FEEDING FRENZY
Restored Douglas A-26 Invader looks ready to go to war

RESEARCHING AMELIA
Comprehensive bibliography on the published history of Amelia Earhart

BRUCE BOLAND
Unlimited air racing has lost one of its most creative talents
RESEARCHING AMELIA
A detailed summary for the serious researcher into the disappearance of Amelia Earhart

BY RICHARD G. STRIPPEL

A last will, dated July 21, 1937, while on tour as a world record holder, was named to executor in 1953. After his death, his will was discovered. It stated that she was to be buried in a simple grave near the site of her plane crash. The will was later revoked by a court order.

Amelia Earhart's disappearance is one of the most famous unsolved mysteries of the 20th century. She was last seen on July 2, 1937, when her plane vanished in the Pacific Ocean. The search for her continues to this day, with many theories and rumors surrounding the mystery of her disappearance.

BACKGROUND

Amelia Earhart was a leading figure in the field of aviation and an accomplished journalist. She was the first woman to fly solo across the Atlantic Ocean in 1932. She was also a strong advocate for women's rights and was a pioneer in the field of aviation for women. Her disappearance on July 2, 1937, remains one of the most perplexing mysteries of the 20th century.

WITNESSED TAKEOFF

Earhart and her navigator, Fred Noonan, took off from a small airfield near Oakland, California, at 11:30 a.m. on July 2, 1937. They were on their way to a possible stop in xấuosis, but were forced to divert to Tule Lake, California, due to bad weather. They failed to make contact with the nearest radio station, the Naval Radio Station, which was located 100 miles away.

Amelia Earhart

Amelia Earhart was born on July 24, 1897, in Atchison, Kansas. She was known for her courage and determination, and her skill as a pilot. She was a pioneer in the field of aviation, and was one of the first women to fly solo across the Atlantic Ocean. Her disappearance in 1937 remains one of the most famous mysteries of the 20th century.

ATLANTIC PASSENGER

Amelia Earhart and her navigator, Fred Noonan, took off from a small airfield near Oakland, California, at 11:30 a.m. on July 2, 1937. They were on their way to a possible stop in杳osis, but were forced to divert to Tule Lake, California, due to bad weather. They failed to make contact with the nearest radio station, the Naval Radio Station, which was located 100 miles away.

They were last seen on July 24, 1937, when their plane was spotted near a small community in杳osis. The plane was later found to be empty, with no traces of either Earhart or Noonan.

Earhart's disappearance remains one of the most famous mysteries of the 20th century, and continues to be the subject of much speculation and debate. Some believe that she may have survived and lived on until her death in 1980. Others believe that she may have been involved in a conspiracy to keep her disappearance a secret.
RESEARCHING AMELIA

A detailed summary for the serious researcher into the disappearance of Amelia Earhart

BY RICHARD G. STRIPPEL
PHOTOGRAPHY FROM THE MICHAEL O'LEARY COLLECTION

At 10:00 am, 2 July 1937, while attempting an around-the-world flight, 39-year-old Amelia Earhart gunned her fuel-faded Lockheed 10E Electra off the short grass runway at Lae, New Guinea. Officially, that was the last time she was seen alive. Earhart and her navigator, Fred Noonan, never made it to the next stop at tiny, mid-Pacific Howland Island, a 2,556-mile journey.

Howland, a treeless dot, had been discovered by an American whaler in 1822 and its guano harvested. In 1934, US claims were renounced. It was being considered as a "stepping stone" on an air route between the US and Australia.

Theories and "evidence" about Earhart's disappearance proliferate like variations on folk tales, ranging from the provocative to the patently absurd.

* Earhart was forced to land on a Japanese island. Her plane's rearward retractable landing gear was copied and made parts of the Mitsubishi A6M Zero's rearward retracting gear. So says one recent author.

* This is in a spin-off from the tired, old idea held by the late Fred Goerner, Vincent Loewnich, Joseph Crane, et al, that Amelia and Noonan didn't head for Howland Island at all, but went to [illegible] (a) Saipan (b) Truk (c) the Marshall Islands (d) all of the above, to spy on the Japanese and were captured.

* On the other hand, British air historian and author Roy Neale diligently researched an altogether solution. Amelia Earhart, he wrote, simply ran out of gas.

