



First Crossing of the Polar Sea



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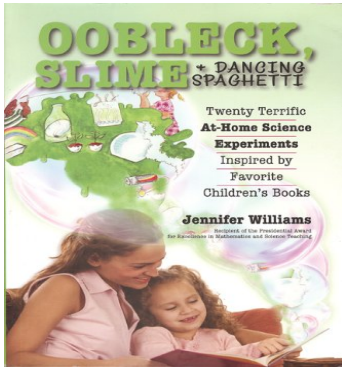
First Crossing of the Polar Sea

On May 12th, 1926, at 1:30 in the morning Roald Amundsen and Lincoln Ellsworth looked down from the cabin of the airship Norge and knew that they were over the North Pole. It was a busy moment. They dropped flags - the American, the Norwegian, and the Italian. Two of them, Amundsen and Oscar Wisting had seen the South Pole - from dog sleds. The third, Lincoln Ellsworth, saw the culmination of years of planning the conquest of the Arctic by air. Radio messages were dispatched, observations made and the pole circled. Then the Norge swung back into her course - a course whose thin tracing over the uncharted wastes was followed by millions - and pointed for Alaska. Thus briefly the stor



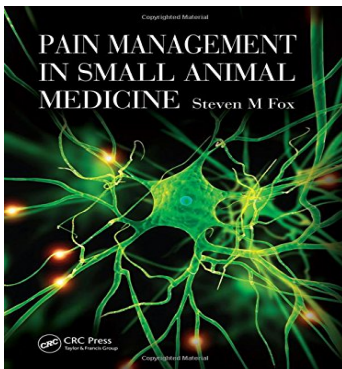
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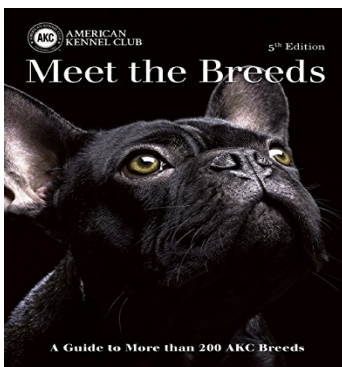
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What others say about this ebook:

Review 1:

I bought this book because I wanted an explanation of the method of navigation used on this voyage. I was not disappointed! Very detailed chapter written by the navigator himself.

Ron DiGiovanni
Easton, PA

Review 2:

On May 11, 1926, the Amundsen-Ellsworth expedition aboard the airship Norge sailed due north from Kings Bay in Spitzbergen. Three days later, without change of course, the great dirigible was seen by Eskimos in Alaska gliding southward from Arctic wastes. For the first time men had crossed from Europe to America via the North Pole. Newspaper reports were voluminous and in the main accurate, but the record as given here by the leaders themselves should be considered the final authority on a transit which ushered in the epoch of polar flying.

This is a well-documented book with many illustrations, simply written, without any attempt to achieve effects. The participants are their own historians. Five other members contributed each a chapter on his specialty, notably Lieutenant Riiser-Larsen, who describes the problems of navigation involved in extended air voyages, and Finn Malmgren, who kept the meteorological records. One omission is not surprising--the absence of a chapter by General (erstwhile Colonel) Nobile, builder of the Norge and its commander. Nevertheless his part is not minimized, though the authors are careful to specify his relative position in the general scheme of things.

To Amundsen, whose leadership meant everything, to Ellsworth, who unselfishly seconded him and contributed a very large share of the cost (\$125,000), and to the Norwegian Aero Club are attributed first honors. In the bibliography of early polar exploration, this book falls easily in the front rank.

Review 3:

A fascinating discussion of arctic exploration in a dirigible. Although only two authors are listed, other crew members included their accounts of the crossing, including that of HJ. Riiser-Larsen, who gives a fascinating and lucid discussion of the principles of navigation over the ice cap in a dirigible. Never mind that the writing is a bit awkward--English is not the first language for most of these guys.

Unfortunately, the illustrations are absolute disasters. I find it difficult to understand why any publisher (University Press of the Pacific, Honolulu) would release a publication with such shoddy reproduction of not only the photographs, but their virtually unreadable captions. The book would be improved by eliminating these pictures altogether. Most of the pictures are shadowy smudges on the pages, and do great disservice to the writings of these heroic explorers.

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