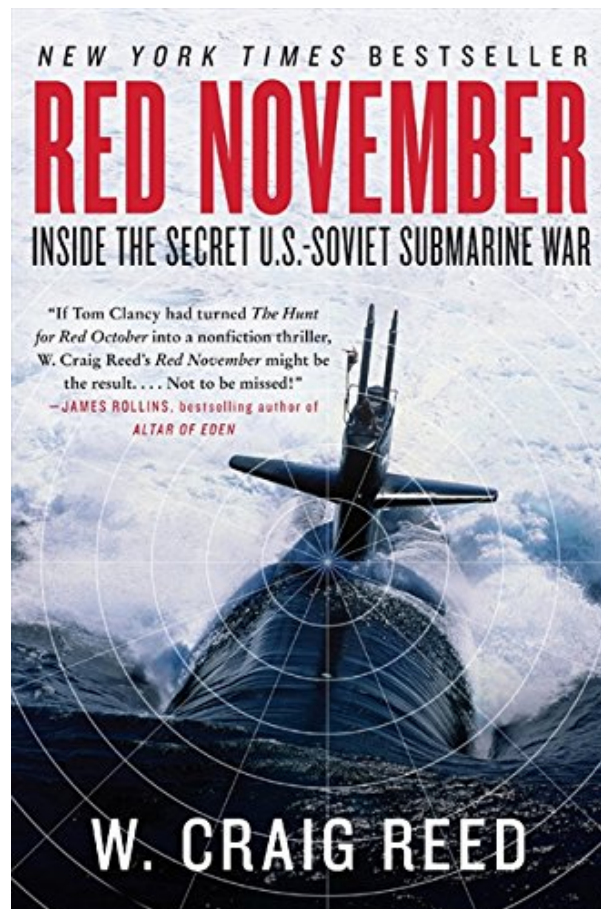
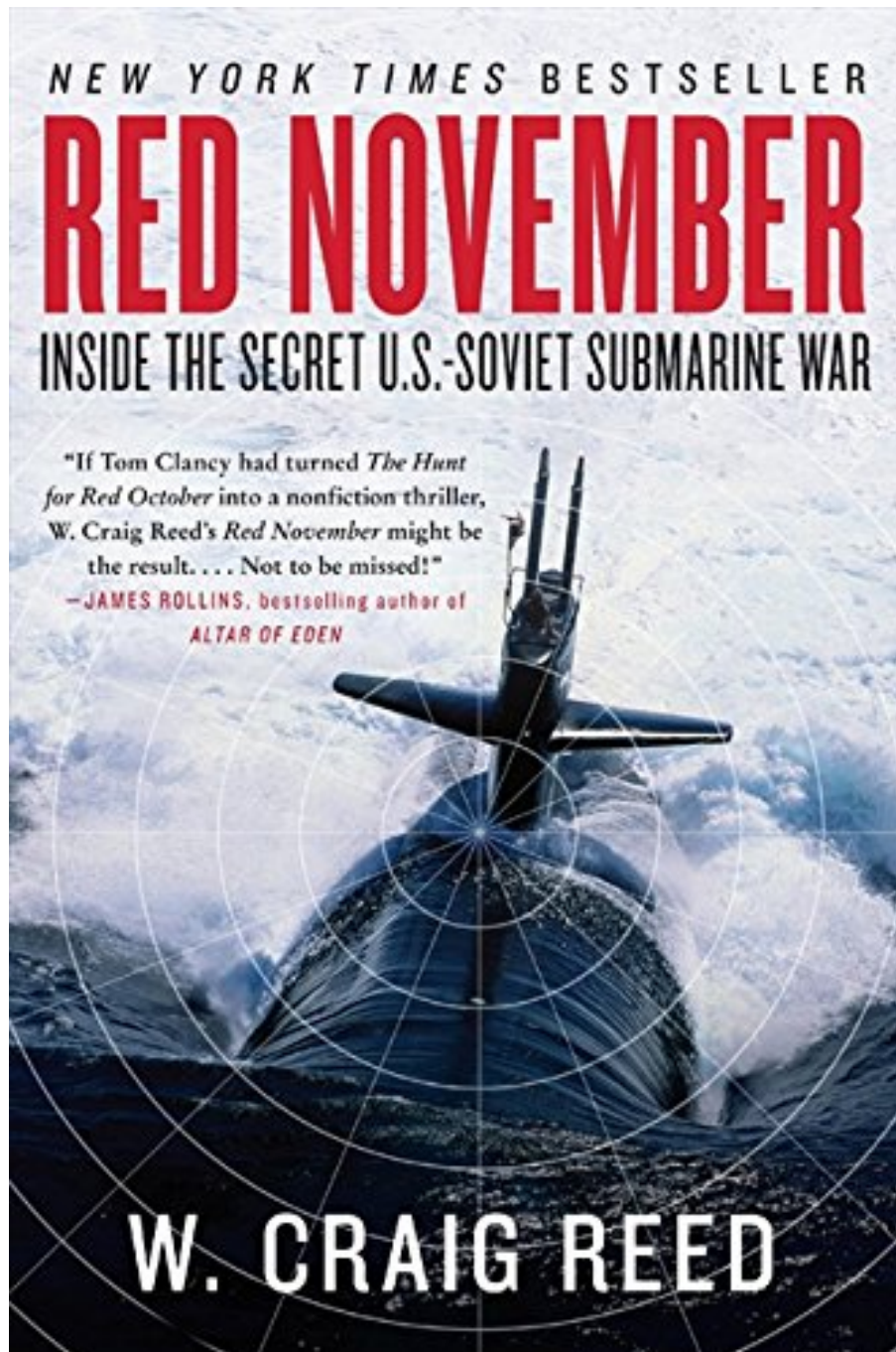


