



## The Skeptics SA guide to The Bermuda Triangle

**The so-called ‘Bermuda Triangle’** is a rather vaguely defined area of the North Atlantic Ocean that has, over time, gained a sinister reputation as being unusually dangerous and mysterious. This ‘reputation’ is due to the fact that, according to some, an abnormally large number of ships and aircraft have disappeared in what are strange, inexplicable, and even unnatural circumstances. As a result of such claims the area has attracted a number of rather melodramatic designations such as, the ‘Deadly Triangle’, the ‘Hoodoo Sea’ (Godwin 1973), the ‘Devil’s Triangle’ (Winer 1977), the ‘Twilight Zone’, the ‘Triangle of Death’, ‘Limbo of the Lost’ (Spencer 1973), the ‘Graveyard of the Atlantic’ (Story 2001, p 121), while the term by which it is best known, the ‘Bermuda Triangle’, came from the title of a fictional story, ‘The Deadly Bermuda Triangle’, written by Gaddis (1974).

The actual shape and area of the triangle are however, as Berlitz (1975) indicated, “somewhat elastic” (p 63). Over time, various authors have ‘stretched’ the borders of the triangle to enable them to include disappearances from locations far beyond the areas originally defined by Sand (1952) and Gaddis (1974). The principal outlines proposed for the Bermuda Triangle are now:

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- a “triangle bounded roughly by Florida, Bermuda, and Puerto Rico” (Sand 1952, p 12)
- an amorphous formation commencing at Cape May (New Jersey) and, extending out to the edge of the continental shelf, following the east coast of the United States around the Florida peninsula into the Gulf of Mexico and includes the islands of Cuba, Jamaica and Dominica, (Spencer 1973)
- a triangular region with its corners located at Miami, San Juan, and Bermuda, encompassing some 1,140,000 square kilometers (386,102 square miles), (Gaddis 1974)
- an area described as “more of an ellipse or a wedge of a great circle... with the apex near Bermuda and the curved bottom extending from lower Florida past Puerto Rica, curving south and east through the Sargasso Sea, then back again to Bermuda” (Berlitz 1975, p 17)
- a trapezoid shaped area that extends far out into the Atlantic and includes the Sargasso Sea (Winer 1977)
- a much larger trapezoid shaped area with the northernmost boundary extending from New Jersey to the Azores (Arnett 1977)
- a lozenge (diamond) shaped area with its corners located at Miami, Cape May, (New

Jersey), Bermuda and San Juan (Sanderson 1988).

Because of these different boundaries, as Rosenberg (1974) noted, the area of the hypothetical Bermuda Triangle can vary from 1,294,994 square kilometers, (500,000 square miles) to 3,884,982 square kilometers (1,500,000 square miles).

The many explanations that have been offered for the disappearances of the various ships and aircraft within the triangle range from the sensible through to the fantastic and bizarre. Amongst the more rational are things such as bad weather, sudden squalls, hurricanes, incompetent and ill-prepared sailors, piracy, unseaworthy ships and explosive cargoes. The more unlikely or irrational suggestions include ‘ocean flatulence’ (large bubbles of methane gas rising up from the ocean floor to overwhelm ships) (*Fortean Times* 2001), giant whirlpools, unstable atmospheric aberrations (Eckert 1962, p 40), electronic fogs (McGregor and Gernon 2005), electromagnetic or gravitational currents that transport craft into alternative dimensions of time and space (Berlitz 1975, p 190 and Eckert 1962), a ‘dimensional rift’, magnetic vortexes and temporal aberrations (Berlitz 1975, p 129), the presence of an-

ti-matter (Berlitz 1975, p 100), giant Atlantean power-crystals (Berlitz 1975, p 149), and alien abductions (Keyhoe 1955). As Story (2001) indicated, this latter suggestion had originally been proposed by Charles Fort, many decades before the concept of the Bermuda Triangle ever existed.

