

Shane Kiefer
Cold Places Final Paper

Dead Silence

In late 2013, a scientific research team left Southern New Zealand for Antarctica with the hope of retracing the path of Douglas Mawson and the famous Australasian Antarctic Expedition of 1911-1914. That original expedition began on the second day of December during the year 1911 with the objective of investigating the Antarctic Continent to the south of Australia and mapping different parts of the region for which there was no prior information at hand.¹ Upon arrival on the continent, their intention was to land at various locations and split up into several different parties, set up a base camp, and explore the landscape via sledges. On November 10th, 1912, almost a year after the initial launch of the expedition, Mawson set out on a far-eastern sledge journey with two other comrades, Belgrave Ninnis and Xavier Mertz. What follows is a chilling tale about that specific journey, known as the Far Eastern Party.

JOURNAL OF ANDREW PEACOCK

(CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER OF 2013 AUSTRALIAN ANTARCTIC EXPEDITION)

-- 23 Dec. 2013 --

-4°C. Appx. location: -67.001, 143.464

G'day mates!

When I first learned of the opportunity to be a part of a modern day re-creation of Mawson's original Australasian Antarctic Expedition, I was absolutely ecstatic. It was actually very convenient for me since all it took was a short flight from my native

¹ Mawson, Douglas, Fred Jacka, and Eleanor Jacka. *Mawson's Antarctic Diaries*. Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 2008. 51.

Queensland AUS to New Zealand to meet up with Chris Turney and the gang.² We were actually going to be re-tracing Mawson's steps, and all the while we would have the opportunity to conduct groundbreaking research as we went. After our initial departure on 8 Dec. from the southern coast of New Zealand, we sailed due South toward the subantarctic spit of land known as Macquarie Island. From there, we headed onward to Commonwealth Bay and Cape Denison, where the original AAE base camp was located.³ Near the latter part of our sail, we encountered sea ice and it was slow going for a while. Yet we had nothing to fear, as our courageous ship, the MV AKADEMIK SHOKALSKIY, is a true expedition vessel. She was built for polar research and is fully ice-strengthened, although the limited number of berths on board (26) means that only the truly blessed individuals received the opportunity to make this trek.⁴ I feel so fortunate.

Three days ago, we made landfall and the real adventure began. Led by our fearless leader Chris Turney as well as Doctor Chris Fogwill, we have been traversing the icy landscape for the past two days. Although we are much more adequately equipped than the original AAE, I cannot help but feel a sort of connection with Mawson and his comrades. Over a hundred years later, we are taking the same steps as the great explorers did during the Heroic Age of exploration. I now must end this journal entry for the day as there is still much research to be done. Fogwill is our resident glaciologist, and despite the fact that I am the medical officer on this expedition, he insists on making me assist

² For a detailed explanation of preparations for an Antarctic journey, please see: Wheeler, Sara. *Terra Incognita: Travels in Antarctica*. New York: Random House. 1996. 3-26.

³ Turney, Chris. "Spirit of Mawson." Trip Itinerary. http://www.spiritofmawson.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/AAE_Leg2_itinerary_02.pdf (accessed April 6, 2014).

⁴ Turney, Chris. "Spirit of Mawson." Trip Itinerary.

him in drilling core samples. I'm really starting to get annoyed with his incessant babbling about ice.

Cheers,

AP

-- 27 Dec. 2013 --

-6°C. Appx. location: -67.201, 143.487

Today, December 27th, 2013, will be remembered in the history books. It marks quite possibly the greatest day of my life. As I pen these words, I can scarcely contain my euphoria and absolute astonishment. I will begin my story without further ado. During the drilling yesterday, we found something astonishing. Something monumental. As we were working, one of the core samples came up with wood in it. Confused, we called for several ice picks and some additional assistance. After about an hour or so of laboring, we uncovered the remains of what appeared to be part of a mangled wooden sledge, preserved in the ice. However, the most important find of all was a metal canteen that was lashed to one of the boards. With much excitement we carted the few pieces of wood and the canteen back to our tents for closer inspection. This is where things got interesting.

