



# Natural Disasters

# The Bermuda Triangle

Jim Whiting



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Words in **bold** type can be found in the glossary.



## CHAPTER ONE

# The Flight to Nowhere

On a bright sunny day, five U.S. Navy torpedo bombers roared down the runway in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. It was about 2:00 P.M. on December 5, 1945.

The group was known as Flight 19. The leader, Lieutenant Charles Taylor, was a very experienced pilot. The other four pilots didn't have as much experience. The flight was part of their advanced training. Four planes carried two crewmen besides the pilot. The fifth had one. The planes would fly a **triangular** course, most of it over water. The exercise was scheduled to last about two hours. The fourteen men expected to be back in plenty of time for dinner. They would never eat dinner again.

## CHAPTER ONE

The first hint of trouble came about an hour and a half after takeoff. Lieutenant Taylor radioed, saying, “I don’t know where we are. We must have got lost after that last turn.” He said his compasses weren’t working. He also thought he was flying over the Florida Keys, a series of small islands that extend west from the tip of Florida. Yet the planes had flown east, not west.

Soon Taylor said he had just passed a small island. There was no other land in sight. He was becoming more and more confused. He thought he was in the Gulf of Mexico, which is west of Florida. He turned east to reach the base.

He was wrong—the base was the other way. Time was running out. The planes were low on gas. The weather had changed, and the pilots could not see very far ahead of them. The wind was stronger, and the ocean was very rough.

Taylor’s last message came in just after six o’clock. He said that the planes would have to

ditch, or land in the open sea. No one ever heard from Taylor or the other pilots again.

Two big patrol planes roared into the air to look for the missing planes. Only one came back. The other one vanished. It carried 13 men.

Airplanes that vanish are big news for a while. Then people forget about them.

That didn't happen with Flight 19. It became famous. It is a central part of one of the world's best-known mysteries: the mystery of the Bermuda Triangle.



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