Throughout the ages while mariners respected and feared the world's seas and oceans, they tended to be viewed by non-mariners as places of danger and mystery. Because of its proximity to Europe the Atlantic, in particular, has long featured in many Western travellers' tales. It was reputed to be the location of various enigmatic locations such as the legendary sunken continent of Atlantis, and other lands such as the reputed earthly paradises of Hy-Brasil and the Fortunate Isles: both of these were still believed to exist as late as the 18th century (Baring-Gould 1967 p 528). These islands were thought to be the source of strange seeds that often washed ashore on the European Atlantic seaboard. In particular, certain kidney-shaped seeds (probably cashews) were the most eagerly sought after as amulets. Claimed to be 'fairy-kidneys', they were worn in the belief that they not only brought good luck and help during childbirth, but because it was claimed they would turn black in the presence of witches and the evil eye, thus warning their owners of potential danger. In reality, many of these came from plants that grew along the banks of the Amazon and after falling into the water, had been carried down to the sea where ocean currents carried them across the ocean.

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Sailors told stories of mermaids, sea monsters, ghost-ships, of encountering great storms and seeing strange lights atop the rigging of their ships. While most of these were simply oft-repeated traveller's tales, there was a degree of truth in their reports of the strange lights. Various natural lights do appear on ships at sea: one example is St Elmo's fire, an electrical plasma discharge that would often appear high on ship's masts and rigging during thunderstorms. Its mysterious nature produced a great deal of religious and superstitious fear amongst sailors of past ages.

There are other unusual patterns of light that appear at sea such as Auroral Pillars, and phosphorescent seas. Berlitz (1975), mentioned that, "glowing streaks of 'white water' in the Gulf Stream" were witnessed by Columbus (p 16). However, while Berlitz described these as a "baffling mystery" as Corliss (1982) points out, they are a quite natural phenomenon. The result of bacterial or phytoplankton phosphorescence on the surface of the water, they can often appear as bars of light or moving wheel-shaped patterns. Fort (1973) mentioned an example of these. Huge luminous wheel shapes appeared on both sides of the steam ship *Patna* in 1880. With the spokes of these wheels, some 180 to 275 metres long (200 to 300 yards), they were observed to whirl around, brushing the sides of the ship, and in that position continued alongside the ship for about twenty minutes (p 278).

The disappearance in the triangle on 5 December 1945 of Flight 19 was to be the primary cat-

alyst for the many stories that followed which implied there was something sinister about the triangle. On a training exercise to practise navigational and bombing skills Flight 19 comprised five Navy Grumman TBM Avenger torpedo-bombers, four of them piloted by student pilots, led by the more experienced Flight Leader, Lt Charles Taylor. Although each aircraft normally carried a pilot and two crewmen, on this occasion one man was absent from Second Lieutenant Gerber's aircraft, making a total compliment of fourteen men in the group.

They left the Fort Lauderdale Naval Air Station and flew 091 degrees for 90 km (56 miles) to the Hen and Chicken Shoals where they were to conduct bombing practice. Afterwards they were to continue on the same course for a further 107 km (67 miles), then to proceed 346 degrees for 117 km (73 miles), then 241 degrees in a final 193 km (120 mile) leg which would return them to their Fort Lauderdale base. However, it appears that both of Taylor's compasses malfunctioned (Kusche 1975, p 104) and they became lost. Then, in attempting to use a number of small islands as navigational aids, Taylor, who was unfamiliar with the area, apparently mistakenly identified several of these small islands as being located in the Florida Keys. On this basis, he appears to have assumed that if they flew northeast they would eventually reach Florida and their base.

Unfortunately, they had actually flown past the Bahamas and this course took them further out into the Atlantic and away from land. With

enough fuel to remain airborne until about 2000 hours, (8:00 pm, Kusche 1975, p 114), they apparently continued on that course, and as their distance from land increased their radio signals became weaker and weaker, until they could no longer be heard.

Taylor had instructed the students at about 1722 (5:22 pm) that when they were down to their last ten gallons of fuel left, they should all ditch into the sea together. Their last message was heard at 1817 (6:17 pm) and some time afterwards, they apparently crashed into the sea. The five aircraft, and all of their crews, were never to be heard from again. It seems that they would have had little chance of survival.

Information later released by the Miami Weather Bureau indicated that at the time of their last reported position the weather was stormy with, “freak winds, attended by gusts up to 40 mph, (64 km/h) along with showers and occasional thunderstorms”, (Sand 1952, p 13). These conditions were confirmed by the captain of the British tanker *Viscount Empire*. According to McDonell (1973), they had been located northeast of the Bahamas at about the same time as the last message was heard from Flight 19, and had advised Air Sea Rescue in Florida that they had encountered high velocity winds and extremely high seas. Kruszelnicki (2004) indicated that the waves may have been as high as 15 metres, (about fifty feet high, p 137).

