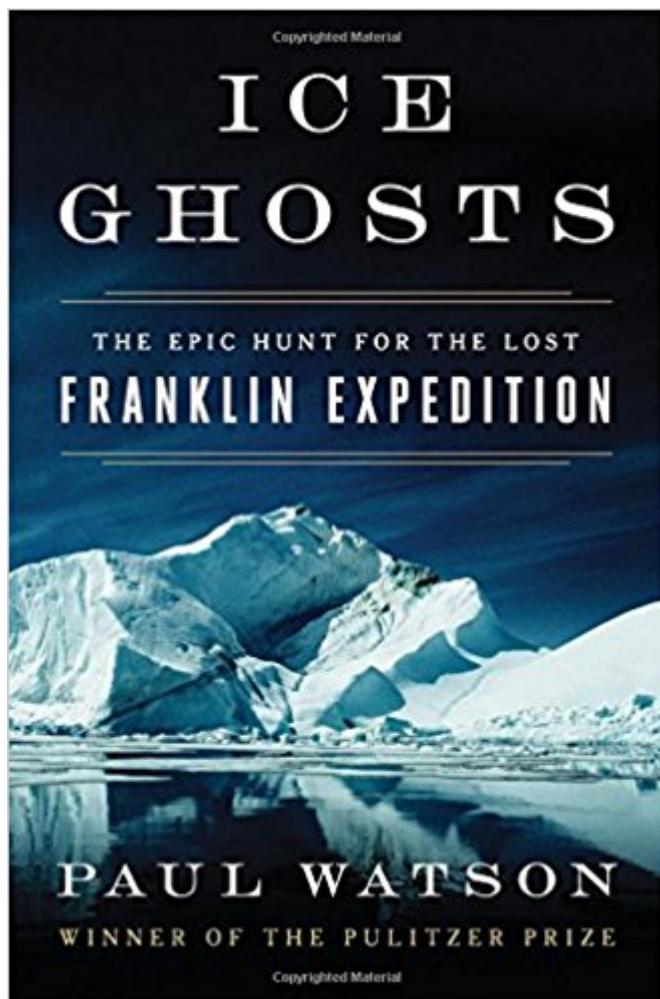


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# **Ice Ghosts: The Epic Hunt For The Lost Franklin Expedition**



## Synopsis

The spellbinding true story of the greatest cold case in Arctic history—and how the rare mix of marine science and Inuit knowledge finally led to the recent discovery of the shipwrecks. Spanning nearly 200 years, *Ice Ghosts* is a fast-paced detective story about Western science, indigenous beliefs, and the irrepressible spirit of exploration and discovery. It weaves together an epic account of the legendary Franklin Expedition of 1845—whose two ships, the HMS Erebus and the HMS Terror, and their crew of 129 were lost to the Arctic ice—with the modern tale of the scientists, researchers, divers, and local Inuit behind the recent discoveries of the two ships, which made news around the world. The journalist Paul Watson was on the icebreaker that led the expedition that discovered the HMS Erebus in 2014, and he broke the news of the discovery of the HMS Terror in 2016. In a masterful work of history and contemporary reporting, he tells the full story of the Franklin Expedition: Sir John Franklin and his crew setting off from England in search of the fabled Northwest Passage; the hazards they encountered and the reasons they were forced to abandon ship after getting stuck in the ice hundreds of miles from the nearest outpost of Western civilization; and the dozens of search expeditions over more than 160 years, which collectively have been called “the most extensive, expensive, perverse, and ill-starred . . . manhunt in history.” All that searching turned up a legendary trail of sailors’ relics, a fabled note, a lifeboat with skeletons lying next to loaded rifles, and rumors of cannibalism . . . but no sign of the ships until, finally, the discoveries in our own time. As Watson reveals, the epic hunt for the lost Franklin Expedition found success only when searchers combined the latest marine science with faith in Inuit lore that had been passed down orally for generations. *Ice Ghosts* is narrative nonfiction of the highest order, full of drama and rich in characters: Lady Jane Franklin, who almost single-handedly kept the search alive for decades; an Inuit historian who worked for decades gathering elders’ accounts; an American software billionaire who launched his own hunt; and underwater archaeologists honing their skills to help find the ships. Watson also shows how the hunt for the Franklin Expedition was connected to such technological advances as SCUBA gear and sonar technology, and how it ignited debates over how to preserve the relics discovered with the ships. A modern adventure story that arcs back through history, *Ice Ghosts* tells the complete and incredible story of the Franklin Expedition—the greatest of Arctic mysteries—for the ages. 8 pages of color illustrations

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

âœ[A] thrilling tale of scienceâ™s hunt to solve one of naval historyâ™s greatest riddles. . . . [Watsonâ™s] intimate familiarity with key players and places gives the reader an insiderâ™s view of the operations.â• - Gemma Tarlach, Discover MagazineâœAn incredible yarn.â• - Matthew Price, Boston GlobeâœFascinating.â• - Bill Streever, Dallas Morning NewsâœA splendid achievement.â• - Ken McCoogan, Toronto Globe & MailâœIntriguing [and] enjoyable. . . . While there have been many previous books about the Franklin expedition and its mysterious fate, the notable originality of *Ice Ghosts* lies in the fact that it brings the story right up-to-date. . . . Franklin aficionados will certainly want to add it to their libraries.â• - Ian McGuire, New York Times Book ReviewâœRiveting.â• - BooklistâœEngagingâœA keen, entertaining chronicle of the various attempts to locate a sensationally doomed expedition.â• - Kirkus (starred review)