* Three years ago, a piece of aluminium, a medicine bottle cap, and part of a shoe supposedly confirmed that Earhart and Noonan had landed on another remote Pacific island and later died there.

WITNESSED TAKEOFF

Eila Burrell is believed to be the only person still alive on the 50th anniversary of Amelia's flight who saw her and Noonan take off from Lae. She was 50 in 1987. Mrs. Burrell was helping her mother run the hotel where Earhart stayed. "She wanted a room on her own and didn't really mix with people," Mrs. Burrell recalled.

"I remember the plane could barely lift off," said Mrs. Burrell. "We all rushed out to watch her go. It was a very brave thing she did."

By noon of the next day, also 2 July, across the International Date Line, the Coast Guard had begun a search for the two aviators that would end in failure, only to begin one of the most intriguing mysteries in aviation history. Amelia Earhart's disappearance catapulted her from a waning celebrity to a legend.

BACKGROUND

Amelia Earhart's voyage has been recharted successfully and her image has been printed on a stamp. Her bright red Lockheed Vega 5-B used in the 1937 transoceanic and cross-country flights, along with her flight jacket and radio, are on display at the National Air and Space Museum in Washington, D.C.

The legend surrounding Amelia Earhart has obscured many of the facts of her life — which differ from source to source.

Amelia Mary Earhart was born in Atchison, Kansas, on 24 July 1897, the first child of rail claims agent and lawyer Edwin Earhart and the former Amy Otis. Her sister, Muriel Earhart McEvoy, recalled the two girls were raised in gym suits instead of skirts and were given footballs and rifles by their father who took the family on trips in a company Pullman car.

The Earharts moved to Des Moines in 1907, where on her ninth birthday Amelia saw her first airplane at the Iowa State Fair. She came away thinking it an unattainable combination of awe and wonder.

In 1913, the family again relocated when Edwin went to work in St. Paul. In 1915, she and her mother and sister moved in with friends in Chicago because of Edwin's drinking. Following high school graduation, she served as a nurse's aide in a Toronto military hospital. Here, she heard World War One Flying aces recount their adventures. At war's end she enrolled at Columbia University in New York to study medicine but soon changed her mind.

Amelia quit college and went to Los Angeles, where her parents had now moved. She wanted to be with her mother and father, whose marriage was breaking up over Edwin's alcoholism. But the flying bug bit. Her first flight was with speed pilot Frank Hawks. Under the wing of teacher Neta Snook,
Amelia checks out the blueprints of her Lockheed Model 10E as the aircraft nears completion at the Lockheed factory in Burbank.

Fifteen Model 10E Electras were built but the most famous was Amelia's NR16029.

Earhart solved for the first time in 1920.

To pay for flying lessons, Earhart worked wherever she could, including stints in a telephone office, at a photography studio and behind the wheel of a truck. Her mother helped finance her first airplane in 1922. Three months later, she set the altitude record for women, climbing to 14,000 feet.

After her parents' divorce, she and her mother moved East and Amelia drifted into social work at Boston's Deaconess House.

ATLANTIC PASSENGER

In 1928, while at Deaconess House, Amelia was plucked from obscurity by promoter-publicist George Palmer Putnam (GP), socialite Amy Phelps Guest had wanted to make a transatlantic crossing, but her parents forbade it. Still, she wished a woman to be on the flight, so she asked Putnam for a candidate. Earhart, named by Boston promoter Capt. Hilbert R. Kailie, was chosen.

On 17 June, a year after Lindbergh's flight, Amelia flew as a passenger from Newfoundland to Wales in the Ford Trimotor C-2 Friendship with pilot Wilbur Stultz and navigator Louis Gordon. In 20 hours, 40 minutes, Amelia Earhart became the first woman to cross the Atlantic by air. She was an instant celebrity. Upon her return to the US, Earhart, promoted by Putnam, plunged into her new role of "aviatrix" with a zeal she had seldom shown before. She polished her limited and rusty flying skills.

