

# ANTARCTIC MYSTERIES

TnT Net

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Antarctica is literally at the end of the Earth, or more accurately at the bottom of the Earth. A place of mostly unexplored ice and snow, shrouded in darkness for nearly eight months of the year when temperatures can dip below -70°F without windchill's. It has been the location of much speculation, fiction writing and strange factual happenings throughout history. Greek Philosophers theorized this region as early as 300BC. In 150AD, Ptolemy published "Geographia" which notes "Terra Australis Incognita." The first reported sighting was in the 7<sup>th</sup> century by Ui-te-Rangiora, who reported seeing the southern ice fields. Piri Reis in 1513 produced a map showing a land with similarities to Antarctica as we know it. Throughout the 1500's and 1600s, many sailors got near, but never sighted land. These included Magellan, Drake, El Cano and Hoces. The 1700's saw the discovery of the islands north of Antarctica, the Bouvet Islands and Kerguelen Islands, and Cpt Cook sailed within 120 miles of the mainland without sighting it. Between the 1780's to 1839 American and British whalers and sealers made some incidental discoveries.

Nathaniel Palmer sights the Antarctic mainland on 17 November, 1820. 1823 – 1824 James Weddell explores what is now the Weddell Sea sailing to 74° South. Throughout the 1800's many countries sent parties to explore the new continent including, the Brit John Bisco who names and annexes Graham Land, Biscoe Is, Queen Adelaide Is and sights Enerby Land. The French sent Jules Dumont d'Urville who discovers Adelie Land. 1838 – 1842, the US sent Charles Wilkes to explore the Antarctic Peninsula. James Clark Ross, the British Captain went south from 1839 – 1843. He discovered the Ross Ice Shelf, Ross Sea, Mt Erebus, Mt Terror (named after the two British ships lost exploring the Arctic in 1845 looking for the Northwest Passage) and Victoria Land. American whaling captain, Mercator Cooper on 2 February 1853 was the first recorded landing on mainland Antarctica. The Norwegians sent a number of expeditions south during the 1800's with much success. The Belgian expedition of 1897 – 1899 were the first to remain over winter south of the Antarctic Circle. The Norwegian 'Southern Cross Expedition' of 1898-1900 set a new record for furthest south, reaching 78° 50'.

The 20<sup>th</sup> Century can be called the Golden Era of Antarctic Exploration, as this is when the Pole was finally reached and the harsh climate was tamed enough to allow 'safe' wintering over. Someone was exploring the frozen continent every year except 1906 and 1942.

(This list isn't complete, just some I find noteworthy)

- 1901-1904 – Discovery Expedition: Led by Robert Falcon Scott reaches 82° 17' S on 30 December 1903. This group were also the first to fly a balloon over Antarctica.
- 1901-1903 – Gauss Expedition was the first German expedition.
- 1902-1905 – The Swedish, French and Scott's all had teams exploring.
- 1907-1909 – British Nimrod Expedition was Shackleton's first expedition where he made 88° 23' S.
- 1910-1912 – Roald Amundsen reaches the Pole 14 Dec 1911.
- 17 Jan 1912 – Robert Falcon Scott reaches the Pole.

- 1914-1917 – Shackleton's Imperial Trans-Antarctic Expedition. This is the famous trip where he lost his ship Endurance to the ice and managed to save his entire crew.
- 1928 – The first airplane flight over Antarctica was made by Americans.
- 1928-1930 – Then LT CMDR Richard E. Byrd makes his first trip to Antarctica and establishes 'Little America.'
- 1933-1935 – Byrd's second expedition and establishes 'Little America II.'"
- 1938-1939 - German Antarctic Expedition. Claimed New Swabia for Nazi Germany.
- 1939-1941 – Third Byrd expedition.
- 1943-1945 – British Operation Tabarin.
- 1946-1947 – American Operation High Jump, led by Byrd.
- 1947-1948 – American Operation Windmill
- 1955-1956 – American Operation Deep Freeze (this name carried on every year until 2005)  
This operation was Adm Byrd's last trip to Antarctica.
- 1958 – Operation Argus. Suspected Nuclear bomb tests over/near Antarctica between 38.5° and 49.5° S. This places them 1,300 to 2,100 miles north of Antarctica. Navy films produced at the time seem to place them much closer. The reported (1961) reason for these tests was to see what effect a high altitude blast would have on radar, radio, electronics, satellites and missiles.
- 1961-1973 – PM-3A “Nukey Poo” a portable nuclear reactor powers the facility at McMurdo Station.

