

URBAN LEGENDS • DON'T READ ALONE!

BERMUDA TRIANGLE



Virginia Loh-Hagan

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BERMUDA TRIANGLE

This series features unsolved mysteries, urban legends, and other curious stories. Each creepy, shocking, or befuddling book focuses on what people believe and hear. True or not? That's for you to decide!



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THE MYSTERY OF FLIGHT 19

What happened to Flight 19? How is it connected to the Bermuda Triangle?

Something odd happened. It happened on December 5, 1945. Five Navy planes took off. They left from Fort Lauderdale, Florida. They flew over the Atlantic Ocean.

They were **training**. Training means practicing. They practiced flying. They practiced dropping bombs. The **mission** was called Flight 19. A mission is a job. It wasn't special. Training happens all the time.

Flight 19 was going well. Then, something went wrong. Their **compass** stopped working. A compass is a tool. It helps pilots find places.



The Flight 19 planes were torpedo bombers.

CONSIDER THE EVIDENCE

Flight 19 made the Bermuda Triangle popular. But many disappearances happened before it. The USS *Cyclops* was a large ship. It weighed 19,000 tons. It carried materials. The materials were needed to make weapons. It had over 300 people on board. It crossed the Bermuda Triangle. It disappeared on March 4, 1918. Nothing was left behind. It made a record in U.S. naval history. It's the largest loss of life not caused by war. Some believe Germans took the ship. The Germans said they didn't. Some believe it had engine trouble. Some believe it sank in a storm. But no one really knows.

The planes flew the wrong way. There was rain. There were winds. There were clouds. One of the **airmen** said, “I don’t know where we are. We must have got lost after that last turn.” Airmen are pilots and crew members.

Fourteen airmen were on the planes. The planes and airmen **disappeared**. They were never seen again.

Another plane went after Flight 19. It had 13 airmen. It flew over the same area. It also disappeared. Navy experts studied what happened. They said this plane exploded. It blew up in the air. The plane was not safe. It was known to catch on fire.

The Navy sends out search-and-rescue teams.





The ocean is vast. It's mysterious.

Over 300 boats and planes looked for the lost planes. They looked for five days. They looked at over 300,000 square miles (776,996 square kilometers). The area was called the Bermuda Triangle. They didn't find anything. They didn't find bodies. They didn't find plane pieces.

Navy experts were stumped. They didn't know why Flight 19 disappeared. First, they blamed "pilot **error**." Error is a mistake. Later, they blamed "causes or reasons unknown."

The mystery of Flight 19 is unsolved. It inspired stories. It made the Bermuda Triangle famous. People wondered about the area. They thought it was dangerous.

DID YOU KNOW?

- The Bermuda Triangle has several names. One name is “the Hoodoo Sea.” Hoodoo means witchcraft. It also means bad luck.
- The Navy investigated Flight 19’s disappearance. There was an official report. Someone noted that it was “as if they had flown to Mars.” No one knew what happened.
- Dragon’s Triangle is named after a Chinese myth. Myths are stories. Some people believed in dragons. Dragons lived deep underwater. Dragons moved. This created storms and fogs. Their movements sunk boats.
- The U.S. government created AUTEK. AUTEK stands for Atlantic Undersea Test and Evaluation Center. The Navy tests things there. It’s in the Bermuda Triangle. Some people said they saw UFOs there.
- Some believe there’s a monster called Bermuda Beast. It lives in the Bermuda Triangle. It’s huge. It jumps out of water. It catches planes in midair. It eats them whole. It does the same to boats. It’s based on a monster from Greek myths. It has a huge mouth.
- William Shakespeare wrote plays. He wrote a play called *The Tempest*. A tempest is a storm. His play is based on a ship in a storm. *The Sea Venture* was a 17th-century English ship. It was heading to Virginia. It fought a storm for three days. But it survived. All 150 people and one dog landed safely.

CONSIDER THIS!

Take a Position: Consider why some scientists don't think the Bermuda Triangle exists. Do you think the Bermuda Triangle really exists or not? Argue your point with reasons and evidence.

Say What? The Bermuda Triangle fascinates people. Explain why the Bermuda Triangle is interesting. What makes it so mysterious?

Think About It! Would you be scared to travel in or near the Bermuda Triangle? Why or why not?

LEARN MORE

- Bingham, Jane. *The Bermuda Triangle*. Chicago: Heinemann-Raintree, 2013.
- Omoth, Tyler. *Handbook to Stonehenge, the Bermuda Triangle, and Other Mysterious Locations*. North Mankato, MN: Capstone Press, 2017.
- Richard, Orlin. *The Bermuda Triangle*. North Mankato, MN: Child's World, 2015.

GLOSSARY

airmen (AIR-muhn) pilot and crew members who work on a plane

aliens (AY-lee-uhnz) creatures from outer space

base (BASE) station, headquarters

compass (KUHM-puhs) a navigational tool that helps find positions and directions

currents (KUR-uhnts) flows of water

disappeared (dis-uh-PEERD) vanished, got lost, left without a trace

error (ER-ur) mistake

hurricanes (HUR-ih-kaynz) storms with heavy winds

meteor (MEE-tee-ur) a space rock falling toward Earth

mission (MISH-uhn) a quest, a job, a task

pirates (PYE-rits) robbers who attack and sink boats

radars (RAY-dahrz) special tools that track movements

rubble (RUHB-uhl) trash, wreckage pieces

supernatural (soo-pur-NACH-ur-uhl) things that can't be explained by science, like ghosts and aliens

theories (THEER-eez) ideas that explain something

training (TRAYN-ing) opportunities to practice skills

trenches (TRENCH-iz) long, narrow depressions or holes in the ground

UFOs (YOO-EF-OHZ) unidentified flying objects like spaceships

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Virginia Loh-Hagan is an author, university professor, former classroom teacher, and curriculum designer. She thinks her laundry room is the Bermuda Triangle; she's always losing clothes in there. She lives in San Diego with her very tall husband and very naughty dogs. To learn more about her, visit www.virginialoh.com.

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• URBAN LEGEND •

(UR-buhn LEJ-uhnd) an often horrific story that is based on hearsay and circulated as true, a modern folktale

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