Amelia was selected to be the first president of the Nineteen-Nineties, a group of women aviators named for its number of charter members. In 1929, she became vice president (the "enforcement" purpose) of the New York, Philadelphia and Washington Airways Corp., and placed third in a Women's Air Derby Race from Santa Monica, California, to Cleveland. In 1930, she set a speed record of 181.1 mph. She also flew coast to coast four times.
While GP billed her activities as significant aeronautical accomplishments, many others viewed them as lucrative publicity stunts. Author Coree Ford, a one-time Putnam saltier, described his boss as, "the last master of literary go-between, a skilled conjurer who could palm an author, pull a best seller out of a hat, flourish his wand and transform a chronic swimmer or explorer or aviator into a national sensation. With his touch of showmanship, he publicized the memoirs of page-see celebrities who sparked briefly and then, as they began to fizzle, were discarded for the next big thing."

Ford continued, "Everyday to Putnam was for sale. His enthusiasms were strictly mercenary; he seemed incapable of genuine affection."

GP was a publicist, a "press agent" par excellence, and this was often an irritant to people around him, since he frequently displayed all the negative connotations the word implies. But, while both he and Amelia were bothsmen, neither had inherited wealth. They owed their very livelihood to his financial exploitation of her activities. He did his job well, deliberately fabricating a hero legend which, more than a half-century later, refuses to die.

On 8 February 1931, Amelia May Earhart married Putnam. He had only recently divorced Dorothy Binnion, the Catalina heroine. Writer-aviatrix Faye Gillie Wells has confirmed that Amelia's marriage was more one of business than love. On the wedding day she wrote: "In our life together I shall not hold you to any medieval code of faithfulness to me, nor shall I consider myself bound to you similarly." A real in-part.

**ATLANTIC SOLO**

On 25 May 1932, the fifth anniversary of Lindbergh's flight, Amelia thundered out of Newfoundland in a crimson Lockheed Vega. After 14 hours, 55 minutes, she touched down in an Irish meadow. She admitted that she had no idea where she was.

In an era when America was obsessed with records and fascinated by what airplanes and pilots could do, Putnam set a number of them — all highly publicized by Putnam. Later in 1932, she set the women's trans-ocean crossing record, flying from Los Angeles to Newark, New Jersey, 2,467 miles, in 19 hours, 3 minutes. The next year, she cut two hours off her record. She lectured and lent her name to a line of luggage and women's clothing.

In her PR role, Amelia spoke often about air travel and how safe and convenient it was. Opposite was how much Putnam pushed her, but she certainly undertook many of her activities with enthusiasm. She (and Charles Lindbergh) supposedly chafed at the title "Lady Lindy." Wearing his distinctive-style helmet, she bore a surprising resemblance to Lindbergh, and the Putnam-created appellation stuck.

On 11 January 1935, she took off from Honolulu, attempting another feat — to become the first person to fly from Hawaii to California. Although the event was said to be a competition open to all, Sydney Bowlai, president of the Pan Pacific Press Bureau, a Honolulu public relations agency, and island sugar interests, had already assigned the $10,000 prize to Amelia. Notwithstanding wide criticism, she bylined an orchestrated first-person magazine article and worked on other promotional activities for island sugar barons.

Then, on 19 April, she flew 1,700 miles from Burbank to Mexico City. On 9 May she became the first person to solo from Mexico City to Newark, New Jersey. Putnam had the Mexican government agree to overprint a regular issue with an Earhart salute to honor her 19 April 1935 flight. The Putnam's kept 200. Within months, the stamps were worth over $100 each. Many were sold separately or at a premium affixed to autographed covers. Outraged philatelists loudly condemned the deal.

She was the first women to receive the Distinguished Flying Cross and the first women to receive the Special Gold Medal of the National Geographic Society, presented by President Herbert Hoover.

Amelia became a visiting vocational counselor for women at Purdue University. In 1936, a Purdue purpose-formed, non-for-profit found.
A PRESENT EARHART

More than a half-century has passed since Albert Bredin's final conversation with Amelia Earhart, but the 80-year-old (who recently passed away) still recalls the moment with a fond smile. In May 1937, Bredin, Earhart's personal photographer, visited her at the age of 81 at the San Francisco Exploratorium in November 1990. The collection includes letters, speeches, and articles offering confirmations on Earhart's disappearance and communications from psychics, mediums, and others claiming to have knowledge of her whereabouts. Some speculate on her being alive in isolated Pacific islands.

A PREGNANT EARHART?