Upon sufficiently warming the canteen enough to open it, we found a handful of pieces of paper, rolled and tied together with what looked to be a bootlace. Turney was given the honors of unrolling the papers, and our curiosity quickly turned to sheer

incredulousness as he unraveled the delicate sheets. The first bit of writing we saw was at the bottom of the outermost page. Scrawled in unsteady letters was a name: Belgrave Ninnis.

I knew of Ninnis from all of the tales about the original Australasian Antarctic Expedition. He was the one who fell into a crevasse during a side expedition and was never heard from again. The more famous part of the story was what happened after Ninnis was lost, as his companions Mertz and Mawson continued their journey back to the base without a majority of their supplies. According to Mawson's widely popular account of the adventure, Mertz died on January 7th of exhaustion and starvation.⁵ Mawson pressed onward for three more weeks on his own and miraculously survived long enough to find a food cache left by previous explorers, which allowed him to eventually make it back to base and tell his harrowing tale.⁶ Mawson was heralded for his courageousness and strength, but Ninnis and Mertz were widely unknown in the story.

However, I was very familiar with Ninnis since he had also been a medical officer for the original AAE expedition party. I had even read some of his writings before he had perished in the crevasse. I loved his idea of floating hospitals, where he proposed that there be a separate ship which travels along with warships during conflicts to serve as a medical hospital for the wounded.⁷ I thought this was a revolutionary idea for the period!

⁵ *The Argus* (Melbourne), "The Fatal Journey," February 28, 1914. <http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/7249463> (accessed March 6, 2014).

⁶ Mawson, Douglas. *The Home of the Blizzard: Being the story of the Australasian Antarctic Expedition, 1911-1914*. London: William Heinemann, 1915. 11.

⁷ Ninnis, Belgrave. "Floating Hospitals." *British Medical Journal* 2, no. 2121 (1901): 456-457.

Getting back to the precious papers we had discovered, Turney had by this time unwrapped all of the sheets and was staring at them with wide eyes. We collectively huddled around him, and he began to read...

LOST JOURNAL OF BELGRAVE NINNIS

(MEMBER OF THE 1911 AUSTRALASIAN ANTARCTIC EXPEDITION)

December 17th, 1912

These papers will presumably act as my last will and testament. I have spent 3 days down in this godforsaken crevasse, and I am unsure how much longer I will be able to last. My hope grows faint that anyone will find me, and the icy walls around me will most certainly serve as my cold crystalline coffin. With the hopes that someone will ever find these pages, I must at least put my story to paper. Someone must know the chilling truth.

This narrative begins on 10 November, 1912. Douglas Mawson, Xavier Mertz, and I set out on a small mapping expedition into King George V land with the expectation of picking up the coast beyond where Madigan's party had previously reached.⁸ I felt very lucky to be traveling with Mawson, the leader of the whole expedition, because I knew we would be afforded only the best supplies on our journey. We even commandeered all of the expedition dogs, forcing all of the other parties to proceed by only the slow method of

⁸ Mawson, Jacka, & Jacka. *Mawson's Antarctic Diaries*. 127.

trudging by foot.⁹ For several weeks we worked to map and compile research about the continent. It was very cold, but perhaps more dangerous were the deceptive crevasses in the ice that sought to lure us into their gaping mouths straight into the bowels of Hell itself. I had a close shave with one such crevasse on 27 Nov. when Mawson and I went to photograph an open crevasse a few hundred meters away while Mertz prepared lunch.¹⁰ As we walked, there was a loud bang and I was suddenly swept downward. I managed to grasp the lip of the hole and Mawson quickly hauled me back on my feet and to safety. Unfortunately, the camera was damaged. We cautiously peered into the hole only to see a vast, gaping darkness that indicated the presence of a deep chasm. A deadly void.

For a few more days we carried on. The days all seemed to blur together into one, but I believe it was the morning of 8 December when tragedy struck. Mertz was in the lead with his sledge, followed by Mawson and his sledge; I was bringing up the rear with the final sledge and the rest of the dogs. All of a sudden, I heard several loud yelps and a cracking sound. In the swiftest of seconds, Mertz and his sledge disappeared from view amidst a flurry of snow and ice. My dear friend Mertz, with whom I had

⁹ Mawson, Jacka, & Jacka. *Mawson's Antarctic Diaries*. 127.

