



The Bermuda Triangle

In a western corner of the Atlantic Ocean is a stretch of water known as the Bermuda Triangle. For decades, this area has been associated with strange phenomena, for many ships, planes and people which have passed this way are said to have disappeared under mysterious circumstances. Some have speculated that these disappearances can be explained by the appearance of alien spacecraft, portals to other dimensions or the influence of the lost world of Atlantis. Other explanations, more grounded in science, suggest that all of these events can be explained without mention of the supernatural. Whatever the cause, the mystery of the Bermuda Triangle is one which has captured the public imagination and will surely continue to do so for many years to come.



The Devil's Triangle

The Bermuda Triangle, also known as the “Devil’s Triangle” is a region of water in the western part of the North Atlantic ocean. The exact boundaries of this triangle are not known, as different writers use different definitions of the space it takes up. The reported size of the triangle can vary from 1,300,000 km² to 3,900,000 km². Where the triangle is, depends on which writer is reporting the incident.

The earliest suggestion that this area of this world was in any way mysterious or supernatural appeared on September 17th 1950 in a newspaper article in the Miami Herald. Two years later, George Sand wrote a short article for Fate magazine, which cemented the area’s reputation. Entitled “Sea Mystery At Our Back Door”, it described the loss of several planes and boats which had ventured into this area, including the unknown fate of Flight 19 – a





routine mission which disappeared mysteriously leaving no trace of crew or plane. Sand was also the first to describe this area as a triangle.

Other articles were to follow, with writers keen to add to the idea that the Bermuda Triangle was a place where supernatural forces were strong.

One explanation put forth for the disappearances mentions Atlantis. It is suggested by some that the lost island of ancient mythology may have used unknown technology to have brought about the disappearance of air and seabound travellers. A submerged rock structure, the Bimini Road, off the island of Bimini in the Bahamas, has been connected to Atlantis, with believers describing this as part of a structure from the forgotten kingdom. However, the Bimini Road is of natural origin.

Another explanation offered attributes the mysterious events to aliens.

USS Cyclops

The disappearance of the USS Navy boat Cyclops led to the largest loss of life in the Navy's history not caused by wartime combat. Sometime after March 4th 1918, the crew of 309 went missing shortly after leaving the island of Barbados.

At the time, it was suspected that the ship, carrying a cargo of 10,800 tons of ore, was sunk by German torpedoes. German authorities have since denied any knowledge of the craft. Explanations suggested since include storms, or sinking due to being overloading with cargo.

To this day, the USS Cyclops remains lost and the reason for this loss of life remains a mystery.



The Bermuda Triangle

Did you know?

The Bermuda Triangle is one of only two places on the Earth where a compass will point to true north instead of magnetic north.





Flight 19

Perhaps the most famous disappearance within the Bermuda Triangle is that of the ill-fated Flight 19. On December 5th 1945, five Grumman Avenger Bombers crewed by fourteen airmen left Fort Lauderdale in Florida as Flight 19 – a training mission. The entire flight was lost at sea and, to this day, no trace of any of the craft has ever been found. To add to the mystery, another aircraft was sent to search for them... and that, too, was lost.

On the morning that Flight 19 left, there was no reason for anybody to expect that anything might go wrong; flight leader Charles Taylor was an experienced pilot with 2,500 flying hours. His men each had 300 total flying hours, with 60 flight hours in the Avenger. Their mission was a routine navigation and training exercise.

The weather that day was calm, described as “favourable, sea state moderate to rough,” and free of the severe tropical storms which sometimes plagued this area.

The planned flight would have consisted of four different ‘legs’. To begin with, the flight flew in an easterly direction for 61 miles before beginning a low level bombing practice. It would then continue for a further 77 miles before changing direction and flying 84 miles, passing over the Grand Bahama island. It would change direction twice more before returning to Fort Lauderdale.

As expected, radio conversations between the pilots were overheard by their base and other aircraft in the area. The planned bombing practice is known to have occurred because at 15:00 one pilot was overheard asking for permission to drop his last bomb.

Forty minutes later, Robert L. Cox, a flight instructor on a different mission, received this transmission: “I don’t know where we are, we must have got lost after that last turn.”

Cox replied, asking the unknown speaker to identify themselves so that he could assist. After another attempt at contact, he spoke to Taylor.



Credit: wikipedia

US Navy Avenger planes





“Both of my compasses are out and I am trying to find Fort Lauderdale,” Taylor explained. “I am over land but it’s broken. I am sure that I’m in the Keys but I don’t know how far down and I don’t know how to get to Fort Lauderdale.”

Cox informed the NAS that the aircraft of Flight 19 were lost and then advised Taylor to keep the sun on his port wing and fly north up the coast until he reached Fort Lauderdale. Operations at the base were unable to detect the aircraft of Flight 19 on any frequency.

Around 17:00, other members of the flight began to voice disagreement with the path they were taking to try to find land. Some argued that “...if we could just fly west, we would get home; head west...”

