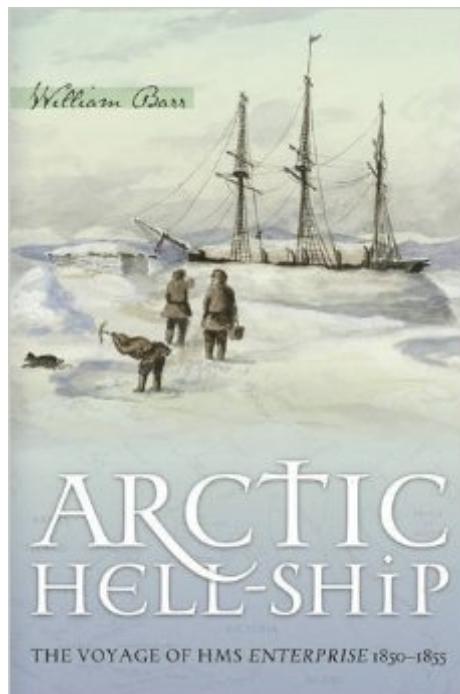


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Arctic Hell-Ship: The Voyage Of HMS Enterprise 1850-1855



Synopsis

In 1850, Richard Collinson captained the HMS Enterprise on a voyage to the Arctic via the Bering Strait in search of the missing Franklin expedition. Arctic Hell-Ship describes the daily progress of this little-known Arctic expedition, and examines the steadily worsening relations between Collinson and his officers. William Barr has based his research on a wide range of original archival documents, and the book is illustrated with a selection of vivid paintings by the ship's assistant surgeon, Edward Adams.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

ARCTIC HELL-SHIP: THE VOYAGE OF HMS ENTERPRISE 1850-1855 tells of a voyage to the Arctic in search of a missing expedition. The Enterprise was to find and hopefully rescue the lost Franklin expedition by approaching the Northwest Passage from the west: during the journey the crew passed three winter frozen into the arctic ice and many of Captain Collinson's officers spent their time under arrest. Paintings by the ship's assistant surgeon accompany a vivid memoir of Arctic conditions, exploration, and struggles to survive. Diane C. Donovan California Bookwatch

This book could have been a lot better than it is. It contains a lot of information about the goings-on aboard the Enterprise during its three winters spent in the Arctic in the early 1850s, and this information is why I give it three stars and not two. The problem is how it is presented: often in lengthy quotations of letters exchanged between the captain and various officers. These are interesting to read the first few times, but quickly lose their bite since their theme is always the

same (officer: "Sir, I don't deserve this treatment"; captain: "Yes, Sir, you do, and here is why..."). These problems between the captain and his officers seem to be the basis for the "Hell" in the title. In fact Barr describes what seems to be a decent time through those three winters: plenty of food and warmth, hardly any scurvy and very few deaths, and even a snooker-table built in the winter for the crew's entertainment, plus a full programme of dramatic performances. The writing is OK but repetitive at times (whole phrases or small paragraphs being recycled - the editor should have taken charge here). Important information that could easily have been included in the main text is tucked away in footnotes, making reading at times unnecessarily cumbersome (this is especially annoying when it comes to nautical terms). So in the end, this is a worthwhile read if you are especially interested in the subject, but not the dramatic tale that the title promises.

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