The DC-3 was the standard airliner of its time. (The disappearance of NC16002 in 1948 would be equivalent to the disappearance of an MD-80 today.)
Thousands of DC-3s were used as military cargo and paratroop planes in World War II. (Author's collection)
A C-46 Commando. Many such surplus U.S. Air Force aircraft were converted to cargo service after the war. The disappearance of one of these while approaching Miami on December 21, 1952, is yet another example of inexplicable losses in the Triangle. (Author's collection)
A big C-54. This was the military transport version of the DC-4, the largest airliner of the time. (Author's collection)
A BSAA Tudor IV, an hermetically sealed aircraft. BSAA and BOAC operated Tudors around the Western Hemisphere, but only two disappeared, both in the Triangle, causing the plane to be withdrawn from service. Freddie Laker later led a move to reinstate the Tudor IV as a cargo plane. As the Super Trader it clocked more than 3 million miles around the world without incident. (Courtesy Joan Beckett, from the collection of J. C. McPhee)
John Clutha McPhee, pilot of Star Ariel, was a highly qualified RAF pilot, a quiet, popular, "intellectual type." (Courtesy his sister, Joan Beckett)
A Lockheed Super Constellation. When a Navy version of this aircraft disappeared in 1954 the Naval Board of Inquiry was only able to deduce that it "did meet with a violent and unknown force." A twelve-day search found no trace. (National Archives)
What can explain the disappearance of Pogo 22 during a routine maneuver in 1961? (Author's collection) The KB-50 was an aerial tanker based on the design of the B-29 bomber. The search for one of these in 1962 is probably the largest search ever conducted for a missing plane. (Author's collection)
A C-133 Cargomaster, the largest USAF plane in service. Two of these vanished from radar, near land, full of cargo and fuel, one without trace, the other leaving

only a life raft and a nose wheel with an unidentified
"magnetic particle." (National Archives)
A KC-135 Stratotanker. Can the unexplained turbulence and "funnels" of the Triangle explain the loss of two jets like this in 1963? (Author's collection)
A C-119 "Flying Boxcar."
The last message from this aircraft was picked up 1,300 miles away from its course. It vanished without trace or reason.
(National Archives)
An ever-reliable, rather bulbous, Piper Apache.
(Author's collection)
A Comanche. (Author's collection)
A standard Piper Cherokee Warrior.
(National Archives)
A Beechcraft Musketeer, competitor to the Piper Cherokee. (Author's collection)
A Beechcraft executive Queen Air 65.
(Author's collection)
Rockwell's Aero Commander, 500 series, a popular heavy twin-engine plane.
(Author's collection)
A Cessna 210. (Author's collection)
Rockwell's prototype Aero Commander.
(Author's collection)
A Cessna Skylane, another popular airplane. (Author's collection)
A Cessna 310, a rugged light twin.
(Author's collection)
A Beechcraft Baron. (Author's collection)
The ever-popular Beechcraft V-tail Bonanza.
(Author's collection)
A Beechcraft Travel Air. (Author's collection)
Captain John Romero, pilot of the Sting 27, holder of two Distinguished Flying Crosses. (Courtesy John Romero III)
Even more inexplicable was the disappearance of a Navajo Chieftain on November 3, 1978, less than 2 miles from the airport and while under visual supervision for landing. (National Archives)
The DC-3 is considered one of the most reliable aircraft ever built. Out of the nearly 11,000 DC-3s built in

the 1930s and 1940s, hundreds are still in service, many in southern Florida and the Caribbean islands, where the short distances and small airfields make their size ideal. The disappearance of this plane, N407D, in 1978 defies explanation. (By and courtesy of Alexandre Avrane)

An F-4 Phantom II in a right turn. In such a maneuver Sting 27 vanished from radar, one of the most puzzling cases in the Triangle. It left no trace and no automatic alarm; an unidentified "oblong" shape was seen in the water moments after, which itself then quickly disappeared. (National Archives)

One of the few disappearances with any clue to what was happening. José Pagan, shown here, and his friend vanished in this plane, N3808H, on June 28, 1980, after a desperate Mayday describing a "weird object." (Courtesy Evelyn Rivera)

What overwhelmed an A-6 attack bomber while approaching the carrier? It happened so fast there was no time for the pilots to eject. (Author's collection)

A number of Venturas went missing during World War II while on routine antisub patrols or search missions. (Author's collection)

On July 10, 1945, a PBM on patrol over the Bahamas disappeared. Tom Garner, shown here, was one of the gunners. The many aircraft disappearances before Flight 19 are emerging from the records today. Left, standard Navy telegram informing Garner's family. (Courtesy Don Garner)

What can explain the bizarre disappearance of a charter Cessna 402 over the Gulf Stream in March 1984 and the ghost image of another aircraft crashing off Bimini at the same time? Did a mirage cast an image of its final moments to the shallows off Bimini? (National Archives)

A big Privateer vanished on July 18, 1945. (Author's collection)

USS Cyclops. In one of the greatest mysteries of the sea she vanished in the Triangle in fair

weather with 309 crew, leaving in her wake rumors of treason, sabotage, mutiny, madness, and, most of all, mystery. (U.S. Navy History Center)

A T-2 tanker identical to the Marine Sulphur Queen leaves a port in Texas. (Author's collection)

Coming upon the derelict Gloria Colita, February 4, 1940. Coast Guard photo taken from the Cartigan. (National Archives)

The Poet in wartime configuration as the General Omar S. Bundy. Part of the weather data obtained from the Star Ariel's flight came from the Bundy. Her turn to disappear would be in 1980, north of Bermuda, with all hands. (Author's collection)

Another view of the Cyclops. (U.S. Navy History Center)

4Can It Be That Simple?

T HOSE WHO BELIEVE there isn't any such phenomenon as the Bermuda Triangle tend to blame the disappearances on very conventional causes like mechanical malfunction, basic bad weather patterns, and human error. They also tend to regard the subject only in passing and ascribe popular interest in it to gullibility, sensationalism, and ignorance. They might also tend to generalize a solution to the subject by noting that on occasion a writer or columnist reported a ship's position in error and that it was really thousands of miles away from the Triangle when it vanished. They imply or state outright that all research therefore falls under suspicion, and they assert that if reporting were better done, a simple solution would be found for all disappearances in the Bermuda Triangle for which there is at present no explanation.

In general, they tend to believe that any point of view beyond this can only be expressing a desire in the supernatural or the occult. Because they do not display a broad or protracted interest in the subject, they do not pursue any solution to it beyond that of citing known cases of poor seamanship, bad navigating, careless flying, and so on, and then they apply these to the broad list of missing vessels and planes. The fact is, however, that those many cases were known because the participants survived to recount what happened and to be embarrassed by their mistakes.

The assumption is made that the survivors of mishaps at sea were simply the lucky ones. The others who disappeared simply were not so lucky, and that no trace of them was found was simply coincidental. They offer the reassurance that these are just statistical losses that can be placed under conventional categories because they have never heard of, or prefer to dismiss out of hand, any stories from survivors—the “lucky ones”—of anything odd or unusual about their accident