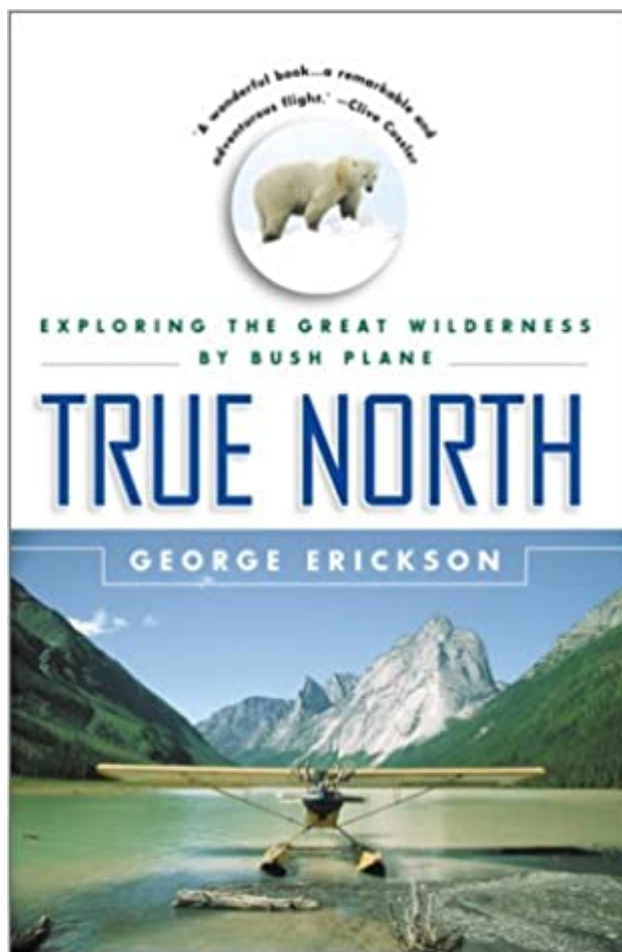


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True North: Exploring The Great Wilderness By Bush Plane



Synopsis

Leaving behind the comforts of civilized life and armed with only a few essentials, award winning author and bush pilot George Erickson captures the exhilarating thrill of roughing it in the wild, as well as evoking the sheer romance of adventuring in the far reaches of North America. The result is a best-selling book that readers-flyers and armchair travelers alike - will not be able to put down. Flying solo in his Piper Cub Special seaplane, Erickson revisits some of the arctic flights he once took with his father. He takes readers on an unforgettable journey through the pristine landscapes of Alaska, the Yukon, and the Northwest Territories. Landing on unexplored lakes and rivers to set up camp, the author fishes for trout using his unique handmade lures, struggles with bad weather, dodges forest fires, and mingles with polar bears, killer whales, musk oxen and caribou. Erickson channels the spirits of Antoine de Saint-Exupery, Charles Lindbergh, and other great aviators. He nearly loses his life - twice - during the trip, but continues to extol the thrill of flying and the science that enables it. Erickson searches the tundra for clues to the disappearance of a long-missing priest, and measures the earth like Eratosthenes at the edge of an arctic sea. He tells tales of unscrupulous missionaries and explorers who starved to death; he communes at fireside with the skull of "Unok" under flaring northern lights and reexamines the Klondike Gold Rush at Alaska's Chilkoot Pass. 6 x 9, 320 pages, color photos) George Erickson, who was named Minnesota Aviation Author of the Year for True North has served as Vice-President of the American Humanist Association and as a board member of the hemlock Society of Minneapolis and of the New Brighton, Minnesota Environmental Quality Commission. A retired dentist, he has logged more than a thousand hours flying over the North Country. He is married with two adult sons. This is his first book.

Book Information

Hardcover: 320 pages

Publisher: Lyons Press; 1st edition (April 1, 2002)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1585745529

ISBN-13: 978-1585745524

Product Dimensions: 9.3 x 6.3 x 1.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.6 pounds

Average Customer Review: 4.0 out of 5 stars 35 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #2,729,310 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #83 in [Books > Travel >](#)

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Customer Reviews

"A wonderful book. Erickson did a great job narrating a remarkable and adventurous flight."--Clive Cussler
"The simple joy Erickson derives from his travels is generous and infectious. TRUE NORTH is for people who want to play copilot with a guy having the time of his life."--National Post
--This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Leaving behind the comforts of civilized life and armed with only a few essentials, award winning author and bush pilot George Erickson captures the exhilarating thrill of roughing it in the wild, as well as evoking the sheer romance of adventuring in the far reaches of North America. The result is a best-selling book that readers-flyers and armchair travelers alike - will not be able to put down. Flying solo in his Piper Cub Special seaplane, Erickson revisits some of the arctic flights he once took with his father. He takes readers on an unforgettable journey through the pristine landscapes of Alaska, the Yukon, and the Northwest Territories. Landing on unexplored lakes and rivers to set up camp, the author fishes for trout using his unique handmade lures, struggles with bad weather, dodges forest fires, and mingles with polar bears, killer whales, musk oxen and caribou. Erickson channels the spirits of Antoine de Saint-Exupery, Charles Lindbergh, and other great aviators. He nearly loses his life - twice - during the trip, but continues to extol the thrill of flying and the science that enables it. Erickson searches the tundra for clues to the disappearance of a long-missing priest, and measures the earth like Eratosthenes at the edge of an arctic sea. He tells tales of unscrupulous missionaries and explorers who starved to death; he communes at fireside with the skull of "Unok" under flaring northern lights and reexamines the Klondike Gold Rush at Alaska's Chilkoot Pass. 6 x 9, 320 pages, color photos) George Erickson, who was named Minnesota Aviation Author of the Year for True North has served as Vice-President of the American Humanist Association and as a board member of the hemlock Society of Minneapolis and of the New Brighton, Minnesota Environmental Quality Commission. A retired dentist, he has logged more than a thousand hours flying over the North Country. He is married with two adult sons. This is his first book.

