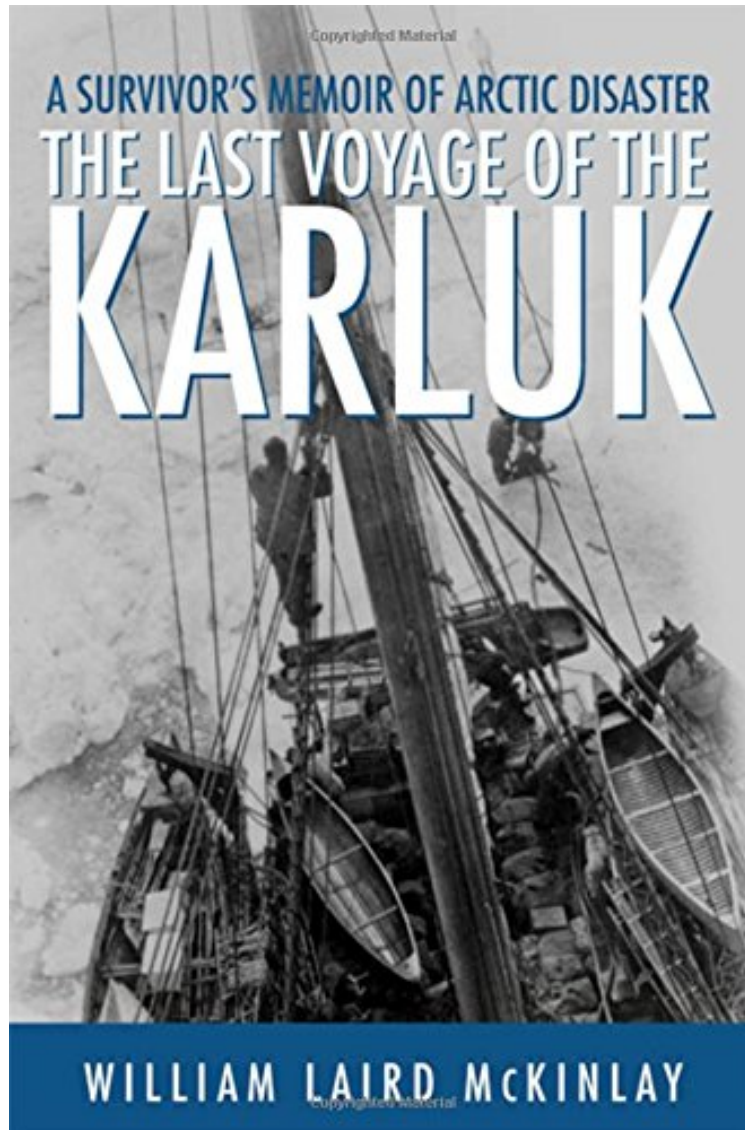


(Ebook free) The Last Voyage of the Karluk: A Survivor's Memoir of Arctic Disaster

# The Last Voyage of the Karluk: A Survivor's Memoir of Arctic Disaster

*William Laird McKinlay*

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**William Laird McKinlay : The Last Voyage of the Karluk: A Survivor's Memoir of Arctic Disaster** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Last Voyage of the Karluk: A Survivor's Memoir of Arctic Disaster:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Excellent true story of an Arctic Expedition gone wrong. By O.E. Friki own the original paperback version. This electronic version does not have the pictures found in the paperback

version and I think this is a significant omission, hence 4 stars. McKinlay's story telling is fascinating. This is a must to read for those interested in Arctic expeditions. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Great book. By Kidcare Grandma I read this book then Ada Black jack and truly enjoyed this history. Would recommend this book. Am looking for more of this genre. 6 of 8 people found the following review helpful. Not enough personality details. By Tom Bruce I am a fan of shipwreck tales, and this true story is a fine example of the genre. Written by a survivor of this 1913 disaster, the book does an excellent job of describing the suffering the untrained Arctic explorers went through during their months of isolation. However, one major fault is that it is difficult to identify with individuals; they tend to be a jumbled conglomerate. I think this is because the author gives very little personal data about anyone, therefore they are little more than a name and an un-descriptive phrase. What compounds this fault, is that two of the shipwrecked crew were from Shackelford's Antarctic shipwreck. It would be interesting to see how their previous experience affected them psychologically. Further, the captain of the *Karluq* left his ship stranded; an entire book could be written about him. Yet we are given little here to understand his motivations. These real individuals, as well as other crew members, deserve more attention and description. (Book review by Tom Bruce)

