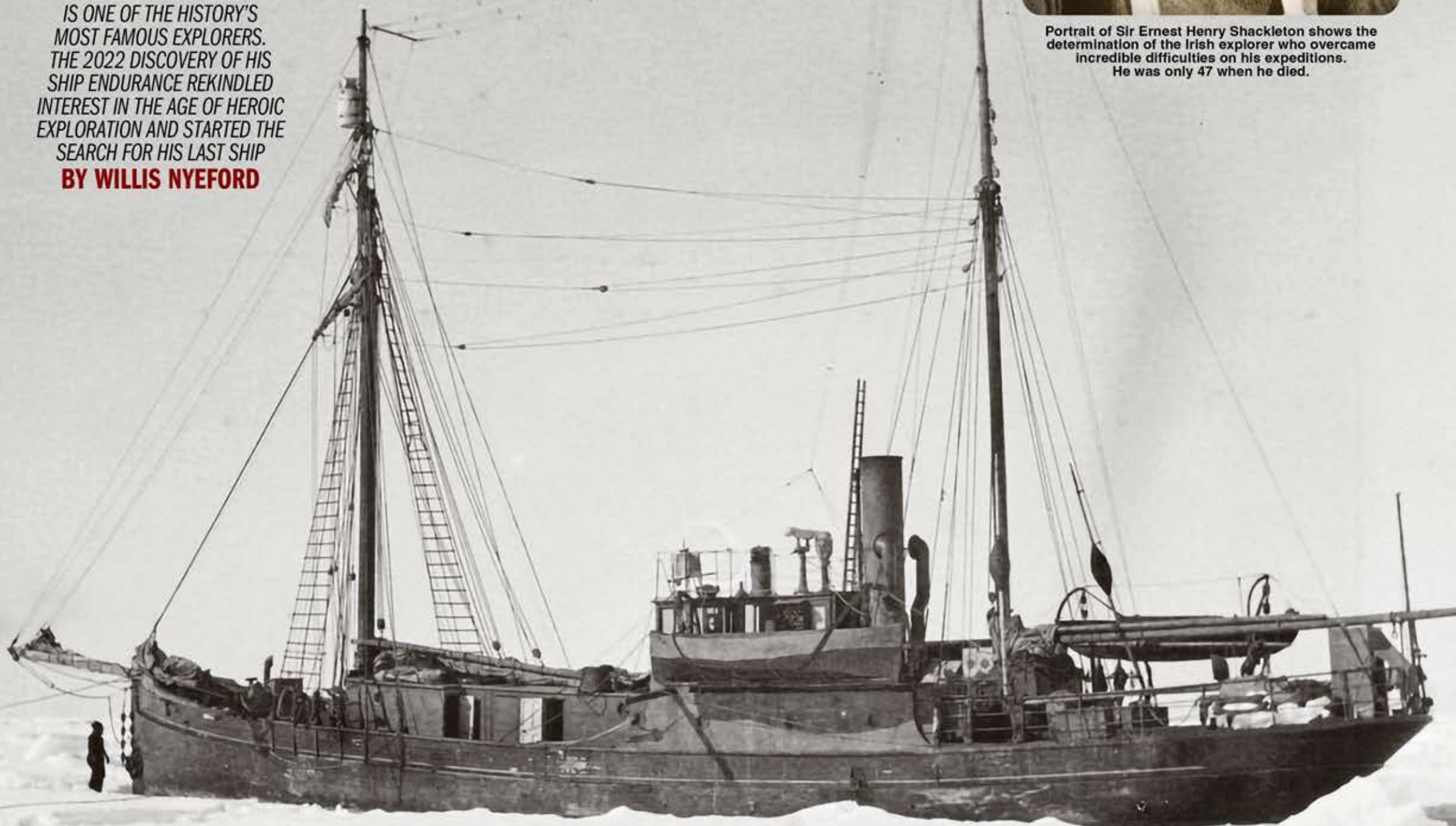


SEARCH FOR QUEST

SIR ERNEST SHACKLETON IS ONE OF THE HISTORY'S MOST FAMOUS EXPLORERS. THE 2022 DISCOVERY OF HIS SHIP ENDURANCE REKINDLED INTEREST IN THE AGE OF HEROIC EXPLORATION AND STARTED THE SEARCH FOR HIS LAST SHIP
BY WILLIS NYEFORD



Portrait of Sir Ernest Henry Shackleton shows the determination of the Irish explorer who overcame incredible difficulties on his expeditions. He was only 47 when he died.



The *Quest* in Antarctic ice. It is still a mystery why Shackleton selected the *Quest* since the vessel had numerous defects for such a hazardous voyage.

It seems that with modern technology we are witnessing major new underwater discoveries on a regular basis. The latest find is the *Quest* — Sir Ernest Shackleton's long-lost ship. The *Quest* was part of the Shackleton-Rowett Expedition (1921-22), which was also the famed explorer's last Antarctic project. It was also the final episode in the correctly-named "Heroic Age of Antarctic Exploration."

This expedition was financed by John Quiller Rowett, a wealthy friend of Shackleton and an individual that firmly believed in Britain's daring expeditions to some of the most dangerous parts of the globe. It must be remembered that even in the 20th Century, there were still vast swaths of the world on which man had not set foot.

When Shackleton returned as a national hero following the *Endurance* expedition, Britain and Europe were in the middle of a war that would slaughter an entire generation. It was May 1917 and many men returning with the explorer sought to enlist. Shackleton was too old to enlist but he wanted to serve his country. Pulling some strings, he eventually left Britain for Murmansk with the rank of temporary major in the British Army.

It was not a happy posting. In one letter home, he stated, "I feel I am no use to anyone unless I am out facing the storm in wild lands." After the war, he returned to England in February 1919. While in Russia, he had formulated plans to develop that area's vast natural resources. This came to nothing when the Red Army took over that area during the Russian Civil War.

Today, most people think of explorers as wealthy men with plenty of backing but that was usually far from the truth. Shackleton had no savings and he owed plenty of money from the *Endurance* expedition. To try to provide funds for his family, he was forced to hit the lecture circuit — something that was extremely popular during that time period. In the winter of 1919/1920, he put himself on an exhausting schedule — lecturing twice a day, six days a week for five months.

While he was doing this, he let his mind drift. Turning away from Antarctica, he decided to go northward and to "fill in this great blank now called the Beaufort Sea." At the time, this