

## UFO Files:

### Pacific Bermuda Triangle



The History Channel's excellent series, *UFO Files*, keeps on going from strength to strength. If they ever release a DVD box set of the series, not only will it be huge, but it will be a required purchase for anybody interested in this subject.

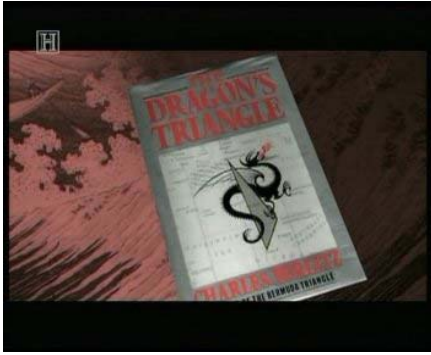
I digress, though. One of the latest episodes was entitled *Pacific Bermuda Triangle* and concerned itself with an area of the Pacific Ocean known as the Dragon's Sea, Devil's Sea or the Dragon's Triangle. This is an area, on the opposite side of the world to the North Atlantic's Bermuda Triangle, where ships and boats have vanished without a trace and numerous strange sightings have occurred for many, many years.



Covering an area of about half a million square miles, the Dragon's Triangle is located south of the islands of Japan, reaches down to the isle of Guam and across to the island nation of Palau, east of the Philippines. Curiously, the northern tips of both the Dragon's Triangle and the Bermuda Triangle lie close to the latitude of 35° north.



Bill Birnes, publisher of *UFO Magazine*, claims that the magnetic anomalies within both of these triangles disrupt compass readings by about twenty degrees.



Despite being less well-known than its western counterpart, the Dragon's Triangle appears to have a more deadly history, with vessels disappearing on a far more regular basis. Since World War II, it has been estimated that over 1,500 vessels and hundreds of aircraft have vanished here.



The region gained notoriety after the publication of *The Dragon's Triangle* by Charles Berlitz in 1989. Berlitz had brought the Bermuda Triangle to worldwide attention fifteen years previously with his best-selling book. For his 1989 book, Berlitz researched hundreds of disappearances and strange events in the Dragon's Sea, citing ghost ships, compass fluctuations, UFO sightings and ships being transported hundreds of miles in seconds.

On the second of July, 1937, famed aviator, Amelia Earhart and her co-pilot, Fred Noonan, took off from Lae in Papua New Guinea. Their goal was Howland Island, some two and a half thousand miles distant. Barely eight hundred miles into the flight and with no warning, her plane vanished. Many explanations have been proffered for Earhart's and Noonan's disappearance, ranging from navigational error resulting in the plane running out of fuel and ditching into the ocean, to the pair being captured by Japanese soldiers and possibly killed or imprisoned for espionage, to abduction by UFOs. Whatever the cause of Earhart's loss, hers is one of the most famous stories linked to the Dragon's Triangle.

Another aspect of the mystery of the triangle is that of ghost ships. For centuries, stories have abounded of cursed vessels sailing without crews and the stories continue to this day. Ghost ships exceeding a hundred thousand tons have been reported. What happened to their crews is a complete mystery.

On the morning of June 11<sup>th</sup>, 1881, a British warship, *HMS Bacchante*, encountered the legendary *Flying Dutchman*, deep within the Dragon's Triangle. A young ensign, who would later be crowned King George V, reported in the ship's log:

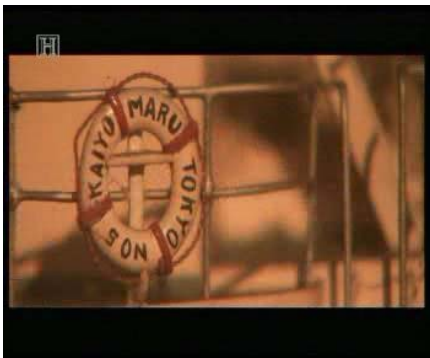
"The *Flying Dutchman* crossed our bows. She emitted a strange, phosphorescent light as of a phantom ship, all aglow. She came up on the port bow, where also the officer of the watch from the bridge

saw her. But on arriving, there was no vestige or any sign whatever of any material ship to be seen, either near or right away to the horizon, the night being clear and the sea calm.”

In January, 1989, a Japanese whaling ship came within fifty feet of a small fishing boat. The boat was boarded, but no crew or cargo could be found. All that was found was the corpse of the captain, his hands still gripping the helm.

Bill Birnes suggests that these missing crews may have been abducted by aliens, snatched from their vessels by a USO or Unidentified Submerged Object.

Of course, entire vessels have vanished without a trace, taking their unfortunate personnel with them.