RED NOVEMBER: INSIDE THE SECRET U.S.- SOVIET SUBMARINE WAR BY W. CRAIG REED



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W. Craig Reed, a former navy diver and fast-attack submariner, provides a riveting portrayal of the secret underwater struggle between the US and the USSR in Red November. A spellbinding true-life adventure in the bestselling tradition of *Blind Man's Bluff*, it reveals previously undisclosed details about the most dangerous, daring, and decorated missions of the Cold War, earning raves from New York Times bestselling authors David Morrell, who calls it, “palpably gripping,” and James Rollins, who says, “If Tom Clancy had turned *The Hunt for Red October* into a nonfiction thriller, Red November might be the result.”

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82 of 87 people found the following review helpful.

Good grief!

By Ed Martin

What a disappointment! Just finished the first 3 chapters and am disgusted with the number of gross technical errors about diesel submarines and their spec-op involvement. The list of errors is too long to itemize. If the rest of the book is as poorly researched it lacks any credibility whatsoever. I served in 8 submarines, diesel and nuclear in my 21 year Naval career and this book looks like it was written by someone who got their information from conversations in a bar. The author is a submariner? You must be kidding. I'm on vacation and have absolutely nothing else to read so I'm reluctantly going to finish the book just to see how bad it gets.

104 of 115 people found the following review helpful.

Non-fiction or fiction? (Updated)

By M. Dobbs

Other reviewers have commented on numerous inaccuracies in this book, particularly relating to the Scorpion incident. I am not qualified to pass judgment on those matters, but I can talk about the Cuban missile crisis. I am the author of an hour-by-hour narrative of the missile crisis entitled *One Minute to Midnight: Kennedy, Khrushchev, and Castro on the Brink of Nuclear War*. A few months ago, Mr Reed's publisher invited me to write a blurb for *Red November* as an expert on the crisis. I declined for two reasons

which I communicated to the publisher at the time:

- (1) Large sections of the book appear to contain invented dialogue, e.g. conversations between Soviet submarine crews at the height of the missile crisis, unsupported by any documentary evidence.
- (2) The claim that Mr Reed's father, William Reed, personally briefed President Kennedy in the White House at the height of the missile crisis on anti-submarine intelligence operations strikes me as highly implausible. I have been through White House records very thoroughly for October 1962, and can find nothing to support this claim. If true, at a minimum, William Reed's name should have shown up in the White House gate records kept by the Secret Service which are publicly accessible at the John F. Kennedy Library in Boston. I invited Mr Reed to provide supporting evidence that his father had visited the White House during the missile crisis but he was unable to produce anything beyond family conversations.