McDonell (1973) later spoke to former TBM pilots and they all agreed that ditching in such conditions the aircraft would probably have

broken up immediately on impact and, in such stormy conditions, the crewmen would not have survived for very long.

Winer (1977) suggested another possible problem. After Flight 19 disappeared naval investigators examined other Avengers for possible clues to the loss. They found that, probably due to the hot Florida sun, the life rafts in some of the aircraft were so badly perished that it was impossible to remove them from their storage compartments (p 4). If the aircrews of Flight 19 had experienced such a situation, they would have been forced to face the stormy seas in nothing but their heavy flying gear.

Although the loss of Flight 19 was the culmination of many separate factors, as Wilkes (1987) observed, “What we now know is that Charles Taylor is the principal reason why Flight 19 never returned.” In retrospect, he was most unsuited to lead a flight of students over the ocean. He was “a lackluster pilot with a somewhat irresponsible attitude” (Wilkes 1987). He had a poor reputation as a pilot who tended to fly without using his instruments. While serving in the Pacific he had twice become lost, run out of fuel and ditched into the sea, and required rescuing on both occasions. Subsequent evidence also suggests that on this particular exercise he had not bothered to take a plotting board, a most basic piece of navigational equipment, along with him.

It appears that all of the aircraft in the flight also lacked clocks. Normally standard equipment, these clocks were frequently stolen.

During their pre-flight checks, a mechanic had noted that none of the aircraft in the flight had clocks fitted. (McDonell 1973). Taylor was heard to ask other flight-crews on several occasions for the time, suggesting, as Kusche (1975) noted, that Taylor was not wearing a watch. Lacking any timekeeping equipment would have worsened the situation since, as Kusche noted “there is no better way to become disorientated than to fly for an unknown amount of time in an unknown direction” (p 117).

Although Berlitz (1975) sensationally claimed that “no incident before or since has been more remarkable than the total disappearance of an entire training flight” (p 20), a fact often overlooked is that, even though Flight 19 comprised five separate aircraft, they were actually flying as a single unit. The four student pilots relied upon, and obediently followed Taylor, so when Taylor became lost, in effect, they were all lost. Although several of the students were heard on the radio suggesting they should head west, it appears that none of them was willing to use their initiative and break away from the group. Although Winer (1977) claimed one plane did actually fly “off on its own” (p 3) he failed to say how this was known, since it is not mentioned by any other author. Whatever happened, the planes continued flying until eventually they all ran out of fuel and ditched into the sea. Compounding the tragedy was the fact that, as Kusche (1975) noted, “Flight 19 was almost exactly on course when the pilots decided they were lost” (p 122).

Reinforcing the sinister reputation of the triangle, at least for believers, was the fact that, one of the many aircraft searching for Flight 19 exploded some 23 minutes after take-off. Some authors, such as Gaddis (1965) suggested that this Martin Mariner flying-boat met the same mysterious fate as Flight 19 (p 194), however, as Winer (1977) noted, the crew of *SS Gaines Mills* saw a mid-air explosion. A later search located, “a large gasoline slick on the water’s surface at that location” (p 5), suggesting the Mariner had crashed into the sea at that point. As long range reconnaissance aircraft the Mariners carried large amounts of fuel, and, as Winer (1977) noted, they “were notorious for exploding in the air.”

The modern myth of the Bermuda Triangle had its origins with two articles. The first, by EVW Jones, was distributed via the Associated Press on 16 September 1950, the second article, by Sand (1952), was entitled ‘Sea Mystery at our Back Door’. While this dealt mainly with Flight 19 it also examined the disappearances of the tramp steamer *Sandra* in 1950, the yacht *Evelyn K*, captained by Al Snider, a well known jockey (incorrectly referred to as ‘Snyder’), on 5 March 1948, a DC3 (NC16002), on 28 December 1948, and two lost Avro Tudor IV passenger aircraft, the *Star Tiger* on 30 January 1948 and the *Star Ariel* on 17 January 1949 (often incorrectly referred to as ‘Aerial’). Sand was one of the first to suggest there was ‘something strange’ about these disappearances in the “watery triangle bounded roughly by Florida, Bermuda, and Puerto Rico” (p 12). He described the area as mysterious and enigmat-

ic (p 13), and suggested that a “disappearance jinx” (p 17) was involved. Thereafter, the term, ‘the triangle’, began to be used to refer to that general area of the Atlantic and by the 1960s the area was being referred to more sensationally as ‘The Deadly Triangle’.

