



From Ice Floes to Battlefields: Scott's 'Antarctics' in the First World War

Anne Strathie

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February 1912: Harry Pennell and his Terra Nova shipmates land on Antarctica hoping to celebrate Scott's conquest of the Pole. Forced by ice to leave before Scott returns, they arrive in New Zealand to find that Amundsen reached the Pole in December 1911. Back in Antarctica in January 1913, they learn Scott and his party died on the return journey. Pennell and his fellow 'Antarctics' return to Britain, where a cycle of medal ceremonies and memorial services is interrupted by the outbreak of war. By 1919 Pennell and his friends have served at Antwerp, on the Western Front, at Gallipoli, in the Channel, at Jutland and Arctic Russia. They serve on horseback, in trenches, on battleships and hospital ships, in armoured cars and flimsy aircraft; their brothers-in-arms include a Prime Minister's son, poet Rupert Brooke (who takes a photograph of one of them) and the creator of a famous Cotswolds garden. As in Antarctica, life is exciting but dangerous. As on the ice, not all Scott's 'Antarctics' survive.



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