¹⁰ "Mawson's Fatal Journey." Home of the Blizzard. <http://mawsonshuts.antarctica.gov.au/cape-denison/mawsons-fatal-journey> (accessed March 6, 2014).

shared many wonderful memories and several years of strong friendship, had been swallowed up by a crevasse in the glacial ice.

Mawson and I quickly dashed toward the rim, hoping desperately to find Mertz clinging to the end as I had been able to do a few days prior. No such luck. All we saw was a mangled body of one of the dogs, grotesquely disfigured and laying on a small lip of ice perhaps 10 meters below us. It was whimpering softly but as we stood there, the whimpers slowly died away and we were left in eerie and utter silence. We called out repeatedly for any chance that Mertz was alive. There was no reply.

Mawson suggested that we set up camp for the night a short distance away from the crevasse in hopes that we might be able to elicit a response from Mertz in the morning, for any sign that he was alive. Perhaps more serious for our sakes was the terrible fact that Mertz's sledge had had most of our supplies on it. We still had some of the dogs and two other sledges, but our supplies were now dangerously low. Deeply troubled by this realization, we slowly drifted off to sleep. I was haunted all evening by dreams of starving and dying on this lonesome and barren continent. The ice seems to stretch on infinitely with no respite from its bleakness.

We woke in the morning and rushed over to the crevasse, hoping that Mertz might have simply been unconscious and unable to answer us after the initial fall. Nothing. Mertz is dead.

We reluctantly packed up and decided that our best bet was to head back toward base. I believe I was too shocked to even comprehend that Mertz was really gone. Our food supply was incredibly scarce, and while I dared not voice my concerns, I privately worried that there was not enough food to get us back alive. Five days passed, and the desperation began to set in. We made progress, but the food supply was still dwindling and I could barely keep my sanity and wits about me. No matter which direction I turned, all I could see was a white blanket of death. Our food was almost entirely gone; just a few scraps of dried meat, a handful of raisins, and some chocolate remained.¹¹ Mawson was a silent companion for much of the journey. His inscrutable features made it impossible for me to know what might have been going on in his head.

On the sixth day, which I believe must have been the 14th day of December, I found out exactly what Mawson had been thinking. I was leading the way with my sledge and dog team, and we had just safely passed by a noticeably gaping crevasse. I stopped for a moment to readjust my hood in order to better protect my head from the bitter cold. A handful of seconds later, I felt a searing pain in my right leg without warning. I cried out in pain and surprise and quickly pivoted around, only to see Mawson standing right behind me, his bloody expedition knife in hand. His face was contorted into a

¹¹ Mawson, Jacka, & Jacka. *Mawson's Antarctic Diaries*. 160.

frightening mask: his teeth were bared in a leering smile and his eyes possessed a wildly deranged look.

"There's not enough for both of us" he snarled. "I need the dogs to get back to base, but I don't need you. No one will ever know." Horrified, I scrambled awkwardly back to my sledge as Mawson lurched toward me, the knife held high and glinting in his hand. I wildly grasped for the reins and spurred the dogs on, even though I was only halfway on the sledge. The dogs jumped ahead in a panic, and I realized that I had no control over where they were going. Behind me, I heard Mawson curse loudly, but I was afraid to turn my eyes back upon the insane yet calculating monster that he had become. Still doggedly hanging on to the sledge, I peered around the corner only to have my heart leap up into my throat. We were headed directly toward the half-hidden crevasse that we had just passed.

After that moment, I cannot say as I can really recall any of the next events. The world went dark amidst the sounds of my own screams.

When I woke up, I found that I was laying on a cold foundation of ice. The sledge, or what used to be the sledge, lay near me in a pile of splinters. I turned my head and saw the remains of my valiant dog team laying most undoubtedly dead a meter or so away. Visibility was low, but there was enough light for me to realize that we must have fallen into the crevasse. I was inexorably trapped. I looked up and saw that I was perhaps 6 to 8

meters down. The crevasse must not have been that deep, which was a blessing for me as I would most certainly not have survived had it been any deeper.

Then I saw Mawson's face peek over the edge of the rim. In an angry voice, he shouted down to me. "You've killed us both! If you could have just been cooperative and made the sacrifice I would have been able to survive on the sustenance your body would have provided." Sickened, I realized that Mawson had been plotting to kill me so he would be able to eat my flesh and survive long enough to make it back to base. Then, he most likely would have made up some story about how Mertz and I died tragically and he heroically managed to find his way back and survive.

