



5 Exploring the arctic

Early explorer cards

ROBERT PEARY

Born 1856

- Robert Peary was an American naval commander and explorer.
- In 1885, he wrote in his diary that he wanted to be the first man to reach the North Pole.
- The following year, Peary made his first expedition to the Arctic, with the intention of crossing Greenland from west to east. He departed from Godhavn, but had to turn back because his expedition was running short on food. He did not succeed in crossing Greenland, however he gained valuable experience.
- In 1891, he returned to Greenland with the intent of heading north to determine whether Greenland was an island or whether its land mass continued to the North Pole.
- He reached the northern coast of Greenland, near the modern-day military base of Nord, proving that Greenland was indeed an island.
- In 1902, he reached the northern part of Ellesmere Island in Nunavut, Canada, the farthest north any explorer had been at the time.
- In 1908, he set off from New York City on a 23-man expedition to reach the North Pole. He spent the winter in Cape Sheridan, near the modern day military base of Alert on Ellesmere Island. In early 1909, he departed across the ice for the North Pole. Peary told his men to wait at the latitude of $87^{\circ}45'N$, while he and a group of six men continued to the North Pole.
- When he returned to his other men, he claimed that he had reached the North Pole, although it could not be verified. Some modern historians dispute his claim.



ON THE MAP, LOCATE:

- The North Pole ($90^{\circ}N$), Robert Peary's life ambition
- Godhavn now named Qeqertarsuaq ($70^{\circ}N$ $53^{\circ}W$), Peary's base in Greenland
- The modern-day military base of Nord ($81^{\circ}N$ $17^{\circ}W$), Greenland near the location where Peary discovered Greenland's northern coast, proving it was an island
- The northern coast of Ellesmere Island, Nunavut, Canada ($83^{\circ}N$ $78^{\circ}W$), the most northerly point of Peary's 1902 expedition
- The modern-day military base of Alert ($82^{\circ}N$ $62^{\circ}W$), Ellesmere Island in Nunavut, Canada near the location where Peary spent the winter before attempting to reach the North Pole
- The latitude of $87^{\circ}45'N$, where Peary commanded most of his men to wait while he attempted to reach the Pole