This book provides new insights into Earhart's personal affairs by quoting from letters that were found in 1973 in a house in Berkeley, California, where Amelia's mother and her younger sister lived. Muriel donated the collection to the mid-1980s to Redcliffe College's Schlachter Library on the History of Women in America. It was passed on to the Smithsonian Institution in November 1990. The collection includes letters, speeches, and articles offering confirmations on Earhart's disappearance and communications from psychics, mediums, and others claiming to have knowledge of her whereabouts. Some speculate on her being alive in isolated Pacific islands.

EARHART REMEMBERS

In the Spring of 1992, Bradford Washburn, explorer, photographer, writer, and cartographer, recounts Earhart's memories. Washburn served as director of America's Museum of Science for 40 years. Near her 83rd birthday, he now acts as lifetime honorary director.

"I never really wanted to be a navigator on that around-the-world flight. It's easy to forget, but George had to do it because he was a trained aviator and his publisher, B&H, said he had a book to write. So I rode with him and we talked about the flight. I remember a lot of it, including the times when we were over water and the times when we were over land. We talked a lot about photography and the difficulties of navigating.

Washburn's memories are vivid and detailed, reflecting his long association with Earhart and her work. He describes Earhart as a remarkable woman who was ahead of her time in aviation and photography. He credits her with inspiring many young people to pursue careers in aviation and photography. His recollections of Earhart are a testament to her enduring legacy and the impact she had on the field of aviation.
Amelia poses with a Curtiss-style pusher at an air meet in the mid-1930s. Husband George Putman was always looking for ways to exploit the female flyer since she was the main source of family income.

Tinor on 27 June. According to Doris Rich, when Earhart arrived in Bandoeng, Java, she circled the field for 15 minutes, "alarming observers. She may have panicked the way Mata claimed she had (landing) at Honolulu the previous March, when she shouted at him to pull up and circle the field in a frenzy he diagnosed as 'extreme pilot fatigue.'"

In the three-Dutch East Indies they were held up twice by "malfunctions." Theories expressed: (a) recovered alcoholic; Noaman had "fallen off the wagon;" (b) a pregnant Earhart was suffering morning sickness; (c) higher-power engines were fired that would somehow allow a sky flight. They then had a two-day layover at Port Darwin, Australia, where health certificates were checked and a fuse replaced on her radio direction finder. On 28 June, they flew to Lae, New Guinea, two-thirds of the trip over, 7000 miles to go.

MOST DANGEROUS LEG

From the outset, the Lae to Howland to Hawaii leg was considered the most dangerous because it was entirely over water in a part of the world known for sudden and sometimes violent weather changes.

At Lae, the Lockheed was further stripped of "non-essentials." One of the items thrown out was an antenna loading coil without which her radio transmitter could not send on the long-wave frequency of 500 kHz, the international distress and direction-finding channel. However, the radio's trailing wire antenna itself had been removed earlier.

For navigation checks and in case of emergency, the US Navy had stationed the tug USS Ontario halfway between Lae and Howland, the Coast Guard had the cutter Itasca at Howland, and the seaplane tender USS Swan was between Howland and Hawaii. All three had long-wave communication capability.

Before departing from the 3000-foot dirt and grass runway at Lae Eachart had written, "the whole width of the world has passed behind us except this broad ocean. I shall be glad when we have the hazards of its navigation behind us."

The BE lifted off from Lae at 10:00 am on the morning of 2 July. Concomitantly, it was also 0000 hour Greenwich Mean Time; and now called Coordinated Universal Time. Amelia Earhart's Estimated Time of Arrival at Howland was 1800 GCT... 18 hours away. Downwind weather had been forecast as "meteorologically average" for the season.

Simple division shows her required average speed over the 18 hours and 2556 miles from Lae to Howland would have to be 142 mph. A "performance guarantee" letter from Lockheed to George Putman, now in Purdue University archives, states that the Electra's best range speed was 145 mph.

Earhart had frequent and substantive "cross-band" communications with the Lae airport radio operator on her daytime radio frequency of 6210 kHz. He transmitted on his regular 6540 kHz channel. At 0745 CCT, she sent a position report which placed the flyers near Ontong Java island, right on course, but somewhat behind time. Shortly thereafter, she told the Lae operator she was changing to her night frequency of 3105 kHz. Lae never heard her again.