My whole body ached. My leg was numb and there was a small pool of half-frozen congealed blood surrounding it. At least the only good thing about it being so cold was that the wound had seemingly ceased bleeding. Mawson uttered some final curses on me and concluded by saying that he was content enough to leave me down here. He was going to attempt to make it back to camp.

That was 3 days ago. I have survived so far by staying bundled up with the extra blankets and clothing that was packed on my sledge, and by ashamedly eating the raw remains of the dogs that were in the crevasse with me. I am appalled at the animal I have become.

I fear all is lost.

Belgrave Ninnis

December 18th, 1912

The dog carcasses have frozen. I can no longer get any meat from them. Forced to break into last bits of rations left on sledge. I am sucking on some loose bits of ice around me as a source of water, but they provide little refreshment.

I am getting colder, and while I am protected from the winds on the surface, it still feels like it is close to 0°C down here. I fear that hypothermia may soon set in. I have begun shivering intermittently as my body attempts to maintain core temperature. Eventually, I will stop shivering for good, as my body will no longer devote the resources to keeping my extremities warm. This is the first sign of hypothermia.¹² As the medical officer on the expedition, I am more aware of such things. Yet down in this crevasse, there is precious little that I can do to prevent my eventual demise. The leg that Mawson stabbed is cold to the touch and if I ever get out of here, I will most certainly lose it to amputation. The only thing keeping me sane is writing these accounts.

B. N.

¹² Medical News Today, "What is Hypothermia? What causes Hypothermia?" <http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/182197.php> (last updated 13 Mar 2010).

December 19th, 1912

Can no longer feel either foot. Down to two small strips of dried meat. I dream of my home back in England and long to be there. Getting harder to write as fingers are getting colder.

B. N.

December 20th, 1912

Drifting in and out of sleep. Afraid to fall asleep, terrible nightmares will come back. Monsters in my dreams, or are they here with me in the ice? Feel my sanity slipping away.

Dec. 21st

With remaining strength I have strapped canteen w/ these accounts onto sledge board and will shortly throw them to the surface. Hope someone will read them and know Truth.

Dec. 22nd

Food is gone. No one to save me. Sense Death is here in darkness, waiting. May God have mercy...

JOURNAL OF ANDREW PEACOCK

(CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER OF 2013 AUSTRALIAN ANTARCTIC EXPEDITION)

After reading those final words, Turney looked up. The room was silent. I don't rightly think anyone knew what to say. Everything I had thought that I had known about the 1911 Australasian Antarctic Expedition had now been turned on its head. Mawson's journal detailed their departure and how the three men had worked for several weeks to map the landscape and make observations about their surroundings. On the day that Ninnis supposedly died, Mawson described how he passed an open crevasse and shouted back to warn Belgrave of the danger. Not thinking anything more of it, he continued on for a quarter of a mile. At that point, he looked back but Ninnis was not behind him. Mawson and Mertz retreated back to the crevasse and saw a gaping hole and assumed the worst. With further inspection, the two saw what appeared to be a food bag down the crevasse hanging on a ledge. They attempted to make contact with him with no luck, and thus it was that Ninnis was lost forever.¹³ Much of their food had been on Ninnis's sledge, so Mawson and Mertz turned back in hopes of making it back to the main base before they starved. Twenty-six days later, Mertz died of starvation and exhaustion, but Mawson was able to make it back to base. All in all, he spent another thirty days on his own out on the ice.¹⁴

I still found it so hard to believe that we had stumbled on Ninnis's last writings. He must have thrown to the surface in his final moments, hoping that someone would

¹³ Preceding five sentences from: Mawson, Jacka, & Jacka. *Mawson's Antarctic Diaries*. 127-148.

¹⁴ Mawson, Jacka, & Jacka. *Mawson's Antarctic Diaries*. 158-171.

find it. Over the years, it had to have been covered and buried in the ice that built up year after year. I pondered the fact that all of the currently accepted information about the expedition had come from Mawson's personal diaries. Mawson's words to Ninnis rung fresh in my ears: no one would ever know. The power to control the truth settled upon one perspective: Mawson's. In that instant, a striking thought crossed my mind: can we ever fully know the truth about anything in history?