Despite the feeling from some pilots that Taylor’s path might be taking them further into open waters, no plane struck out on its own in a western direction. The weather began to deteriorate and radio contact became intermittent. Around 18:20, the last message of Taylor’s which could be heard was: “All planes close up tight... we’ll have to ditch unless landfall... when the first plane drops below 10 gallons, we’ll go down together.”

When it had become clear that the flight had been lost, the alert went out to airbases, aircraft and ships. Planes were diverted from scheduled missions to find the flight and guide them home. One of these called in a routine radio message at 19:30 but was never heard from again.

A few months later, a 500-page report into the incident was published. It suggested that Taylor may have led his flight in the wrong direction after mistakenly identifying the small islands he was flying over as the Florida Keys. The report said that, as the compasses on the flight were at fault, Taylor was not at fault.

Following the report’s publication, Taylor’s mother contested its findings. She felt that it was unfairly blaming her son, stating that there was no evidence to blame him as no bodies or wreckage had ever been found. The report has since been changed giving, “cause unknown” as the explanation for the disappearance.

Stories about Flight 19 have built up over the years, with one claiming that Taylor’s last transmission was: “Everything is wrong... even the ocean doesn’t look as it should... don’t come after me! They look like...”





Connemara IV

On September 26th 1955, the pleasure yacht Connemara IV was found adrift in the Atlantic Ocean. No trace of the crew was found. It has been suggested that the strong storms of the 1955 Atlantic hurricane season may have accounted for the loss of life.

Unexplained disappearances

Many vessels which entered into the area of the Bermuda Triangle have disappeared without any proven explanation for their fate. The events listed here are not a complete list, but give an indication of some of the incidents occurring.

July 10th 1945	A US Navy patrol sea plane disappears with twelve crew members. A ten-day search of land and sea finds nothing.
December 5th 1945	A flight of Navy bombing aircraft disappears.
Jan 30, 1948	The Avro Tudor IV aircraft disappears.
December 28th 1948	A flight from San Juan, Puerto Rico to Miami Florida, disappears with three crew and thirty-six passengers.
January 17th 1949	The Star Tiger aircraft disappears.
February 4th 1963	The SS Marine Sulphur Queen boat disappears.
November, 1964	Airplane pilot Chuck Wakely describes a paranormal experience.
June 29th 1969	Expert yachtsman Donald Crowhurst disappears.
June 20th, 2005	A Piper-PA-23 aircraft with three people aboard disappears between the Bahamas and Florida.
May 15th 1017	A private aircraft vanishes from radar and radio contact. Plane wreckage is found later.





Chuck Wakely's sighting

In November 1964, pilot Chuck Wakely was flying a plane from Nassau to Florida, proceeding through the Bermuda Triangle at a height of 2,000 metres. On the flight, Wakely described being surrounded by a mysterious light. The light increased in intensity, becoming blinding and all of the plane's instruments ceased to function. After some time, the light disappeared and the instruments returned to working normally.

Scientific explanations

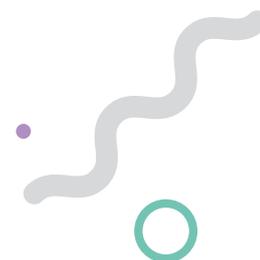
Despite its fearsome reputation, the waters of the Bermuda Triangle are not known to be any more dangerous than those of any other similar place. Countless voyages through this area have happened without incident. The number of planes and sea vessels which disappear there are no noticeably higher than disappearances elsewhere. Indeed, insurance companies do not list it within the ten most dangerous waters in the world to travel through.

Anywhere in the world, wherever transport disappears, investigators work to establish the cause to ensure that similar incidents can be prevented from happening. In the case of disappearances in the Devil's Triangle, many scientific explanations have been offered.

One of the explanations most often given for the disappearances is that of compass failure. In some parts of the world, the compass reading for magnetic north and true north are the same. The Bermuda Triangle is one of these areas. As this fact is unknown to most members of the general public, the strange readings on a compass here might be confusing, and even suggest that an unexplained phenomenon is occurring.

Another explanation is that of weather. This part of the world is prone to strong, violent tropical storms and hurricanes. Such weather in these parts has proven strong enough to destroy large vessels and blow planes off course.

Passing through the Bermuda Triangle is the Gulf Stream, a powerful current, like a river within the ocean. These waters would be powerful





enough to carry floating objects, such as small planes making water landings or boats encountering difficulty, far off their reported position. The wreckage of other downed vessels could also be swept away by this mighty current.

But perhaps the most obvious explanation for these events is that of human error. Far from home, and reliant on limited resources, it is easy for mistakes to happen and to make the wrong judgement. Stubbornness can also lead to travellers sticking to the wrong course.

An unsolved mystery?

It is in our nature to understand the world, to use reason and evidence to support this understanding. But this can be a double-edged sword. Sometimes we can be tempted to look for patterns where there are none to be found - only coincidence. Sceptics and scientists would argue that there is nothing which suggests the Bermuda Triangle is any more dangerous than many other shipping routes.

However, despite many scientific explanations being put forth, plenty of mysteries remain, and many souls have strayed into the area, never to return again. Were you offered the chance, would you be brave enough to enter the Bermuda Triangle?