In April, 1949, the *Kuroshio Maru No. 1*, a Japanese ship with twenty-three people on board, disappeared. In June 1952, the *Chofuku Maru No. 5* vanished with all twenty-nine hands. On 26<sup>th</sup> June, 1955, a US Air Force F-3B jet lost contact with its base and the plane was never heard from again. In March, 1957, a KB-50 tanker aircraft with eight crewmen aboard vanished. June 7<sup>th</sup>, 1963,

and what was left of the *Donan Maru* was found adrift.

The *Kaiyo Maru No. 5* was a Japanese survey ship researching the area for the Hydrographic Department of the Maritime Safety Agency. On September 24<sup>th</sup>, 1952, the ship was lost with all thirty-one crew, making it the biggest disaster in the history of Japanese oceanographic research. The favoured explanation for the complete loss of the ship is that it was caught by the blast from a submerged volcano (the Triangle has many volcanoes, as it lies within the Pacific 'Ring of Fire'), some are not convinced, claiming that the *Kaiyo Maru* was a victim of the Dragon's Triangle.



Like the Bermuda Triangle, the Dragon's Sea is said to be an area in which the rules of time and space are in flux, causing ships and planes to be forced off course by many miles in an instant. Loren Coleman, author of *Mysterious America*, says that there are many explanations, but it really is a mystery why these temporal effects occur.

In the late 1950s, American entertainer, Arthur Godfrey, was flying over the Dragon's Triangle

when his instruments failed and he saw a USO. Flying blind for an hour before his instruments returned to life, he made it to Tokyo and found that he had 'lost' thirty minutes.

Lieutenant Colonel Frank Hopkins, an advisor to the 106<sup>th</sup> Air Transport Group, was flying in a C-97 Stratofreighter over the triangle in 1968. Back then, he was a navigator and, as protocol required, he used star navigation to plot their course every hour. Three hours into the flight, he took another celestial fix and was astonished to find that their position was more than 340 nautical miles down their intended course. On landing, he told his duty officer that the aircraft had been 'dropped' many hundreds of miles ahead of their plotted course. No report was filed. Hopkins maintained that the area was prone to peculiar forces that posed danger to planes and ships that ventured across it.



Over the years, there have been huge numbers of UFO and USO reports from within the Dragon's Triangle. In Berlitz's book, he tells of Mikakunin Hiko-Buttai, the Japanese for UFOs, which have sunk ships whilst leaving or entering the ocean. In bygone days, these losses were attributed to demons or dragons that

lurked beneath the waves. Nowadays, Japanese researchers blame USOs or UFOs.

Some experts believe that part of the Dragon's Triangle includes the city of Tokyo in its boundaries. Junichiro Kato, head of OUR-J, the Organisation of UFO Research – Japan, has photographed over two hundred objects over the Dragon's Triangle. He claims to have been witnessing one or two a month at one point.

On June 14<sup>th</sup>, 1997, Kato photographed what appeared to be three glowing discs, travelling at over five hundred miles per hour over Tokyo Bay. The event was witnessed by ten other people and the news media were alerted, but no reports made it to air.

In 1990, on a quiet beach about thirty miles south of Tokyo, magazine editor, Masanobu Miyoshi, witnessed a white light 'buzzing' a jet that was flying over the ocean. He describes the UFO as moving like it was writing a 'W' in the sky. Before his sighting, he did not believe in UFOs, but what he saw has changed his opinion.



The former Soviet Union had one of the largest active fleets in the Pacific and many UFO and USO reports were filed. According to famed Russian researcher, Vladimir Ajaja, in 1977, the Soviet Navy ordered a study to be begun to examine reports of unidentified objects seen at sea. He was in charge of that group and, by the end of that year, instructions had been given to Soviet naval vessels about how to observe UFOs and what to do when one was spotted.

On August 18<sup>th</sup>, 1980, the Soviet research ship, the *Vladimir Volbirov* was moving south through the Dragon's Sea on a course towards the Japanese island of Okinawa. At about midnight, a glowing, cylindrical object rose from the sea, hovered for a while and then shot off across the sky.



In April, 1981, the 165-foot Japanese freighter, *Taki Kyoto Maru*, was in almost the exact location of the *Vladimir Volbirov*. Suddenly the ship was rocked by shockwaves erupting from the sea. A bright, saucer-shaped object rose out of the water and hovered, silently, over the ship. It was about fifty feet in diameter. The ship's instruments fluctuated wildly as the saucer circled the ship

for about fifteen minutes. Then it plunged back into the ocean, again creating huge waves that buffeted the Japanese vessel, almost causing it to capsize. When their instruments returned to normal, the captain found that they had lost fifteen minutes of time.



In December of 1984, the Japanese research ship, *Kaiyo Maru* (obviously not the same as the one that disappeared in 1952), was off the Falkland Islands in the South Atlantic. A crewman, Mr Naganobu, saw two dozen UFOs, hovering in the sky. Suddenly, they shot off in three different directions. Two years later, the ship was in the Dragon's Triangle. A huge, cigar-shaped UFO, over a hundred feet in length, approached the ship and plunged into the ocean. This event was once again witnessed by Mr Naganobu. This time, the UFO was also seen on radar. Both of Naganobu's reports were published in a 1988, Japanese edition of *Scientific American*.

