



Alone on the Ice: The Greatest Survival Story in the History of Exploration

By David Roberts

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His two companions dead, food and supplies vanished in a crevasse, Douglas Mawson was still one hundred miles from camp.

On January 17, 1913, alone and near starvation, Douglas Mawson, leader of the Australasian Antarctic Expedition, was hauling a sledge to get back to base camp. The dogs were gone. Now Mawson himself plunged through a snow bridge, dangling over an abyss by the sledge harness. A line of poetry gave him the will to haul himself back to the surface.

Mawson was sometimes reduced to crawling, and one night he discovered that the soles of his feet had completely detached from the flesh beneath. On February 8, when he staggered back to base, his features unrecognizably skeletal, the first teammate to reach him blurted out, "Which one are you?"

This thrilling and almost unbelievable account establishes Mawson in his rightful place as one of the greatest polar explorers and expedition leaders. It is illustrated by a trove of Frank Hurley's famous Antarctic photographs, many never before published in the United States. 24 pages of illustrations

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Editorial Review

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Douglas Mawson is not as well known as Amundsen, Scott, or Shackleton, but as this intense and thrilling epic shows, he deserves a place on the pedestal next to these other great explorers of the Antarctic. Trained as a geologist, the Australian-born Mawson launched an expedition to a largely unexplored region of Antarctica in 1912. The effort soon turned into a grim struggle of endurance and survival against an unforgiving environment. Mawson and his team had to cope with the unpredictability of severe weather, hidden crevices in ice that could easily swallow a man, the loss of their food and other supplies, and their slow physical deterioration. Roberts attributes their survival in no small measure to the guts and determination of Mawson. He is portrayed here as a fascinating combination of reticence and aggressiveness, with an ability to both command and inspire his men. This fast-moving account earns for Mawson and his team a well-deserved place of honor in the so-called heroic age of Antarctic exploration. --Jay Freeman

Review

A fresh and thoroughly researched account of Douglas Mawson's epic journey of self-rescue across one of the most inhospitable regions known to man. Roberts takes the reader alongside the men of the 1912 Australasian Antarctic Expedition, and the desperation of Mawson's sledge journey can be well imagined step by frigid step. --Ed Viesturs, author of *K2: Life and Death on the World's Most Dangerous Mountain*

This is Roberts at his best, telling a little-known tale of adventure, tragedy, and endurance. Mawson may be the most famous Australian explorer, and *Alone on the Ice* is an admirable introduction of him to American readers. --Greg Child, author of *Over the Edge*

If you like frostbite-inducing weather and death-defying adventure stories, then award-winning author David Roberts gives you what you want: a wonderfully told, impressively researched tale of brave explorers confronting Antarctic blizzards, a deadly landscape pockmarked with deep crevasses and intrepid men trying to come back alive. --Chuck Leddy

An important missing story from the heroic age of Antarctic exploration, this book will steal the night from you. Gripping and superb. --Laurence Gonzales, author of *Surviving S*

Others have written the loose outlines of Douglas Mawson's astonishing survival against the worst conditions that Antarctica can deliver a lesser-known but equally compelling epic as that of Ernest Shackleton but Roberts's telling trumps them all. --Gordon Wiltsie, author of *To the Ends of*

An accurate and enthralling account of the greatest story of polar exploration and survival. Roberts takes the reader back to a time of hardship, collective friendship, and a level of determination unknown in today's culture. This book will make you cherish every meal and the joys of a warm bed. --Conrad Anker, coauthor of *The Lost Explorer*

About the Author

David Roberts is the author of, most recently *The Lost World of the Old Ones*, among twenty-six books about mountaineering, exploration, adventure, and Western history and anthropology.

Users Review

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William Gannaway:

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Edward Crosley:

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