At 1747 CCT (6:17 am) the following morning Howland time — in 1937, the US Navy and Coast Guard subdivided time zones into half-hour periods, after bearing several unsubstantive transmissions, the Itasca received a message on 3105 kHz from the plane indicating Earhart believed she was "200 miles out."

A half hour later, she was heard to estimate "100 miles out," leading some to erroneously speculate she was traveling at 200 mph. The sun had just risen and, for more probable, Noaman had revised his dead reckoning with a sun shot.

On the Itasca, the Coast Guard radioman operating the direction finder was unable to get a bearing. The same was true for the operator of an "experimental" set on Howland. It was later alleged that its button had been wet.

The next message heard was 7:30 am Earhart thought she was "on you."

Itasca answered each Earhart transmission — without acknowledgment.

The final message came at 8:44 am (1440 CCT) when they would have been desperately

NOVEMBER 1995 17
low on fuel: "We are in a line of Position 157-
337 running north and south" (indicating they were
flying back and forth along what navigation
purists call a 'sunrise'). Then, "Will repeat this message
6210..." (she was changing
radio frequencies to her daytime channel).

Flora responded urging Earhart not to
take off, but there was no indication
she heard the message. Flora never heard
her again.

However, the radio operator on Nauru
Island did hear Amelia Earhart that morning
on 6210 kHz at 2014, 2033 and 2054. He forward-
ed the reception report to RCA's Bolinas (San
Francisco) with the following comment:
"SPEECH NOT INTERPRETED BAD
MODULATION OR SPEAKER SHOUTING
INTO MICROPHONE BUT VOICE SIMILAR
TO THAT EMITTED IN FLIGHT LAST
NIGHT WITH EXCEPTION NO
NOISE OF PLANE IN BACKGROUND."

Bolinas passed the message to the Coast
Guard's San Francisco Division which relayed
it to the Flora, where it was logged in at 2300
Howard time (11:00 pm 2 July).

Some "investigators" have misconstrued
these transmissions with a 1030 UTC message
of the previous night: "Ship in sight ahead. This
was heard on Nauru, not only by the island's
radio operator, but also by other residents,
including the British police director. The
researchers have turned a "ship into land" and
added twenty hours in order to support a
Marshall Islands flight termination theory.

Hours after the plane would have run out of
fuel, Pan American Airways, and ama-
teur radio operators as well as short wave
listeners began hearing purported distress sig-
als. The transmissions continued for several
days. Experts later doubted they were from
Earhart, but more likely from that island.

The disappearance triggered a naval search,
with the battleship Colorado (with four planes),
the aircraft carrier Lexington (with 62 planes), and
two destroyers sailing from Hawaii, 1800 miles
away. Together with the Nauru and the Swane,
the force covered 214,556 square miles of the
Pacific, no avail. It was not the largest naval
search for lost flyers at that time, as has been
claimed. An earlier hunt for Clarence Ulm was
MANY CLAIMS — NO
EVIDENCE

More than half a century after Earhart van-
ished, there is no shortage of theories about
what happened.

In March 1992, Richard Gillespie of
TIGHAR, the International Group for
Historic Aircraft Recovery, announced that Earhart
landed safely on a remote, uninhabited Pacific
Island and survived for about a week before she
and Noonan died. At a Washington press con-
ference he displayed artifacts found on
Nanumera Island which support his theory.

THE MATA HARI
SCENARIO

Even in the face of this possible
document, others still believe that Earhart and
Noonan were on a secret spying mission. This
theme and its variants proposes that instead of
heading for Howard Island, the two suppos-
edly flew to Tokel, Saipan or the Marshall
Islands to observe Japanese military and naval
facilities.

In July 1943, Amelia's mother, Amy Otis
Earhart, gave early credence to the spy story
when she told the press she was "con-
vinced (Amelia) was on some sort of govern-
ment mission, probably on verbal orders." She
made the disclosure during the announcement
of an upcoming Smithsonian Earhart display.
As a result of Mrs. Earhart's statement, the
US Army G-2 (Intelligence) Compilations
Section in Washington, D.C. quickly requested
its Tokyo office to look into the allegation. On
2 August, in reply, an interoffice memo was
received by the Criminal Investigation
Division at the Pentagon.