Fogwill exited the tent and returned shortly afterward with a copy of "Mawson's Antarctic Diaries". He flipped hastily through the book until he found the entry written by Mawson describing the demise of the Far Eastern Party. He read aloud "Our loved companion Ninnis had without doubt been killed instantly. All the dog food and almost all the man food and many other necessities had gone also."¹⁵ He skipped ahead to the entry for 9 January. "I read the Burial Service over Xavier this afternoon."¹⁶ Everything had been a lie.

After our somber yet intriguing discovery, we decided that it was best to break for a bit and cook some dinner. We could discuss our next steps over a meal. During this time, I began to try to wrap my brain around this bizarre twist of events surrounding the original AAE. It was virtually impossible to do so. Mawson had been a hero, and his narrative of personal struggle with the elements was one of the greatest recorded instances of survival in history. Yet the true story told by Belgrave Ninnis maintained a much different perspective of the great explorer.

¹⁵ Mawson, Jacka, & Jacka. *Mawson's Antarctic Diaries*. 148.

¹⁶ Mawson, Jacka, & Jacka. *Mawson's Antarctic Diaries*. 158.

At dinner, we filled in some of the team members who had been out for the day collecting research and brought them up to speed. Then, we collectively started trying to figure out what we should do about our findings. Most of the team was in favor of taking the sheets of paper along with the canteen and pieces of the sledge back to the mainland to have them analyzed as well as have the true story of what really happened be made public. However, one of the team was strongly opposed. Daniel Franklin, one of our junior assistants, had been out researching for the day but had gotten noticeably involved in the discussions about the findings. He argued that despite what had been written by Ninnis, Mawson should still be considered a hero. Only a man who had Mawson's magnificent courage, endurance and physique could have survived the appalling difficulties of the three-weeks' journey back to his base with enough food just to keep him alive.¹⁷ Franklin insisted that, Mawson still had to survive for almost a month on his own before he made it back to base. Evidence showed that he was forced to eat the livers of the expedition dogs, and he still endured many hardships in order to stay alive.¹⁸ "It was just every man for himself" Franklin claimed. There was wide dissent among the rest of the team, and Franklin was isolated in his arguments. He became increasingly angry and finally he stomped off into the darkness. After that episode, everyone has eventually retired to their tents for a night of rest. I must say that I had never really gotten to know Franklin before tonight, but I have a growing dislike for the man. After

¹⁷ Alderman, A.R., and C.E. Tilley. "Douglas Mawson. 1882-1958" *Biographical Memoirs of Fellows of the Royal Society*. 5, (1960): 119-127.

¹⁸ Carrington-Smith, Denise. "Mawson and Mertz: a re-evaluation of their ill-fated mapping journey during the 1911-1914 Australasian Antarctic Expedition." *Medical Journal of Australia* 183, no. 11/12 (2005): 638-641.

all, I think we must just do justice to the memories of Ninnis and Mertz and bring the lost Ninnis journal to light.

I hope we can all come to a reasonable conclusion tomorrow. I must now turn in for the night, most everyone else is already sound asleep.

AP

From his perch behind a large outcropping of glacial ice, Franklin watched as the last light flickered out of the tents. He couldn't believe that no one had sided with him in defending a great hero and an even greater explorer, Douglas Mawson. If they only knew.

Franklin's grandfather Ernst had been born not as Ernst Franklin but as Ernst Mawson. Ernst had been born to Pacquita Mawson, Douglas's wife waiting back home, approximately eight months after he had left in 1911. However, she had not been able to raise the child on her own so she had put it up for adoption. Ernst was eventually given up to the St. Augustine nursery, where he was raised by nuns. Douglas Mawson never even knew that Ernst had been conceived.

Yet Franklin knew, because he had done an extensive genealogy of his family lineage during his time as a student at school. Thus, he had secretly signed on to the 2013 expedition as a research assistant in order to better understand his great-grandfather's past life. Now that the wretched journal by Ninnis had been uncovered, Franklin was abashed and knew he must do something to protect his great-grandfather's legacy. He had been a hero, and no one could say any differently. It was obvious that Ninnis was a bumbling dunce. He would have slowed Mawson down. Survival of the fittest reigns supreme on this icy wasteland.