To date nearly every developed country has sent at least one expedition to Antarctica, including North Korea.

## **NOTEWORTHY GEORAPHICAL FORMATIONS**

### **Blood Falls**

In the McMurdo Dry Valley, a bright crimson, five-story waterfall pours out of Taylor Glacier into Lake Bonney. It looks like a gush of blood from a wound in the ice, but scientists have recently discovered the cause behind this mysterious phenomenon. The water that feeds Blood Falls was once a salty lake that is now cut off from the atmosphere due to the formation of glaciers on top of the lake. The water is preserved 1,300' underground and has become even saltier over time - it's now three times saltier than seawater and cannot freeze. The saltwater is also extremely rich in iron and completely devoid of oxygen and sunlight. As the iron-rich water seeps through a fissure in the glacier and comes into contact with the air, the iron oxidizes and rusts, staining the water a deep red. This eerie sight is only accessible by helicopter or cruise ships visiting the Ross Sea.

### **Gamburtsev Mountain Range**

Antarctica holds many secrets beneath its vast ice sheets - even a massive mountain range. Hidden below a 1,200' to 2,400' thick sheet of ice are the Gamburtsev Mountains. They stretch for 745 miles and rise to 9,800', a third of the height of Mount Everest. The mountains were named after Soviet

geophysicist Grigoriy A. Gamburtsev, after they were discovered in 1958 by Russian scientists. The scientists were traveling across Antarctica when they encountered a thin spread of ice and recorded abnormal gravity fluctuations, revealing the incredible wonder below. Although we've never seen the mountains, scientists use radars to see the physical features of the mountains, while gravitational and magnetic readings allow them to study the mountains all the way to their base. The Gamburtsev's have long baffled scientists as to how they were formed and why they still exist. As the mountains are around a billion years old, they should have eroded away with the geological passing of time. There are many theories about how they are still standing, predominantly that their may be a frozen mantle protecting the mountains from erosion.

### **Mount Erebus**

Despite the freezing conditions, Antarctica is home to a number of volcanoes. There are four volcanoes on Ross Island, although all are inactive except Mount Erebus, which has actually increased in volcanic activity in the last 30 years. Mount Erebus is an extreme natural wonder, with liquid magma and ancient lava lakes that have been boiling for around 1.3 million years. It's the world's southernmost active volcano and Antarctica's second-highest volcano, towering to 12,467'. Scientists cannot often visit Mount Erebus due to the remote location and dangerous weather conditions, although a team of scientists managed to climb the volcano in 2013. They hiked through snow, rocks and glaciers to the peak, where they found organisms living in the heat of the volcano. They also discovered a number of ice caves with thriving microorganisms in the soil, and it is believed that these extreme creatures are some of the most unique in the world.

### **The Giant Hole or Polynya's**

A hole the size of Ireland opened in Antarctica in 2017. Known as a polynya, the hole is nothing new, with an area of approximately 3,700 square miles was first observed. Over the next few weeks, it would increase in size by more than eight times to about 29,600 square miles. It's the largest hole to be observed since the 1970s, and the first one to open in 40 years. Found in the Weddell Sea of the Southern Ocean, these polynya was thought to be formed due to the warmer, saltier water found in the deeper parts of the sea. The warm water is pushed up by ocean currents, melting the ice on the surface. As the water comes in contact with the cooler surface water, it sinks again, only to be reheated and pushed back to the surface. Researchers now believe it was caused by a powerful cyclone passing through, giving us another reason to stay well clear of the area.