On March 18<sup>th</sup>, 1965, the captain of a Toa Airways Convair passenger plane encountered a large, oblong-shaped craft. To avoid a collision, he turned his aircraft sixty degrees at over five hundred miles per hour (the programme shows a twin-prop

aircraft, likely a Convair 240, so it is unlikely that a speed of 500 mph was achieved. The passenger plane may have been a Convair jetliner that *can* fly over that speed and were in service in 1965, such as the Convair 990). The UFO stopped suddenly and then manoeuvred alongside the airliner. The captain radioed that he was being 'shadowed by a UFO'.

The object was about fifty feet long and glowed with a greenish hue. The encounter was witnessed from the ground and another pilot in a separate aircraft heard the Toa captain's frantic radio transmissions.

The object was independently spotted several times that night at different locations.

Stories from the Dragon's Triangle stretch back hundreds of years, with tales of sea dragons pulling ships to their doom. The region is also home to one of the oldest UFO stories:



One day, a spherical boat was towed into a Japanese village after it appeared on the beach. Inside was a woman who looked nothing like the locals: she had white skin, red and white hair, spoke a strange language and held a box close to her at all times. The 'boat' has strange

symbols upon it, like nothing the local people had ever seen.

Dr Kazuo Tanaka of Gifu University studied the old stories about this 'alien woman' and her craft and came to the conclusion that she was extra-terrestrial. The story of the Utsuro-fune (or Utsuro-bune) appeared several times in 19<sup>th</sup> Century Japanese literature and many depictions of the woman and her craft were printed, all very similar. The stories, though set in about 1803, may date back much further and be drawn from Japanese folklore. It has been suggested, however, that the woman may have been British, or at least European, and that the 'unknown writings' on her craft may have been Latin alphabetical characters.

On the 24<sup>th</sup> of September, 1235, strange lights were seen to hover over an army camp in Kyoto. The troops were terrified, thinking the lights were sea dragons coming to attack them.



In 1274, Kublai Khan, the Mongol Emperor, amassed a fleet of nine hundred ships, holding over forty thousand men, and set sail to conquer Japan. A typhoon formed and more than half of the ships were

sunk. Not to be deterred, Khan assembled over three thousand ships in 1281 and a hundred and forty thousand men and gave his invasion of Japan another go.

This time, a 'divine wind' destroyed most of the ships and half of the men lost their lives. This gave rise to the notion that Japan was protected by the gods and any invasion of her shores was doomed to failure.

July 8<sup>th</sup>, 1853, and Commodore Matthew Perry was in Tokyo Bay at 4am. In his log, he described 'a remarkable meteor' that illuminated the entire area with a blue light. It flew from south-west to north-east before gradually sinking into the ocean and disappearing. It was described as a large, blue sphere, with a red, wedge-shaped tail. The tail appeared 'like the sparks of a rocket'.



American researcher, Steven Greer, notes that because the Dragon's Triangle is located in the Pacific Ring of Fire, a highly active area of volcanism, many UFO sightings in the region will be because of the tectonic activity deep below the sea.

US Navy ships have detailed charts showing where the known areas of

activity are located and ships are advised to stay away from those regions. Dr Joann Stock, of the California Institute of Technology (CalTech), explains that when undersea volcanoes erupt, huge amounts of gases are released. A ship above such an eruption of gases will find that it is no longer buoyant, as the bubbles of gas disrupt the water volume. When this occurs, a ship can be pulled under the surface very quickly. These submarine eruptions can also release large amounts of particulate matter that can clog the intakes of aircraft, causing them to drop out of the sky.

The Dragon's Sea is also prone to a phenomenon known as 'triangle waves'. These are when winds converge from different directions and can create a powerful wave many tens of feet high. There have been reports of triangle waves of a hundred feet or more.

Whatever the reasons for the incidents in the Dragon's Triangle, and they are likely to be varied, we have to remember that what happens there is real. Planes and ships are destroyed and people lose their lives in that vast expanse of ocean. It is not something that can be simply dismissed with a shrug of 'I don't believe it'. The evidence is there, mysterious things happen.

*Pacific Bermuda Triangle* was yet another excellent episode from the *UFO Files* series. As usual with this programme, every avenue was explored and both sides of the argument were given time to put

their views across. It was also nice to have an episode that wasn't called *Northallerton's Roswell*, or whatever. Saying that, we'll probably get *The Indian Ocean Bermuda Triangle*, *The Sahara Bermuda Triangle* and *The Milton Keynes Bermuda Triangle* before very long.

As I said at the beginning of this article, if a DVD set was released, it should be at the top of the list of everybody who has even the slightest interest in UFOs. Maybe it is out on DVD already and I've missed it!

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