Forty minutes passed and Franklin knew it was time to make his move. No one could live to tell the tale, and Ninnis's journal would never see the light of day again. Leaving the protective safety of the ice, he stealthily crept toward the brace of blue expedition tents. Cold winds whipped around Franklin, but he was warmed by the guiding spirit of his ancestor, Douglas Mawson.

“I TREAD SLOWLY AND DELIBERATELY THROUGH THE SNOW. THE ICY WIND HOWLS IN MY EARS AND WHISPERS SOOTHING WORDS OF DEATH. NO. I AM A SURVIVOR. I CLUTCH AT MY SIDE. IT’S STILL THERE. THE SOUNDS OF HIS FOOTSTEPS REVERBERATE IN MY EARS. EACH ECHOING CRUNCH EXPONENTIALLY INCREASES MY OVERWHELMING NEED FOR SURVIVAL. HE MUST GO. MY HATRED GROWS. THROUGH A HAZY CRIMSON VEIL, I SEE HIM WALKING AHEAD OF ME. A VIVID IMAGE MATERIALIZES: THE KNIFE SWIFTLY CUTTING THROUGH CLOTH AND PENETRATING DEEP INTO HIS VEINS, THE SKIN BREAKING WITH THE CONTACT OF SHARP STEEL. COLD METAL DEATH BITES AT SOFT WEAK FLESH. A DEEP MAROON HUE POURS OUT AND STAINS THE WHITE SNOW. MORE FOOD.”

Franklin looked up from the body at his feet. Clutching Ninnis's diary in his hands, he squinted at the horizon. A limping figure moved sluggishly away from the tents. Like his great-grandfather's experience, one had escaped. No matter, it would be more fun this way.

Several moments later, a single bloodcurdling scream pierced the stillness. No more.

Dead silence reigned once again across the cold Antarctic landscape.

EPILOGUE

THE BRISBANE TIMES

FEBRUARY 11TH, 2014**REMAINS OF AUSTRALIAN ANTARCTIC EXPEDITION TEAM FOUND****UNKNOWN PREDATOR BLAMED IN DEATHS**

Search parties yesterday came across the grisly remains of what appears to be the ill-fated 2013 Australian Antarctic Expedition. The expedition has made headlines the past few months after a failure to return from their quest to re-trace the steps of the famous explorer and Antarctic hero, Douglas Mawson. Last reported contact was on December 23rd, but after that nothing was heard from the 26-man team, and when their expected return date came and went, search parties were dispatched. After over five weeks of searching, the discovery was finally made yesterday. Initial inspections by on-site medical examiners have showed that the men may have met a gruesome end. A majority of the remains were discovered amongst the shredded pieces of what appears to be the expedition team's tents. With this bit of evidence, fears that the team may have frozen or starved seem to have given way to the possibility that the team was attacked by some sort of vicious predator. Reports from an unnamed source are also indicating that some of the bones recovered display evidence of cuspid marks and scratching that is characteristic of a predator attack. To this point, no existing land predators have been discovered on the continent, but preliminary consensus from experts is that a yet undiscovered predator may have been behind the attack. At this point, officials are keeping much of their findings quiet, but they have stated that no written records have been recovered with the bodies at this point, making it difficult to ascertain what may have happened. The MV AKADEMIK SHOKALSKIY sailed on December 8th from New Zealand with 26 men on board. Thus far, the remains of 25 men have been recovered. Searchers are still attempting to locate the remains of the final member of the expedition, but hope grows fainter each day.

More information to follow on this developing story.

Annotated Bibliography

- **Alderman, A.R., and C.E. Tilley. "Douglas Mawson. 1882-1958" *Biographical Memoirs of Fellows of the Royal Society*. 5, (1960): 119-127.**

This book is essentially a series of memoirs about Douglas Mawson. It gives a recap of his life and all of his major accomplishments, and specifically details his heroic struggle during 1912 with the Far Eastern Party. The authors provide a good amount of information about Mawson's life before his defining solitary struggle after the deaths of his comrades, which I will be able to use to add depth to my characterization of the men. While I will be focusing on Ninnis's experiences on the party, a majority of the writings about Ninnis and his disappearance come from Mawson so it makes sense for me to learn about his background as well.