### **The Black Pyramid**

Some think this unusual mountain was only recently discovered from satellite photos on the internet. Truth is the thing was first reported in 1913 by the 'Terra Nova Expedition' led by Robert falcon Scott. He named it a pyramid and it is named such on every map since then. I guess it was hiding in plain sight. Located at 78° 21'S – 163° 30'E, in the Ellsworth Mountains. Its size is about 6,500' per side and 4,100' tall.

## **FLORA and FAUNA**

### **Antarctica previously was a warm region with rain forests**

Antarctica is an ancient land that has undergone some incredible transformations over millions of years. Before it became a frozen desert after the Ice Age, Antarctica was actually a warm region with rain forests and possibly even civilizations. The theory developed from the discovery of fossilized wood, signs of tropical trees and leaf impressions that show the existence of rain forests in Antarctica. Scientists have also found many fossils from marine animals, birds and dinosaurs from the Cretaceous

Period. Among the smaller species, they've uncovered the fossilized fore-wings of a beetle species that lived between 14 and 20 millions years ago in a warmer climate, and tiny single-celled fossils that have been a great source of debate among scientists. They've also found fifty-million-year old sperm cells on the egg case of a long extinct species of worm, an extraordinary discovery that scientists hope will lead to new evolutionary information. In Jan 2024 a 75 lb Cod was found frozen in an ice block and reportedly is 500 yrs old. They also found a fossilized shark tooth measuring 5", a normal Great White only has 2.5" teeth.

### **Sea Pigs**

H.P. Lovecraft would have probably loved to see this interesting creature. Called "the ugliest creature beneath the waves," the scotoplanes (scientific name) are what you get when you combine the terror of Cthulhu with the plump, pink and short-legged appearance of a piglet, about 8' long. They are the slugs of the sea and live among other deep-sea creatures such as clams and coral. Their appearance is vastly different depending on which ocean you spot them in, but one thing is for certain: the sea pig is the stuff of nightmares, and definitely one of the weirdest things found in Antarctica.

### **Sea Spiders**

If you're not afraid of spiders yet, these scary things in Antarctica might change your mind if you're "lucky" enough to see them on an Antarctic cruise. Well, they're not actually spiders, but a type of primitive marine arthropod. In retrospect, that doesn't make them any less creepy. As a species, they are present all around the planet, and can be as small as 1 millimeter in size. Unless you get to scary Antarctica where Polar Gigantism is a thing. These underwater terrors can grow up to have a leg span of 10".

### **A "Sea Monster" Ningen**

It's amazing that in the age of 50+ megapixel quality images we can still have grainy photos that yield Sasquatch or UFO-hunts on the Internet. Maybe I'm being too harsh here – after all, this is just a satellite image we're talking about. Regardless, sometimes you might get lucky and find some Antarctica mythical creatures. This sea monster definitely fits the description of "scary things found in Antarctica!" The Japanese Whale Researchers have very good records of it, and you can find it on YouTube.

### **Ice Fish**

Small translucent fish who have no red blood corpuscles.

### **Mud Blob**

Translucent fist that looks like a blob of mud that lives nearly 10,000' below the sea in the upper layers of the much on the sea floor.

### **Antarctic Hellfish**

These fish are only a few inches long, are red in color with very large eyes. They haunt the sea around the 2,000' depth.

### **Antarctic Octopus**

This octopus is only a few pounds in weight and have blue blood. They also have a venomous bite.

## **PHENOMENON, CONSPIRACIES and RUMORS**

### **Singing Ice**

A massive slab of ice in Antarctica is singing. The Ross Ice Shelf is the largest ice shelf in Antarctica. It's several hundreds of feet thick and covers an area over 193,000 square miles, around the size of Oregon. Scientists have recently discovered that the Ross Ice Shelf sings an eerie melody, caused by the winds blowing across the snow dunes. The winds create surface vibrations and almost non-stop seismic tones. The vibrations aren't audible to human ears and scientists use seismic sensors to listen to the mournful tune. The song was discovered by accident, after seismic sensors were installed on the ice shelf to observe other behaviors. Scientists have since discovered that the song changes in response to the environment, such as melting or storms shifting the snow. They're now using the song as a tool to monitor the ice shelf in real time, tracking its stability and vulnerability for collapse through the seismic humming.

