

# Captain James Cook

James Cook was a British explorer, navigator, cartographer and captain in the Royal Navy. He was born on November, 7, 1728 in the village of Marton in Yorkshire. He was the son of a Scottish farmer. When he was eight years old, his family moved to Great Ayton. James Cook attended a local school for five years after which he started working with his father.



He made detailed maps of Newfoundland prior to making three voyages to the Pacific Ocean, during which he achieved the first recorded European contact with the eastern coastline of Australia and the Hawaiian Islands and the first recorded circumnavigation of New Zealand.

A stylized, cursive handwritten signature of James Cook in black ink.

Cook joined the British merchant navy as a teenager and joined the Royal Navy in 1755. He saw action in the Seven Years' War, and subsequently surveyed and mapped much of the entrance to the Saint Lawrence River during the siege of Quebec. This helped bring Cook to the attention of the Admiralty and Royal Society. This notice came at a crucial moment in both Cook's career and the direction of British overseas exploration, and led to his commission in 1766 as commander of HM Bark *Endeavour* for the first of three Pacific voyages.



In three voyages Cook sailed thousands of miles across largely uncharted areas of the globe. He mapped lands from New Zealand to Hawaii in the Pacific Ocean in greater detail and on a scale not previously achieved. As he progressed on his voyages of discovery he surveyed and named features, and recorded islands and coastlines on European maps for the first time. He displayed a combination of seamanship, superior surveying and cartographic skills, physical courage and an ability to lead men in adverse conditions.



Cook was killed in Hawaii in a fight with Hawaiians during his third exploratory voyage in the Pacific in 1779. He left a legacy of scientific and geographical knowledge which was to influence his successors well into the 20th century and numerous memorials worldwide have been dedicated to him.