- **Carrington-Smith, Denise. "Mawson and Mertz: a re-evaluation of their ill-fated mapping journey during the 1911–1914 Australasian Antarctic Expedition." *Medical Journal of Australia* 183, no. 11/12 (2005): 638-641.**

In the journal article by Denise Carrington-Smith, she provides a recap of the ill-fated Far East Party led by Douglas Mawson. Carrington-Smith highlights the journey of the three men on this expedition and mainly examines the circumstances surrounding Mertz and Mawson's sufferings after Ninnis fell through the crevasse. The most useful bit of information that this article mentioned exactly what happened that led to Ninnis falling into the crevasse. A majority of their supplies went down with him, and this would allow me a credible bit of information to support the notion that Ninnis could have survived down in the crevasse for a while. Other good information gained from reading this article was her recap of some of the ailments that Mawson and Mertz may have faced. She evaluates one suggestion that both Mawson and Mertz suffered from hypervitaminosis A as a result of eating the livers of their expedition dogs, and proposes that they suffered from starvation instead. Additionally, her discussion of Mertz's death was unique and allows me to better incorporate the timeline of events that happened after Ninnis fell into the crevasse. This gives me a reliable source of information to be able to perhaps pursue two parallel story lines; one with Ninnis in the crevasse, and one with Mawson and Mertz suffering in isolation trying to be saved. Her arguments are persuasive because she uses valid and reliable sources to back up her claims, and this makes them seem logical and fact-based.

- **Mawson, Douglas. *The Home of the Blizzard: Being the story of the Australasian Antarctic Expedition, 1911-1914*. London: William Heinemann, 1915.**

This book tells the account of the Australasian Antarctic Expedition, and specifically discusses the circumstances surrounding the disappearance of the Far East Party. What is most unique in this book is that there are accounts written by some of the members of the expedition who were back on home base. These accounts detail the departure of the party, and list some of the supplies that the three members took with them as well as the exact number of dogs that were brought with for transportation. More than anything, this source will provide me with useful information to write an accurate historical fiction of the expedition leading up to the catastrophe where Ninnis falls down the crevasse. Since this book was written by Douglas Mawson, it can also be counted on as being a firsthand account of what may have happened. However, as previously mentioned,

it also recaps accounts of other members of the expedition so it is by no means a one-sided account of what happened. This makes it all the more valuable for me to incorporate some of its information into my writing piece.

• **Mawson, Douglas, Fred Jacka, and Eleanor Jacka. *Mawson's Antarctic Diaries*. Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 2008.**

This book is a compilation of journal entries by Douglas Mawson of all of his Antarctic journeys. Specifically what I will be focusing on is the inclusion of his journal entries of the “Far Eastern sledge journey across King George V Land” in which he documents the entire sledge journey where Ninnis disappeared and Mertz died of supposed starvation. What is most useful is the journal entry format that the book is written in, as this gives me an idea of how to format any potential journal entries that I might include from Ninnis. Each entry lists the group’s position with longitude and latitude, gives the temperature, and also provides me with an idea of some of the shorthand notations that were typically used in the writing style. Additionally, the entries are all arranged by date and each event is attributed to a certain date, which will help me be as historically accurate as possible when describing some of the events. It also detailed some of the effects of the cold, which is useful because I would like to incorporate some of these into my writing to give readers an idea of what the men were struggling with. Moreover, Mawson’s accounts provide an insight into some of the innermost thoughts of someone faced with hardship in the cold, which will help me write with a better sense of the psychological struggles the men faced.

• **"Mawson's Fatal Journey." Home of the Blizzard. <http://mawsonshuts.antarctica.gov.au/cape-denison/mawsons-fatal-journey> (accessed March 6, 2014).**

This source is a compilation of information about the “fatal journey” of Douglas Mawson, Xavier Mertz, and Belgrave Ninnis. Some of the information comes from the larger volume *The Home of the Blizzard* written by Douglas Mawson, but what is most useful about this particular source is that it focuses almost entirely on the days leading up to when Belgrave Ninnis was lost and also the days afterward in which Mawson and Mertz were left on their own. The website takes excerpts from journal entries from both Mawson and Mertz, which is useful for my research because the day in which Ninnis falls down the crevasse is recounted in detail by Mertz. This allows me to understand the mindset of the other two explorers when Ninnis fell, and will hopefully help me write a more accurate piece of historical fiction. Additionally, while I will mostly be focusing on the experiences of Ninnis after he falls into the crevasse, this source tells of Mawson falling into a crevasse as well after he was on his own. By drawing from what Mawson describes, I have a good example of what may have been going on in Ninnis’s head as well.