### **Third Man Factor**

Speaking of potentially not being alone, the harsh conditions and varying sunlight hours have been known to cause hallucinations. The Third Man Factor was alluded to in TS Eliot's 1922 poem 'The Waste Land' and describes instances where explorers feel or see a presence as shadows are cast across the seemingly infinite plains. This specific reference was inspired by Ernest Shackleton's Antarctic expeditions where every member of the group was believed to have the shared experience. The event is supposed to bring comfort to people who are going through the most desperate and traumatic times of their lives. Therefore, it's not unreasonable to assume that it plays a big part in the final moments of some unfortunate people's lives.

### **The Earth is hollow and Antarctica is the gateway**

As their name suggests, Hollow Earthers believe that the world is hollow and within its depths lies a lush, tropical utopia that is home to a variety of creatures. Some claim dinosaurs are down there, others claim aliens, Vikings and even Nazis as the inhabitants of Earth's core. The only way to reach this world within a world is through the poles. Two gigantic holes exist at the top and bottom of the Earth. Each, if found, grants you access to the hidden paradise that lies beneath your feet.

### **Hitler's Frozen Base**

In the late 1930's, the Nazis showed an interest in Antarctica and sent an expedition to survey a part of it and claim it for Germany, the claim was not continued but it sowed the seeds for a whole range of fantasies about secret things that might be going on.

### **Neuschwabenland**

A little known German expedition to Antarctica from the 17th of December 1938 to the 12th of April 1939 on the ship MS Schwabenland had the purpose of claiming an area now known as Dronning Maud Land mainly to protect the German whaling industry. This area however had been previously explored by Norway and was formally claimed by the Norwegians in January 1939 after the Germans had set sail. The Schwabenland was equipped with a steam catapult and two Dornier Wal flying boats which were used to photographically survey 232,000 square miles. About a dozen aluminum flags were dropped from the aircraft at turning points of flight polygons and others were left by foot expeditions,

none of these have ever been recovered. The land surveyed was claimed by Germany in August 1939 as "Neuschwabenland" named from the ship. The outbreak of war prevented two further planned expeditions and the possible building of a base, though most probably to the other side of Antarctica in the Pacific sector away from the Norwegian claim, the claim was abandoned in 1945.

### **U-530 and U-977**

On the morning of the 10th of July 1945, the German U-boat U-530 arrived at the Argentine naval base at Mar del Plata near Buenos Aires, two months after the German surrender and the end of the war in Europe on the 8th of May 1945. Rumors spread that it had brought Hitler, Eva Braun, Martin Bormann and others and had landed them on the coast of Patagonia or Antarctica before reaching Mar del Plata. A week later a Hungarian exile in Argentina, Ladislav Szabo wrote a detailed account in a local newspaper of how Hitler and his entourage had supposedly escaped Germany. The story quickly spread worldwide and versions of it appeared in other newspapers in many countries.

On the 17th of August, another U boat, U-977 also arrived at Mar del Plata, further fueling speculation. The commanders of these U-boats and their crews were arrested and interrogated by naval personnel from Argentina, the USA and the UK, they all concluded that the arrivals were innocuous and the crews were released. Two years later in 1947, Szabo published a book "Hitler is Alive" where he claimed these two U-boats had taken fleeing senior Nazis to Antarctica as part of a submarine convoy, the commander of U-977 in particular, Heinz Schaeffer denied this but the rumor still spread. In another version of the story, it is Hitler's ashes that were taken to Antarctica and placed in a special ice-cave along with Nazi treasure.

Szabo claimed a Nazi Antarctic base called "New Berchtesgaden" had been built in 1938-39, this idea has been taken up by several authors over the years often building on earlier embellishments with tales becoming ever more fantastical as time went on. The submarine convoy and the "New Berchtesgaden" base both first appear when described by Szabo, there is no reference to either before his publications, subsequent publications refer to what he initially described and there has never been any evidence of either.

