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Ice Blink: The Tragic Fate Of Sir John Franklin's Lost Polar Expedition



Synopsis

"Absorbing, artfully narrat[es] a possible course of events in the expedition's demise, based on the one official note and bits of debris (including evidence of cannibalism) found by searchers sent to look for Franklin in the 1850s. Adventure readers will flock to this fine regaling of the enduring mystery surrounding the best-known disaster in Arctic exploration."--Booklist "A great Victorian adventure story rediscovered and re-presented for a more enquiring time."--The Scotsman "A vivid, sometimes harrowing chronicle of miscalculation and overweening Victorian pride in untried technology, a work of great compassion."--The Australian It has been called the greatest disaster in the history of polar exploration. Led by Arctic explorer Sir John Franklin, two state-of-the-art ships and 128 hand-picked men----the best and the brightest of the British empire----sailed from Greenland on July 12, 1845 in search of the elusive Northwest Passage. Fourteen days later, they were spotted for the last time by two whalers in Baffin Bay. What happened to these ships----and to the 129 men on board----has remained one of the most enduring mysteries in the annals of exploration. Drawing upon original research, Scott Cookman provides an unforgettable account of the ill-fated Franklin expedition, vividly reconstructing the lives of those touched by the voyage and its disaster. But, more importantly, he suggests a human culprit and presents a terrifying new explanation for what triggered the deaths of Franklin and all 128 of his men. This is a remarkable and shocking historical account of true-life suspense and intrigue.

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Customer Reviews

What went wrong? How could 129 officers and men with the most technologically advanced ships

and enough canned, baked and pickled food for three years on a journey to find the North West Passage in 1845 - vanish? There had been eight previous polar expeditions since 1819 and only 17 deaths out of 513 men. This was one of the greatest British naval disasters. Ice Blink is about mismanagement, oversights, government foibles, prejudice and incompetence. The lessons of the Sir John Franklin's Expedition in 1845 are still sadly relevant. The same problems that doomed those men in the far North are around today. Governments and corporations often award contracts to the lowest bidder, prejudice means the right people do not get hired, top heavy management creates inefficiencies and over reliance on technology obscures common sense. The lowest bidding manufacturer, Stephen Godner's Canned Food, was the exclusive supplier of canned food for the expedition. No one in the navy bothered to check the filthy conditions at this factory. The canned food arrived just a few hours before the launch, avoiding close inspection. Sir John Barrow, Second Secretary of the Admiralty, hired men of English birth and Anglican faith for the expedition, and dismissed ten experienced Scottish Seamen. One officer was in charge of four men. Admiral Barrow and Captain Franklin believed in the latest machinery. Ships, scientific knowledge and canned food would lead them to victory. There were no hunters on board or native guides used. Despite all this, Ice Blink is also about the bravery, loyalty and resourcefulness of the men who served on the expedition. They did everything they could to survive and to help each other. Scott Cookman brings alive the times that made this expedition possible.

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