Captain Cook

Name: James Cook

Born: 7th November 1728 in Marton-in-Cleveland, England

Early Life
At the age of 18 Cook became a merchant sailor. In 1755, he decided to join the Royal Navy. Here he became a master of map making. His talent was recognised and he rose quickly through the ranks.

The Endeavour
In 1770, Cook became captain of a voyage to the southern hemisphere. The purpose of the voyage was to sail to Tahiti to make observations of the planet Venus as it passed between the Earth and the Sun. However, before the voyage departed, he was given an envelope containing secret instructions. It told him to explore another land; New Holland (Australia). The ship arrived in Tahiti before moving on to explore New Zealand. Cook mapped the main islands of New Zealand. As they continued to sail west, the crew spotted New Holland for the first time. Ten days later Captain Cook arrived at Botany Bay. Here he studied the native plants and animals and had encounters with Indigenous Australians. He claimed the land was now part of the British Empire. He sailed up the coast and landed in Cape York before eventually returning to England in 1771.

Other Voyages
Cook made many other voyages around the world. In 1772, he successfully sailed to the south pole; further south than any other human in recorded history. In 1776, he set out to find a route connecting North America to Asia.

Death
Cook never found a route connecting North America and Asia. While attempting to do so he landed in Hawaii. Here he came into conflict with the Hawaiians and was killed.