Paul Watson worked as a war reporter for more than twenty years, covering conflicts in Angola, the Balkans, Eritrea, Rwanda, Afghanistan, Iraq, and Somalia. He is the author of *Where War Lives* and *Magnum Revolution*, and the recipient of the Pulitzer Prize, the National Headliner Award, the George Polk Award, and the Robert Capa Gold Medal. He served as Asia bureau chief for the Los Angeles Times and covered the Arctic for the Toronto Star. He holds a masterâ™s degree in international affairs from Columbia University. He lives in Vancouver, British Columbia.

I don't what book the "professional" reviewers were reading but it wasn't the one I read. I agree with most of the recent reviews that the book is long, dull, disjointed, & conveys no sense of adventure or excitement. Too many extraneous characters are introduced & the authors goes off on tangents that do not advance the story. It could have been edited down to half the length & saved me some

time.

This was a potentially fascinating story, but I found it to be less than dramatic due to the author's style of giving away the plot constantly throughout the book. Further, the events are not described in time-linear fashion, but rather there is a lot of jumping around with plenty of forward referencing that creates confusion in addition to decreasing drama. On the other hand, the author's language is vivid in describing the arctic environment, Inuit culture, and historical events and characters, which I did find interesting. Overall, I'm glad to have read the book despite its disappointments for me. I read this on a black and white text Kindle. This is NOT a good format, since the provided map of geographic features is too small to be legible and in any case is very inaccessible with awkward Kindle navigation. In addition, I found it difficult to get an appropriately detailed map of the Arctic that lists all of features referred to, either on the web or in one of my atlases. This is a serious shortcoming of the Kindle format that I have experienced several times with historical nonfiction, and I would not recommend using Kindle for such books.

Excellent overview of the entire history of the search for Franklin's lost expedition. Good on history but the author meanders a bit in the sections devoted to the modern search effort.

A little drawn out and slow going for my liking. Quite repetitive and doesn't flow particularly well, but does give a good insight to the man, his family and the Navy establishment of the time.

A good read and certainly a must-read for anyone interested in the latest on the Franklin Expedition and the discoveries related to its fate. The book does have its weaknesses. Lively and well-written when discussing Franklin and then Lady Franklin's efforts to have him first rescued and then at least found, it does lose focus in the middle sections. Long rambling chapters tell you many mildly interesting things about Inuit life and Canadian policy which are not even remotely connected to the Franklin story; at times the book reads like a National Geographic article on contemporary Arctic Canada. But overall, the scholarship is solid, and once he gets back to the remnants of the expedition, the author's involvement with the topic makes for an authoritative account.

Interesting story but is somewhat meandering. Picks up speed in the second half.

I enjoy reading about the Franklin Expedition, and with so much new news out since 2014 -16, and

this book appearing just this year in 2017, I figured this would contain the latest information. In truth I was a bit suspicious that the author is a 'Winner of the Pulitzer Prize', which usually means 'this book is tortuously overwritten', and sure enough, it was. Way too much unrelated detail; so much so that the account of the actual find of the Franklin ships finally appears to the exhausted reader on page 318 (of 346 pages of text), almost as an afterthought, and concludes only a few pages later. (Not to mention that there are only two photos of the finds -- a ship's bell and a ship's wheel -- nothing of any other artifacts or of the wrecks or underwater views.) To make up for the lack of visual leavening, we are lathered up with useless prose details: a helicopter (quite incidental to the story, by the way) is a 'red-and-white Messerschmitt-BĂ¶lkow-Blohm Bo 105 ... a light-duty German helicopter developed in the 1970s'; a seaman is a 'quick-witted wisecracker with a gray goatee ... he could be mistaken for an unusually tall elf'; and the elf-seaman's grandfather (no less) 'specialized in buffing furniture to a mirror sheen in the art of French polish' and 'once scolded the future Queen Elizabeth II'. A few pictures really would be worth a few thousand words. And, in a quaint but somewhat inexplicably tone-deaf choice, Watson insists on referring to 'The Arctic' in the feminine, e.g., 'That was the plan. The Arctic, as she usually does, decided otherwise.' Although the book was a disappointment, both from the lack of useful detail (amid the profusion of useless ones) and from plodding, meandering prose that can be likened only to the trail of the doomed Franklin sailors themselves, the book's strong suit is the near-real-time recounting of the various bureaucratic obstacles put up by British and (more recently) Canadian officialdom to blunt the progress of what turned out to be a fairly easy find of two large and largely intact vessels sitting upright in less than 100 feet of water -- one of which, the 'Terror', was found in 'Terror Bay', where one might expect someone could have looked previously.

A fascinating account of the failed Franklin Expedition. Heroic efforts and deadly errors combine in a riveting account from the early days of polar exploration. The author provides an in depth account of the personalities involved, including the local people, Franklin's driven wife, and the complicated cast of sailors, scientists and explorers who were caught up in this story. I especially appreciate the author's thoughtful background information that provides cultural and personal details that bring the characters goals and actions into clear focus. Well done.

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