An astonishing narrative of disaster and perseverance, *The Last Voyage of the Karluq* will thrill readers of adventure classics like *Into Thin Air* and *The Climb*. In 1913, explorer Vilhjalmur Stefansson hired William McKinlay to join the crew of the *Karluq*, the leading ship of his new Arctic expedition. Stefansson's mission was to chart the waters north of Alaska; yet the *Karluq*'s crew was untrained, the ship was ill-suited to the icy conditions, and almost at once the *Karluq* was crushed--at which point Stefansson abandoned his crew to continue his journey on another ship. This is the only firsthand account of what followed: a nightmare struggle in which half the crew perished, one was mysteriously shot, and the rest were near death by the time of their rescue twelve months later. Written some sixty years after the fact, and drawing extensively on his own daily log, McKinlay's narrative of this doomed expedition is rendered with remarkable clarity of recollection, and with a combination of horror and a level of self-possession that, to modern eyes, may seem incredible. Like most of his companions, McKinlay was inexperienced, without a day's training in the skills essential to survival in the Arctic. Yet he and many of his fellow crewmen, with the help of an Eskimo family accustomed to such conditions, survived a year under the harshest of conditions, enduring 80-mile-per-hour gales and temperatures well below zero with only the barest of provisions and almost no hope of contact with civilization. Nearly a century later, this remains one of the most compelling survival stories ever written--an extraordinary testament to man's overpowering will to live.

.com On April 23, 1913, 24-year-old William McKinlay, a teacher of mathematics and science in Scotland, was finishing dinner when a telegram arrived. Legendary Canadian explorer Vilhjalmur Stefansson, it explained, was planning a four-year Arctic expedition between the northernmost shores of Canada and the North Pole. It was to be "a vast scientific project," McKinlay recalls, "involving studying Eskimos, geological surveys, sounding of uncharted Arctic waters, and a look-out for new islands to be discovered for Britain." McKinlay would be the team's magnetician and meteorologist--if he joined. He never thought twice--never mind that the crew was a motley assemblage of scientists and sailors, many of whom had never seen a polar bear outside a zoo. There was no survival training for the uninitiated. This was the heyday of the Arctic expedition--and "scientists were in great demand to bring back information about ... the poles." In July, the 250-ton *Karluq* departed Alaska. By August, the ship was doomed, trapped and drifting in a solid pack of ice. Stefansson abandoned ship (continuing his explorations for five full years before returning), and the *Karluq* drifted for months before it was crushed by the ice and sank. Twenty-five people escaped onto the ice, isolated for a year before rescue arrived. By then, 11 people had perished--some in trying to reach land, others by suicide, malnutrition, or disease. McKinlay's first-hand account of the *Karluq* debacle is Shackleton's *Endurance* story in reverse: what happens when an untrained, ill-matched crew meets disaster and barely rises to the challenge. Leaderless and despondent, the stranded resorted to treachery, lying, cheating, and pure folly. *Karluq* is a story both unbelievable and familiar, and it is convincingly told: how ambition and poor planning lead to spectacular disasters from which only sheer will or luck can offer salvation. --Svenja Soldovieri About the Author William Laird McKinlay returned from the Arctic to serve as an officer on the Western Front during World War I, and spent much of his life thereafter as a school headmaster in Scotland. His account of the *Karluq* disaster was first published in 1976, when he was eighty-eight years old.