastline, meeting with native Americans.