Following the lead of Sand (1952), other authors also began to suggest more convoluted explanations for the disappearances, some of which were quite bizarre. Titler (1962) suggested that electromagnetic anomalies might be responsible for the disappearance of aircraft in the triangle and he implied that Project Magnet, a Canadian Department of Transport research programme examining the possibility of using the Earth’s magnetic field as a source of propulsion might be involved.

In this environment of bizarre suppositions, in February 1964, Vincent Gaddis published a fictional story ‘The Deadly Bermuda Triangle’ in the *Argosy*, an American weekly pulp fiction magazine. As mentioned previously, the term ‘The Bermuda Triangle’ was taken from the title of this story. Gaddis had previously written a number of books and short stories and he frequently included references to various types of ‘Fortean’ phenomena. Although this particular story was a piece of fiction Gaddis included various references to events that had taken place in the Bermuda Triangle within the context of the story. This apparently confused many readers who mistakenly assumed that this fictional story was really a factual, true-life account of events that had actually occurred in the triangle.

Further confusing *Argosy* readers was that, in the 1960s, the magazine had begun to increasingly publish material that although of a dubious nature, was presented as being factual. This was the result of Ivan T Sanderson, a well known biologist with an interest in cryptozoology and the paranormal, becoming the Science Editor for the magazine. In his editorial role he had included many stories about strange creatures and paranormal events which he claimed were ‘factual’. As a consequence of this it was often difficult for readers to distinguish between fictional and non-fictional material in the magazine!

Once the Bermuda Triangle began to gather notoriety, other writers began to extend the size, and shape, of the triangle so they could include disappearances from much further afield. Thus, the 282 ton brigantine, the *Mary Celeste* (often incorrectly referred to as the *Marie Celeste*), which had been found abandoned in December 1872 near the Azores, was added to the list of ships lost within the triangle. The fact that it was actually found some 3,700 km (2,299 miles) outside the area of the original triangle appeared to have been conveniently ignored. Extending the boundaries of the Bermuda Triangle, to suit their needs, became a common practice with many writers.

This tendency to manipulate facts is merely one example of the careless approach taken by many authors in dealing with the Bermuda Triangle. Much of the material concerning the triangle tends to be of poor quality, suggesting confusion, misinformation and poor research, by many writers.

One example of this is demonstrated by the fact that many of the details concerning the *Mary Celeste* are incorrect. She became confused with another similarly named ship, the *Mari Celeste*, a 207 ton paddle steamer that had hit a reef off Bermuda on 13 September 1864. Then, in January 1884 Arthur Conan Doyle published a fictionalised ‘eye-witness account’ in the *Cornhill Magazine* of the fate that had met the crew of the *Mary Celeste*. Although the story ‘Habakuk Jephson’s Statement’ was based rather loosely on the actual incident, Doyle was surprised to find that many, including the publishers of the *Boston Herald*, thought it was a factual account of events that had taken place aboard the *Mary Celeste*, leading to its abandonment.

As Kutsche (1995) noted, so pervasive has been the influence of this fictional story that many of the details in the story are now widely accepted as genuine: for instance, most people now believe this was the actual name of the ship was the *Marie Celeste*, the name that Doyle used for the fictional ship in his story.

While Gaddis gave the triangle its name, it was Charles Berlitz who gathered together many of the more fantastic theories from other authors, and, adding his own bizarre theories, transformed a minor mythos into a major issue. A well-known scholar, the world’s largest selling author of ‘travel guides and foreign language phrase books’ (Hagen 2004, p 12), his book, *The Bermuda Triangle*, sold millions of copies worldwide, and probably, more than any other book, made the triangle a popular topic

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with both the media and the public. Berlitz (1975) was convinced “that something is very wrong with this area.” (p 10), and he proposed an assortment of bizarre theories to explain the losses of ships, aircraft and human beings from within the triangle.

Berlitz appears to have preferred wild sensational theories to fact: thus, in Berlitz (1977b) he repeats the World War I myth concerning the disappearance of the First Fourth Norfolk regiment, that they disappeared into a cloud, and were never heard from again, indeed he claimed they had actually been transported into another dimension (pp 150 – 151). He had obviously never bothered to check official reports of this incident. If he had done so he would have discovered that according to war records, after the war the Turks had revealed how the regiment had all been killed in an ambush, and their bodies had been buried in a mass grave, the location of which had been revealed to British authorities.