### **UFO Sightings**

Antarctica, with its remoteness and extreme conditions, has long been a source of fascination for UFO enthusiasts and conspiracy theorists. While the frozen continent is not a hub for UFO sightings compared to more densely populated areas, there have been sporadic reports of unexplained aerial phenomena in and around Antarctica. In this article, we will explore some of the notable UFO encounters near Antarctica, including who witnessed them, when they occurred, and other relevant details. There is a long history with unidentified flying objects around Antarctica.

#### **The Admiral Byrd UFO Encounters (1946-1947)**

Perhaps the most famous UFO-related incidents associated with Antarctica involve Admiral Richard E. Byrd, a renowned American explorer. In 1946-1947, Operation Highjump was launched, a U.S. Navy expedition to Antarctica. During this mission, Admiral Byrd reportedly encountered unidentified flying objects. Byrd's cryptic diary entries mention "flying discs" and strange aircraft with incredible speed and maneuverability. These accounts have fueled speculation about extraterrestrial activity in the region.

The Navy had their own camera crews on all of the Antarctic trips recording all the important happenings. On 19 Feb 1947, the last flight made by Byrd and three other aircraft to survey areas not covered. When the aircraft turned back to their base, Byrd's aircraft separated, taking a different route.

The other three returned together. According to the archival film, Byrd's aircraft had engine problems. They show emergency procedures where the crew jettison everything not bolted down, except for the film from the survey.

After Byrd's death, one of his sons supposedly found his father's 'secret diary.' Contained within the pages is his account of being met by the UFOs and visiting the 'Master' at a semi-tropical area. His plane was captured by a 'tractor beam' to bring it to the ground and then back to the air after the meeting. This is the basis of the Byrd UFO story. Did it happen, was the diary real, or was it a stunt for publicity? That is the question.

### **The Argentine Navy Incident (1965)**

In August 1965, an Argentine Navy vessel, the “Sobral,” was conducting research in the South Atlantic Ocean near Antarctica when crew members reported a series of bizarre sightings. They described luminous, unidentified objects in the sky, exhibiting unusual flight patterns. Despite the official investigation that followed, the incident remained unexplained.

### **The Chilean Navy UFO Incident (2014)**

In November 2014, a Chilean Navy helicopter conducting a routine patrol near Antarctica captured a video of a UFO in the sky. The footage showed a disc-shaped object flying erratically, changing shape, and releasing a trail of vapor. The incident garnered widespread attention and led to a thorough investigation by both civilian and military authorities. While the official conclusion pointed to no definitive explanation, experts suggested it could be a weather balloon or a meteor.

### **The Russian Scientists' Accounts (1982)**

During a Soviet Antarctic expedition in 1982, a group of Russian scientists working at a remote research station reported a series of UFO sightings. They described unusual lights in the sky that moved erratically, defying the laws of physics. The scientists' accounts were documented but remained inconclusive.

### **UFO Reports from Antarctic Research Stations (Various Years)**

Antarctica's research stations, staffed by scientists from around the world, have occasionally reported UFO sightings. These incidents often involve observations of unusual lights or objects in the sky. While such reports are infrequent and typically lack conclusive evidence, they continue to fuel speculation and interest in the region's unexplained phenomena.

### **The McMurdo Sound UFO Incident**

In 1965, American military personnel stationed at McMurdo Sound reported a bizarre sighting in the sky. They claimed to have witnessed a group of UFOs that exhibited extraordinary flight maneuvers. The incident was recorded in official logs and classified documents. While skeptics argued that these sightings might be explained by natural atmospheric phenomena, witnesses remained convinced of the otherworldly nature of the event.

### **Things my close friend heard on her two trips to McMurdo**

There is an area (not one of the ecologically off limits areas) where no one is permitted to go. On one of her trips the Red Bull people wanted to go through, but were stopped. No reason given, no questions were answered. Talking with the Station workers after the event, she was told “no one is allowed in that area for any reason.” Like the Red Bull team no further explanation was given.

Another rumor that circulates south of the Circle. In the 1950-1960's time frame, a secret meeting was held in Antarctica between the US, Russia and China. What was covered is unknown. There are also many haunting/ghost tales told surrounding the old buildings of early expeditions.

## REFERENCES

### Web Sites and Links

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