I have an entire bookcase full of Alaskan and Canadian bush pilot books. Many are very good, some are OK, two are really bad. This is one of the bad ones. This is a boring and very long winded

description of a long cross-country trip around Canada. It has nothing to do with real bush flying and nothing interesting happens. That would be bad enough, but the author considers himself to be a historical science genius on every subject and is never at a loss to pontificate about the history of this or that scientist of the past (He is also an anti-Christian bigot, so beware if you didn't intend to buy a book that is preaching and insulting. He has a real hate-on for the Christian religion and modern Western civilization in general). The portions of the book which are not lecturing you about the greatness of Eratosthenes or some other ancient scientist, such as describing a floatplane take-off, are tediously and painfully described in excruciatingly flowery prose. What a blowhard! Everyone knows someone who is like this. Everyone has, at times, had to make an effort to avoid someone like this...This is not typical bush pilot fare. Most interesting bush pilot stories include hardships and/or perseverance at making major repairs in the wilderness using limited materials at hand, or flying at the limits in order to get back on the ground safely or to get back to civilization. This is just using a long cross country airplane trip as a means to grasp onto any minimally related location, event, or recollection and use it as an excuse to pompously bloviate about it.

I bought this book because I love reading about Alaska and the far north. The premise of this book is that Erickson, a retired dentist, travels around Northern Canada and Alaska in his plane and tells the stories of the places he's visited. He does a nice job of describing the plane, the experience of flying, the many little lakes and towns he visits, the weather, and the wildlife he sees. I really enjoyed this part of his book. I also liked the crisp color photos he included in the center of the book. I even enjoyed the totally unrelated stories of history, other adventurers, early scientists, and his explanation of how the compass works and how the longitude and latitude lines on a map are measurements of time. What I didn't enjoy was his constant harping against organized religion and the evils of mankind. If he doesn't believe in God, that's fine for him, but he insults some portion of his readers with his arrogance and disrespect on the subject. What does that have to do with bush planes and wilderness? I also didn't enjoy his lectures about how we need to stop populating the earth and stop using natural resources. He somehow missed the irony of his consumption of oil and gasoline, not to mention the noxious emissions from his plane's exhaust, while flying around on a totally optional trip. He burns wood for his campfires, too. He mentions having kids and grandkids, so he's evidently added to our population problem. Overall this was an interesting book and I'm glad I read it. But it won't be one of my "keepers" mainly because he reminds me of the blowhard at the office party who wants to impress everyone with his superior intellect and lifestyle.

This is a wonderful collection of stories about how various parts of Canada, and Alaska were settled. More accurately, how the many companies (from mining, to fur trading, to religion) attempted to move into the Northern regions, either failing or surviving on the bold courage of those sturdy individuals who manned the "forward outposts". What this book is, is a great collection of little histories of the different regions and micro-communities that dot the "outback" of the Great White North. The reader has the feeling of sitting in a cozy bar next to a fireplace and listening to someone tell stories about "the early days". George Erickson has a gift for writing about these histories, and his camping and fishing stories, in an interesting and captivating way. He obviously has a passion for the history of Canada and Alaska. But pilots be advised; this is not a deep, personal book about flying. While Mr. Erickson uses a Super Cub on floats to access the many lakes and rivers, he never moves to an emotional level of writing about flying. It lacks the flying emotions of, say, a Steven Coonts or Mariana Gosnell. But that also means the non-aviator can enjoy the book without getting lost in a world only known to flyers. At times, he begins to develop the image and feel of flying, but it is not the center of the book. One example is his explanation of landing in Juneau, Alaska. He begins to write a description of the "huge blue-green wall" of the Mendenhall Glacier while on final approach. But within one sentence, he is on the water, landing, and within a two short paragraphs, we are done flying and back to more "ground stories". It's all part of it, I understand, but us pilots would enjoy much more of Mr. Erickson's gift of story telling in descriptions of the feel and emotion of the flight over wild Canada. The book contains a number of little thumbnail sketches of each leg (a-la cocktail napkin quality), and some truly stunning color photos. But the book could use an overview map in the appendix to give the reader a much better appreciation of the enormous distances the author covers. I made my own to follow George, and was amazed with the extent of his odyssey!! Mr. Erickson gives a fascinating history of the north, and an enjoyable read of fly-in camping his way across Canada and Alaska. The book is a fun read, and will make you want to load up your floatplane and strike out into the Canadian wilderness...or just go get another cup of hot cocoa and read another chapter. Thanks Mr. Erickson, for the fun history lesson.

I first read this book almost 10 years ago and just finished re-reading it. This book is an excellent blend of travel adventure, history, culture, religion, science, geology, and aviation. The author travels by floatplane throughout northern Canada and Alaska. He does a great job of bringing you into his cockpit and making you laugh along the way. I have given numerous copies of this book as gifts and recommend it for all readers.

I've read this three times now and enjoyed it just as much the last time as the first. The author provides great insight into the history, geography, and culture of remote northern Canada. He weaves all of this while sharing a summer flying in this unique land.

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