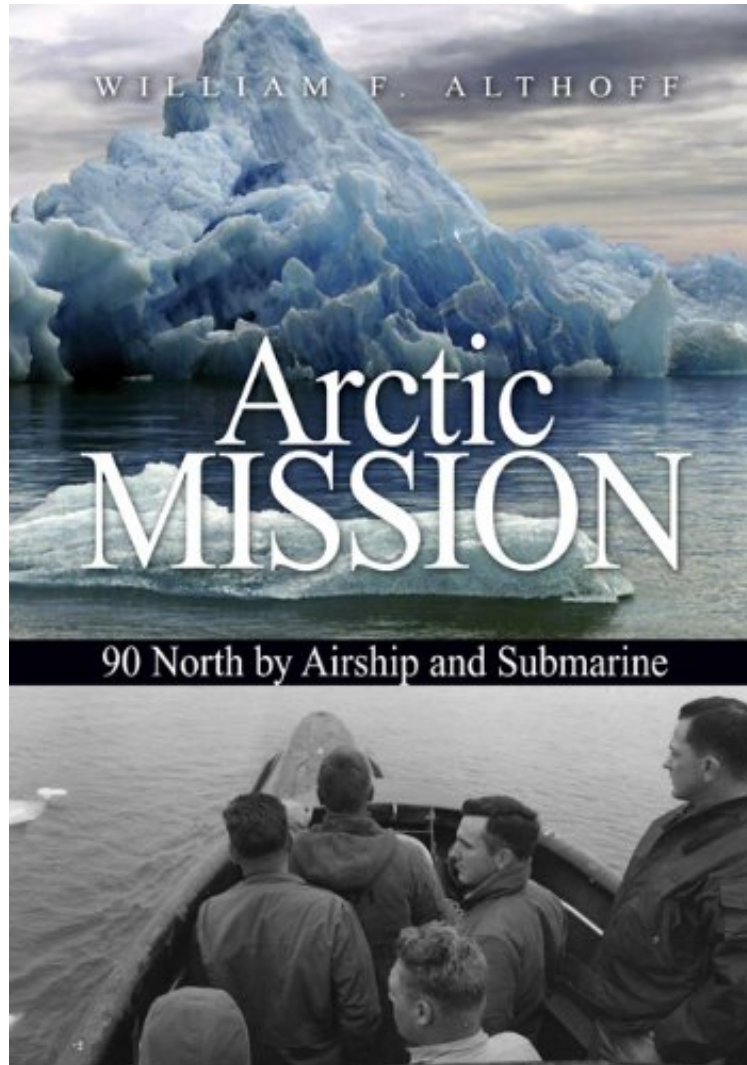


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## Arctic Mission: 90 North by Airship and Submarine

*William F. Althoff*

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**William F. Althoff : Arctic Mission: 90 North by Airship and Submarine** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Arctic Mission: 90 North by Airship and Submarine:

0 of 1 people found the following review helpful. US Polar Submarine Airship Exploration By W. James D. Easton At the time when the US had both nuclear submarines and Navy airships, it was decided to mount parallel expeditions to the Arctic. This was a time when the Soviet Union was also mounting significant efforts there. This book is exhaustively researched, covering almost every aspect of these two US Navy efforts, with emphasis on the airship operation. Politics. Personnel. Weather. Track. Logistics. That being said, the overall effect is somewhat paradoxical in that the effect of all the detail and information included is to leave the reader somewhat stunned, while, on the other

hand putting one in absolute awe of what was done by the Umberto Nobile flights using enormously fewer resources and much more primitive equipment. If one wants information relating to this particular USN effort, the book is a great resource. If one wants to read about truly heroic arctic airship adventure, read Nobile.

Arctic Mission recounts two concurrent Navy Department penetrations of the Arctic, in 1958: one an unclassified project, the other absolutely secret. The Cold War posed alarm and threat; amid its urgencies, the International Geophysical Year of 1957-58 was underway. Sputnik had opened the Space Age for Americans, a national humiliation. The White House needed a success. Sailing under the direct orders of the Commander in Chief, the nuclear submarine Nautilus (SSN-571) would-if successful reaffirm U.S. technological prowess with a stupendous demonstration: an under-ice transit of the Arctic Basin via the North Pole. The airships unclassified mission was an Office of Naval Research project. Objective: to assess the suitability of non-rigid airships (blimps) for support of field parties deployed throughout the North, ashore and afloat. That IGY August, BUNO 126719 crossed the Arctic Circle the sole military airship ever to do so en route to rendezvous with a U.S. Air Force ice-rafted camp (drifting station) in the Arctic Ocean. As 719 (delayed) pressed north, Nautilus pierced the geographic pole then without changing course logged the first-ever transit of the deep-ocean Arctic, Pacific to Atlantic. Based on interviews and correspondence with dozens of participants, and on Navy Department reports, the work presents first-hand material throughout a distinct contribution to the naval literature. Indeed, Arctic Mission may be the first in-depth (non-popular) account of the boats epic cruise to 90 N. Further, the ONR expedition across Arctic Canada to IGY BRAVO (ice island T-3) is a singular unknown--even to naval aviators.

This book is well-written and at times reads like an adventure story. Also of note is the author's ability to refer to both the absurdities and paranoia, as well as the achievements, of the Cold War era; his references to Russian research successes and achievements in the Arctic are even-handed and informative. This is a fascinating narrative, thoroughly recommended. Naval Books of the Year column in Warship, 2013. About the Author: William F. Althoff is a geologist and historian of naval aviation and science in the Arctic. His publications include scientific papers, articles, and six books. He was Ramsey Fellow in Naval Aviation History at the National Air and Space Museum in 1999-2000 and then research associate in 2000-02.