

71 days of biting wind in the face. Snow in the eyes. Numb toes and aching muscles. It was not pleasant riding. But Larsen was a determined man and determined men can tolerate more suffering than most. Not a second thought. His friend died of a heart attack and now a priest was needed so the deceased could be ushered out the right way. On with the riding.

71 days of living off frozen blocks of soup and raw fish. The dogs also needed fuel and before Larsen silenced his own stomach growls, he always made sure they got theirs. Dogs don't eat - dogs don't run. That's the law in the great North.

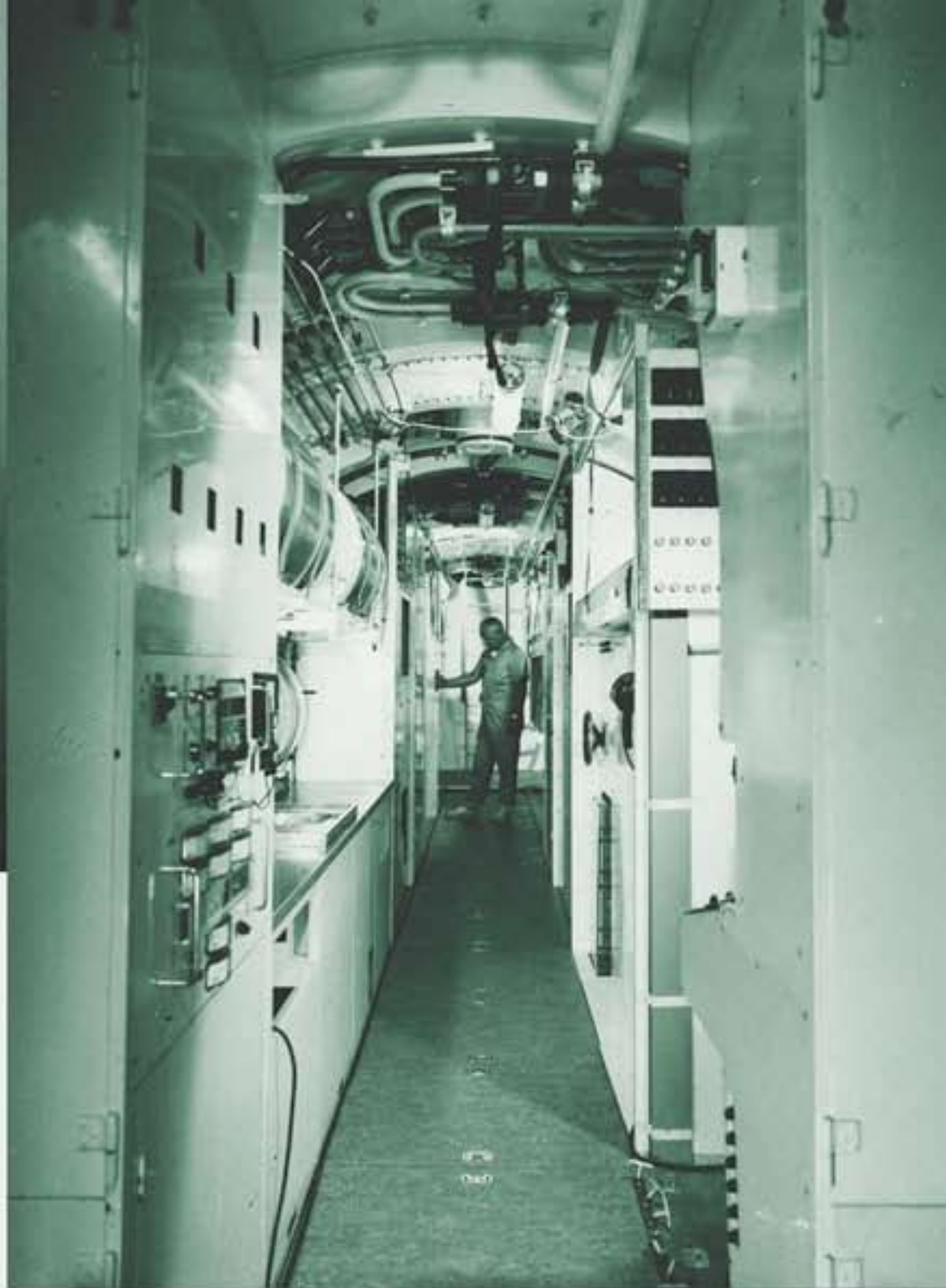
71 nights of sleeping in an igloo. But before he could sleep in it, he had to build it. So Larsen would get on all fours and cut 50 blocks of ice, give or take a few. Then he'd heave them into place and crawl inside. Down went the caribou sleeping bag. Collapse. After a few hours sleep, he'd get up and do it again.