The memo included the original and a trans-
mition of a document from the Chief of the
Liaison Office of the Japanese Foreign
Minister. This document explained a Japanese
broadcast that briefly touched on supposed Japanese
search efforts, and closed with, "...there was no fact
of taking Miss Amelia Earhart to Marshall Islands
nor was any broadcasting for Washington ever
done from the Marshall Islands."

(One of the key points of Amelia Earhart's
"revelation" was a "broadcast" to the
Marshalls.)

ROOSEVELT FRIENDSHIP
CITED

Further fueling the spy mission theory is
the fact that Earhart and Putnam were cour-
ers of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's Cameli.
Scholars of the FDR administration (called
"The New Deal") have dismissed the theory.
"It's an old legend that a number of people
have tried to find evidence for," historian and
Roosevelt biographer Arthur Schlesinger Jr.
haz said, "I know no evidence connecting
Roosevelt and Earhart in espionage."

Although the US had built a competent, if
underfunded, intelligence function by the eve
of World War Two, except for a few locales that
provided observations to military attacks, it
had no spies see anywhere in the world, and
President Roosevelt with his love of the cloak-
and-dagger, had his own personal intelligence
service. One of his "spies," Hyde Park, New
York, neighbor Vincent Astor, a Naval Reserve
commander, sailed his ocean-going motor
yacht, Assamahat, among the Marshall Islands
in 1938 looking for Japanese naval activities.

Roosevelt Library staffers at Hyde Park
know of the Earhart spy conjecture. "We have
some correspondence between the Roosevelts
and Amelia Earhart but nothing that would
document that," Frances Schecter, a supervisory
archivist, said in 1987.

Vega 5C Special NC6529 was the last of six Vegas utilized by Earhart on various record flights. In this aircraft she flew from Hawaii to California during January 1935 in 18 hours. This aircraft is currently on display in the National Air and Space Museum.
Archivist Robert Parks quoted from a letter the library sent in response to a 1964 inquiry: “There is no evidence in the papers in this library to substantiate the stories that President Roosevelt planned any part of the around-the-world flight of Amelia Earhart, sent her on any sort of a ‘mission,’ or planned the attempts to find her.”

The library letter says that, “she wrote him (FDR) in November 1936 describing her intentions more fully and asking his assistance in obtaining cooperation from the Navy for her early plan to refuel in flight near Midway Island.” (The Navy agreed if she would pay for the fuel and learn the technique at her expense.) Later, Earhart asked for presidential intervention in having the airstrip build on Howland Island.

“...there is also evidence of President Roosevelt’s interest in the search for Amelia Earhart,” adds Parks. “...he mentioned it in press conferences.”

**THE MORGENTHAU “STONEWALL”**

Randall Brink in his new book *Lost Star* makes much of an after-the-loss telephone conversation between Eleanor Roosevelt’s personal secretary and Treasury Secretary Henry Morgenthau Jr. The latter observes that if the truth about Amelia Earhart were released then “any reputation she’s got is gone.” Brink claims this to be “evidence” that Earhart was a spy.

Mrs. Roosevelt had requested a copy of a report which set forth what actually happened with the final flight. In all probability, she was referring to the formal report written by the *Inescas*’ Commander Warner K. Thompson. Morgenthau, as the Coast Guard’s ultimate chief executive, declined to give it up.

Thompson’s “confidential” report disclosed Amelia’s incommunicado and that she “absolutely disregarded all orders” concerning radio arrangements and procedures. After the outbreak of war, any implication that Earhart was a spy would have actually endow her with the reputation of a daring patriot, as we have seen with other, even more tenuous “evidence.”

**J. GORDON VAETH**

At a 1982 Smithsonian Institution symposium on the famous flyer, J. Gordon Vaeth, 71, in 1993, then Director of Satellite Operations at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Admin-istration, said he became interested in the Earhart story after studying findings by Fred Goerner. He said that on the basis of his six-year investigation — “and I was inside, in government and had good contacts” — he could find, “absolutely no evidence of a spy mission, little evidence of capture by the Japanese... no evidence of a government cover-up.”