Apparently obsessed with Atlantis, UFOs, and the prophecies of Edgar Cayce, he suggested that the disappearances in the triangle were due to various bizarre causes. These included:

- abductions by aliens from outer-space, who visited Earth periodically to collect human specimens (p 55, 110, 190)
- abduction by intelligent beings from below the ocean (p 55 and 127)
- abductions by beings from other dimensions (p 128)
- antigravity warps (p 100), or gravitational ‘malfunctions’ (p 92)

- magnetic ‘malfunctions’ (p 93)
- Atlantean crystal lasers (p 197).

The Atlantean crystal lasers was one of the pseudo-scientific claims made by ‘psychic’ Edgar Cayce who claimed that Atlantean technology had been far in advance of even our modern expertise. He claimed they could harness vast amounts of energy from crystals and that they possessed a large cylindrical six-sided crystal, the Tuoai or Firestone that could collect large amounts of energy from sunlight, moonlight, starlight, and from other ‘unknown elemental sources’. Used as a power source, the Atlanteans could concentrate this energy and then transmit it all over their island. According to Berlitz (1975) this ‘crystal laser’ survived when Atlantis sank into the ocean, and now, despite thousands of years at the bottom of the ocean, it continued to function, from time to time discharging its energy, “causing electromagnetic stresses or drains resulting in the malfunctioning or disintegration of sea and air craft” (p 197).

Berlitz claimed that the disappearances in the triangle were evidence of conspiracies by terrestrial, extra-terrestrial and even underwater species. These “extraterrestrials periodically visit the earth and kidnap or ‘spacenap’ men and equipment” (p 55) for purposes of anthropological research. While such sensational explanations appeal to a rather naïve public, lacking any solid evidence, such conclusions are nothing more than highly subjective conjecture.

Berlitz tended to present a great deal of hearsay and pseudo-scientific speculation, while frequently omitting important details, for instance:

- Despite the lack of historical evidence (Kish 1978) he claimed that the Phoenicians and Carthaginians explored the Atlantic, possibly crossing the Sargasso Sea (Berlitz 1975, p 49), and that the Carthaginian admiral Himilco described the Sargasso Sea
- He claimed that during his radio communications Taylor reported “Everything is wrong ...Strange ...the ocean doesn’t look as it should” (Berlitz 1975, p 21), however, as Kusche (1975) and McDonell (1973) indicated, such statements were never part of Taylor’s communications
- He claimed the *Witchcraft*, which disappeared on Christmas Eve 1967, “proceeded through calm seas to about one mile from the shore” (Berlitz 1975, p 60), yet according to Kusche (1975), at that time “Stiff winds blowing from the north and northeast whipped the surface of the Atlantic into a carpet of foam” (p 217)
- When dealing with the loss of the *Marine Sulphur Queen*, a former oil tanker, he conveniently failed to mention that this type of tanker, (T2), was notorious for experiencing fractured keels. Another T2 tanker, the *SS Schenectady*, cracked in half only weeks after being launched. At the time she was moored, in calm weather, at a dock waiting to be fitted out. In addition, the US Court of Appeals found that the *Sulphur Queen* was considered particularly unsound due to her Skeptics SA

conversion to carry sulphur, and, because she had not been properly maintained, she was considered unseaworthy

- With respect to the York transport which “disappeared north of the triangle en route to Jamaica” (Berlitz 1975, p 44) he conveniently failed to mention that although her ultimate destination was Jamaica, the plane was actually lost on the Azores to Newfoundland leg of the journey (Kusche 1975, p 165), and was some 1448 km (900 miles) north of the triangle
- Possibly his greatest error was when he claimed that the Freya was found abandoned in the triangle in 1902 after sailing from Manzanillo in Cuba to Chile (Berlitz 1975, p 57) — in fact, it had sailed from Manzanillo, a port on the west coast of Mexico, and was found in the Pacific, some 4,800 km (3,000 miles) from the triangle (Kusche 1975, p 49).

In general, the more fantastic claims about the Bermuda Triangle tend to be based upon vague rumours, misinformation, speculation, sensationalism and even deliberate lies. Unfortunately, the more sensational myths about the triangle appear to be far more popular with the public than the more reasonable explanations. As a result, as in the example of Conan Doyle’s story ‘Habakuk Jephson’s Statement’, many of the myths about the triangle are now widely accepted as ‘factual’.