It was a long, punishing trip. 1,140 miles in just over 2 months. But a man had died, and when men die they deserve a funeral. Not a second thought. On with the riding.

The sea has thousands of stories. To lose yourself in another, visit the Maritime Museum at 1905 Ogden Avenue in Vanier Park. Go to vancouvermaritimemuseum.com or call 604-257-8300 for museum hours, prices and information on our current exhibits.

HENRY LARSEN TRAVELLED 71 DAYS BY DOGSLED TO GIVE HIS FALLEN COMRADE A PROPER BURIAL. AND THIS IS ONE OF HIS LESSER FEATS.





The hatch closed. The experiment began. Kill the sunlight and cue the psychological stress. The routine of monitoring ocean currents was mind numbing. Mental fortitude and resilience would be key.

Psychological surveys were taken. Reflexes were tested. Their sense of humour was poked and prodded. Behavioural shifts were noted. Sleep patterns were measured. The men were bacteria in a petri dish and NASA had the microscope on the highest zoom. Under such conditions, opera music and liquor were saviours. At night, Mozart and a shot of bourbon let them momentarily forget about the cold and damp. The marine life also provided a useful distraction. It got old fast but was better than nothing.

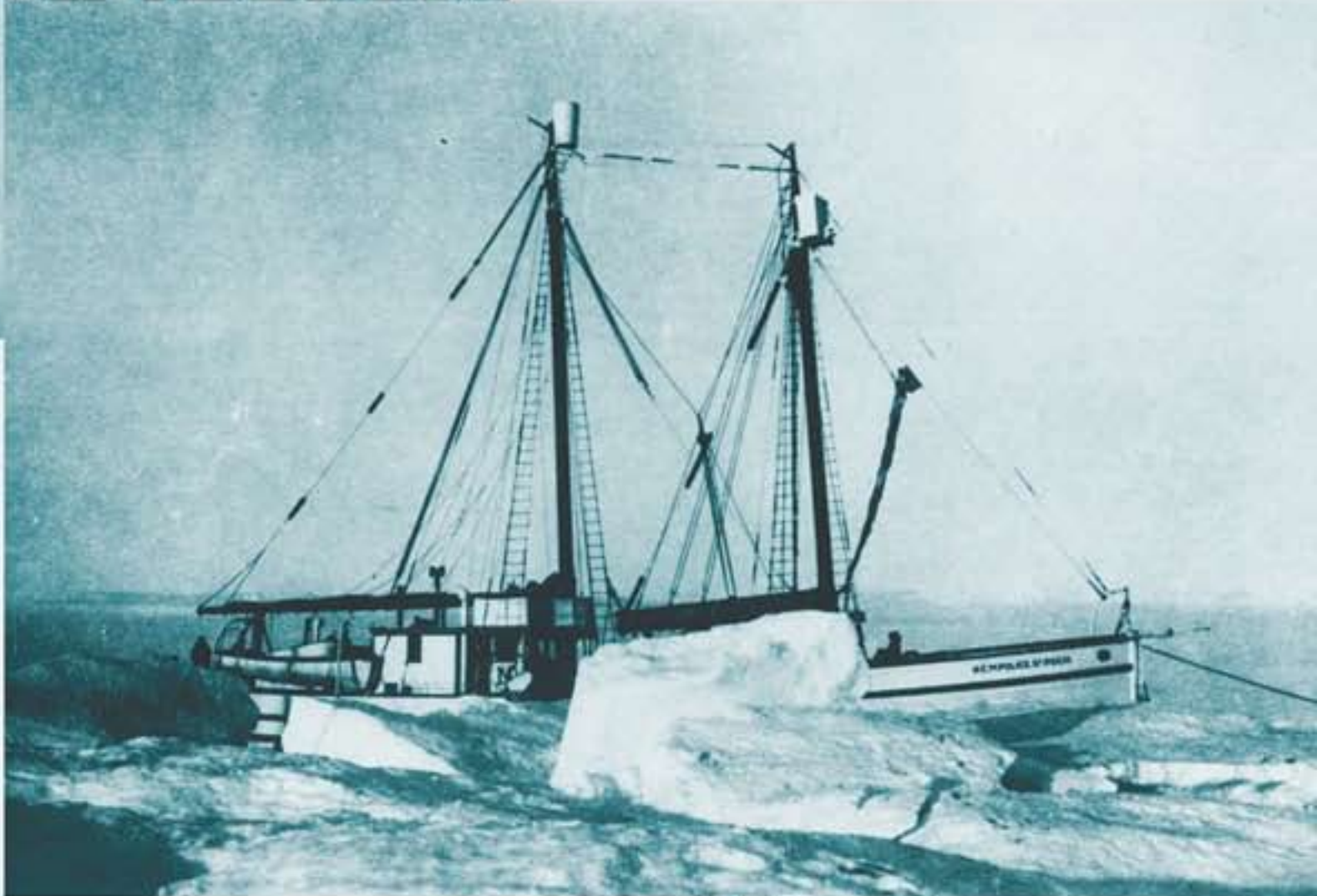
By the time the sub surfaced a month later, NASA had seen enough to answer their question. The short answer was no, the men didn't go insane. The long answer filled a 5-volume classified report. That report helped guide the construction of the Skylab and it still influences manned space missions to this day.

The sea has thousands of stories. To lose yourself in another, visit the Maritime Museum at 1905 Ogden Avenue in Vanier Park. Go to vancouvermaritimemuseum.com or call 604-257-8300 for museum hours, prices and information on our current exhibits.