UPDATE:

Since writing this review, I have had an exchange of emails with Mr Reed. This has prompted me to take a more detailed look at the sections of his book that deal with the Cuban missile crisis. There are numerous easily demonstrable errors of fact in these chapters. To cite just one example, wrong positions are provided for all four Soviet submarines that were tracked by U.S. intelligence in the vicinity of Cuba. In some cases, Mr Reed provides locations for the submarines that are more than 500 nautical miles from their actual locations. Please see the comments section for further details.

I stand by my original conclusion: there is as much fiction in this book as non-fiction, making it worthless as a reliable historical source.

Michael Dobbs

Author

[...]

46 of 50 people found the following review helpful.

A mixed stew of fact and fancy....

By Timmer

Mr. Reed has given us a book which appears to lack an overall structure and suffers from extremely poor fact checking and too many editorial errors.

Three of his chapters reveal heretofore unpublished details of Naval Security Group (NSG) activities during the 1960s from his father's personal reminiscences. The author combined the information from these family experiences with what appears to be historical research on NSG activities during the 1960s-1970s, providing the reader with a good, if a bit overhyped, view into these "Black" arts that will probably remain officially classified for another 50 years. From this "meat", the stew is despoiled by two chapters regurgitating the conspiracy theory nonsense of Offley, Sewell and others concerning the K-129, Project Azorian/Jennifer, and the loss of USS Scorpion. A large percentage of his discussion on K-129 and Scorpion is dated, incorrect, erroneous, or conspiracy-theory speculation.

Most of the book consists of submarine SpeOps (special operations) sea-stories told to the author by some "200" sailors interviewed for this book. Unfortunately, the author appears to have had insufficient personal experience or general knowledge of the technical and naval activities of the Cold War to separate truth from fiction in these stories, which the author offers up as "fact" in the wide-eyed innocence of a 14-year old virgin.

For example, on page 11 - in a story concerning the penetration of Sevastopol's harbor by a US submarine,

the author reports that the entry across the "Dardanelles" had a Soviet iron gate, as if the Dardanelles was the at the mouth of Sevastopol's harbor. Later on page 12, he tells of this same US submarine going deep within the Sevastopol's harbor and avoiding Soviet ASW efforts by dodging between ancient buildings 300 feet below the surface of the harbor. Both these inanities come from a Machinist Mate 3rd Class source who was aboard the submarine at the time, but who certainly had no access to the periscope on that mission. This unreliable hearsay is "supported" by the author in the notes for this chapter, referencing a Ballard expedition into the Black Sea which reported a mud-and-dabble hut found off shore the Crimean at a 300-foot depth. The author would have us believe that a 7,000 year old mud hut from the area supports this bar-talk from a man who had no access to any actual sighting, and who was uneducated as to the location of the Dardanelles.

On page 1, the author talks about the Soviet fleet in May of 1952 as "...including ballistic missile submarines..." -- WRONG -- over three years later, on 16 Sep 1955, the Soviet ZULU SSB "B-67", launched the first ballistic missile ever fired from a submarine. Ballistic missile submarines did not join the Soviet navy as operational units in any numbers (ZULUs, GOLFs, and HOTELS) until over half a decade later.

Another story, on page 16, - referring to the "fall of 1953" - the author states that ---"Six SOSUS stations were now deployed..." WRONG - the first station activated was NAVFAC Ramey, Puerto Rico, commissioned Oct 1954 and the first six NAVFACs were not operational until sometime in 1955 as can be verified within 60-seconds of internet research.

Practically every sea-story contains many such errors of fact -- errors that the author swallowed whole, in open credulity, without editing for error, exaggeration, or the effects of the fourth whiskey or the eighth beer. To call this book "non-fiction" is mislabeling.

More than anything else, Red November is a collection of submarine sea-stories with all of their gee-whiz and zap-bang moments --told by participants who exaggerate their own knowledge and/or the veracity of memories from 40 years ago. Red November may be entertaining but it is not informative in its present state -- full of factual error and patent nonsense.

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