• **Medical News Today, “What is Hypothermia? What causes Hypothermia?” <http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/182197.php> (last updated 13 Mar 2010).**

This article came from one of our first days of class, and it helped us get a better understanding of what hypothermia is as well as the symptoms of it. In a similar light, I found it most useful in my paper for including facts about what the onset of hypothermia was doing to Ninnis down in

the crevasse. With Ninnis's background in the medical field, it only made sense to include this piece to add credibility to Ninnis's journal writings. He certainly would be a bit more scientific in describing what was happening to him, so this piece worked well for my paper and to emphasize the interactions of humans and cold places.

- **Ninnis, Belgrave. "Floating Hospitals." *British Medical Journal* 2, no. 2121 (1901): 456-457.**

In the article "*Floating Hospitals*" by Belgrave Ninnis, he discusses his idea of why there should be a separate ship which travels along with warships during conflicts. This ship would be entirely geared toward providing medical care of sick and wounded crew. Ninnis argues that this would keep sanitation higher and would keep healthy crew members from contracting anything from the sick. It would also allow for the wounded to receive the best care possible since the sole effort of these ships would be to provide medical care. He goes on to describe how the ship should be constructed, detailing ventilation, rooms, operational care, and more. His arguments were persuasive because of his background as a medical officer and his knowledge was useful in pushing for the utilization of medical ships. From it, I learned a good bit about Belgrave Ninnis and that he was very learned upon matters of health and medical practices. This would be useful for my piece of historical fiction because I am hoping to make Ninnis the focal point of my story after his fall into a crevasse on the Australasian Antarctic Expedition. I chose this piece because "*Floating Hospitals*" indicated his personal views on medical practices at sea and on voyages, and gave insight into how much he knows as a medical practitioner. This way, I could write a more accurate series of journal articles of which Ninnis may have composed; it gave me an example of his writing style and tone.

- ***The Argus* (Melbourne), "The Fatal Journey," February 28, 1914. <http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/7249463> (accessed March 6, 2014).**

This source was an excerpt of a newspaper clipping published in 1914 that detailed the deaths of Ninnis and Mertz. A majority of the article was an account of Mawson's memories of the event where Ninnis ended up down the crevasse, so this part gives me another perspective on the catastrophe, this time from Mawson's account. In another source, the event was recapped by Mertz, so this gives me multiple sources to draw from. Another part of the article discusses Mawson's struggle after Mertz died, and this will be useful for inclusion into my paper because it details some of the effects that the cold had on Mawson. Once again, I will be able to use some of the experiences that Mawson tells of and apply them to what Ninnis may have been facing after his fall down the crevasse. The source itself comes from *The Argus* newspaper and serves as a good primary source recap of the events, with no foreseeable biases.

- **Turney, Chris. "Spirit of Mawson." Trip Itinerary. http://www.spiritofmawson.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/AAE_Leg2_itinerary_02.pdf (accessed April 6, 2014).**

This source was a website that detailed the journey of the 2013 Australian Antarctic Expedition and provided information about the trip itself. The main source of useful information was the part of the website that gave the trip itinerary, which I found to help me create a fact-based introduction as to how Ninnis's lost journal was discovered. The main character, Andrew

Peacock, is a real member of the new expedition, so I felt that by incorporating this source into my historical fiction, I would be able to have a solid foundation and a believable plot line.

- **Wheeler, Sara. *Terra Incognita: Travels in Antarctica*. New York: Random House. 1996. 3-26.**

This source is one of the class readings that we had during the middle part of the semester. It is an account of the author's journey to Antarctica, and the section that I sought to utilize from it mainly discussed the preparations necessary for making the trip. This piece was most useful in my piece to direct readers to another reading about how explorers would often prepare for a trip to Antarctica. Further reading can sometimes assist in making connections with the piece that they are reading, and I hope Wheeler's article is able to do this for my readers as well.