The true causes of the many disappearances in the so-called Bermuda Triangle can be attributed to two primary causes, the Atlantic Ocean and human error.

The Atlantic is one of the largest and stormiest oceans in the world. As Kruszelnicki (2004) noted, the so-called triangle area lies just north of that part of the Atlantic where most of the great hurricanes form before moving north towards the US mainland. This area is subject to violent storms and waterspouts that can appear without warning, and disappear just as quickly. The Gulf Stream, which flows “swiftly and turbulently through the Bermuda Triangle” (Kruszelnicki (2004) p 136) creates unique weather problems, and as Rosenberg (1974) noted, the area above the Gulf Stream is subject to sub-tropical cyclones, a particularly turbulent form of weather phenomena, hybrid storm systems: these sub-tropical cyclones are often of very short duration, and can appear suddenly and disappear just as quickly as they arose. Rather like huge tornadoes, several kilometers in diameter, they can create massive sea swells which, moving in several directions simultaneously, can quickly overwhelm any craft caught in their midst.

Given these environmental factors, and that this region of the Atlantic Ocean is one of the busiest maritime areas in the world, it is only to be expected that some ships will be lost. However, as Kruszelnicki (2004) observed, “a survey by insurance underwriters Lloyd’s of London shows that, on a percentage basis, there are no more ships lost in the Bermuda Triangle than anywhere else in the world” (p 137).

As mentioned earlier, a major factor in the creation of the Bermuda Triangle mythos is



poor quality of research, As Kusche (1975) revealed, many of the claims made concerning the various disappearances are simply incorrect! This clearly suggests that most of the triangle authors never bothered to check actual records: it appears they relied on the unsubstantiated reports of other authors, often adding their own sensational 'insights'. Thus when Berlitz claimed that the *Freya* had sailed from Manzanillo in Cuba and had been found abandoned in the Bermuda Triangle (p 203) he was repeating almost word for word the claim made by Gaddis (1965) ten years earlier.

Gaddis (1965) made some other basic errors. He claimed the *Sandra* disappeared in June 1950, it was actually in April; he claimed the vessel was "350 feet in length" (p 202), in fact it was only 185 feet (Kusche 1975, p 161). He was not the only author to confuse his dates. Eckert (1962) claimed that Flight 19 disappeared in 1946 rather than 1945, he also included a hearsay report concerning an apparent 'temporal aberration' so fantastic that, more than anything else, it serves to demonstrate the implausible nature of many of the stories about the Bermuda Triangle, and especially, the naivety of those who believe such nonsense.

Kusche (1975) appeared to have been one of the few objective researchers into the disappearances in the triangle. He began by checking the original records concerning the disappearances. In doing so he discovered that in many instances the actual records contradicted many of the claims made by various authors.

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Some authors had claimed craft had disappeared in fine weather condition, with calm seas, when in fact the records revealed that the weather was the exact opposite. While Gaddis (1965) claimed that the *Sandra* had vanished "in peaceful weather" (p 202), Kusche (1975) found that on the day after she left Savannah, Georgia, a severe storm had developed, and with winds gusting up to 117km/h (73 mph) this storm had battered ships for three days off the coast of Florida.

There are no strange and mysterious forces within the Bermuda Triangle. Rather they exist in the impressionable human minds that need the stimulation of mysteries and enigmas. Unsolved mysteries hold a far greater appeal than commonplace explanations, and there are always those prepared to exploit a naive and gullible public.

The truth about the Bermuda Triangle myths is simply this: a series of unsolved accidental mishaps have been sensationally misrepresented as being due to abnormal, even extraordinary causes. However, when one examines the evidence in a more rational and objective manner, it becomes quite clear that many of the claims concerning the alleged perplexing nature of the triangle are nothing more than journalistic sleight-of-hand. As Hagen (2004) commented the "mysterious vortex" exists only "in Berlitz's narrative, a place where facts, not ships and planes, seem to vanish unaccountably" (p 13).

Laurie Eddie, January 2010

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### The South Australian branch of the Australian Skeptics

For further information on the Australian Skeptics and the journal, *the Skeptic*, contact:

Email: <[info@skepticssa.org.au](mailto:info@skepticssa.org.au)>

Web site: <[www.skepticssa.org.au](http://www.skepticssa.org.au)>