IN 1969, NASA STUDIED 6 MEN IN A SUBMARINE FOR 27 DAYS TO ANSWER 1 QUESTION: WOULD THEY ALL GO INSANE?



Vancouver
Maritime Museum



Black powder in a bottle. Directions for use: light wick. Pray. That was the only cure for the ice. And the ice was what the men aboard the St. Roch feared most. It made for a strange enemy. No limbs. No eyes. No heart to aim their guns at. It was endless. Suffocating. And whenever the ice closed in around them, one poor bastard would have to blast them free.

Onto the ice he'd step. Pole in one hand. Bottle of black powder in the other. First he'd attach the bottle to the pole and find an opening in the ice. Then he'd light the wick. When he heard the hissing he knew he'd have less than 5 seconds to shove the pole as deep into the ice as possible. A case of hesitation or shaky nerves would cost him a leg or worse.

If he managed to get the pole under the ice, the explosion would begin to rumble almost instantly. Kaboom! The ice would lift violently and crack. Then came the cold shrapnel downpour. When it stopped, he'd do a quick damage scan to make sure he hadn't lost any limbs or gained any holes. If he was lucky, he'd climb back onto the ship in one piece. The men aboard the St. Roch didn't have it easy. All they could do was: light wick. Pray.

The sea has thousands of stories. To lose yourself in another, visit the Maritime Museum at 1905 Ogden Avenue in Vanier Park. Go to vancouvermaritimemuseum.com or call 604-257-8300 for more information.

**CONQUERING THE NORTHWEST PASSAGE
TOOK UNWAVERING COURAGE,
FIERCE DETERMINATION
AND A LITTLE SOMETHING CALLED
EXPLOSIVES.**