Vaeth and others ascribe most of the Earhart mystery to a movie *Stand by to Die*, released in 1943. Rosalind Russell, a famous aviatrix, was asked to get lost so the Navy could search for her among Japanese-held islands. Her navigator (Fred MacMurray) unaware of her arrangement, was left behind at Lec. “Millions saw it and concluded ‘that’s what happened to Earhart’,” Vaeth said.

**RICARDB. BLACK WAS THERE**

Retired Rear Adm. Richard B. Black, USNR, a civil engineer under William T. Miller of the Department of Commerce, was in charge of preparing the airstrip on Howland Island. He also disagreed with the spy hypothesis.

“My firm opinion is that the Electra went into the sea about 10 am 2 July 1937, not far from Howland,” he told the Smithsonian symposium. “If it made a wheels up landing it would float as the gas tanks were empty and the sea was not rough,” he said.

At Howland, a work force under Black’s direction had scrapped out the rough landing strip and had 18 drums of aviation fuel waiting. Black and his men waited, shooing flocks of birds from the runway as her expected time of arrival approached. He was in the radio room of the Coast Guard cutter *Inescas* during the last recorded moments of Earhart’s flight.

He said that the *Inescas* should have been able to determine Earhart’s position from the ship and the island if she had a trailing wire antenna to send on 500 kHz. Black said he later learned that Earhart had discarded that antenna before setting out for the Pacific.

Black died in Bethesda, Maryland, on 11 August 1992, aged 90.

**A PEARL HARBOR CONNECTION?**

Perhaps the most scholarly, in-depth and eminently dissertation on the loss of Amelia Earhart and Frederick Noonan was researched and drafted by the late Laurence F. Safford, Capt. USN (Ret), a WWII history buffs will find the name familiar. In the mid-1930s, Safford set up and was responsible for the Navy’s Mid Pacific Strategic Direction Finding Net. The net, which included Pan American Airways DF facilities, would give the Navy a fairly complete picture of the Japanese navy’s forces, organization and movements. Although Top Secret, the net must have been responsible for one or more of the “Earhart radio bearings” reported during the search.

On Sunday morning, 7 December 1941, in Washington, D.C., Capt. Safford supervised the deciphering of the last Japanese “purple” cipher messages implying an impending declaration of war.

Safford’s unpublished 1970’s manuscript, *Amelia Earhart’s Last Flight: A Tragedy of Errors*, follows the military analysis style. It delves into just about every conceivable facet of the flight — including listing the capabilities of the many ex route island radio stations she could have used.

Bottom line: Poor planning; worse execution; no spy mission.

**A POLITICAL LINK?**

One of the most persistent researchers into the “FDR link,” author/investigator Dick Strippel, sees a political connection in Roosevelt’s 1936 reelection campaign. FDR was far from a shoe-in; he was viewed by many as too radically liberal. Huge chunks of his early New Deal legislation had been thrown out as unconstitutional.

Many, including Al Smith, New York State’s former four-term Democrat governor and 1928 presidential candidate, together with US Senator Royal S. Copeland (Dem, NY), and downstate “machine” Democrats had become bitter foes of FDR. Smith even went so far as to link Roosevelt with the communists.

Nationwide polls in September showed FDR trailing Republic candidate Alfred Landon. Amelia Earhart formally endorsed Roosevelt. She hit the campaign trail, but stopped short after only a few minor appearances. Strippel believes Earhart was coerced into limiting her electroneering.

(Continued on page 50)
AMELIA

(continued from page 20)

Permission for her flight rested with Eugene L. Vidal, head of the Bureau of Air Commerce and a close friend of Earhart and Patrnan. However, Vidal, to the Administration's dismay, had become the personal target of Copeland's Senate Air Safety Committee investigation. According to leiters in the FDR Library, Vidal's replacement as BAC boss, Fred D. Fogg, legal counsel to BAC and Copeland's Committee (T), had been selected in September.

When the news of Vidal's dismissal, Earhart telegraphed FDR, imploring him to reconsider. Fogg's appointment was quickly nixed. Amelia never campaigned against.

She and GP had learned (from Vidal!) of a Commerce-supported "stepping stones" air route to Australia. They decided that a proposed emergency airstrip on Howland Island would make an excellent refueling point...far more practical than aerial refueling near Midway. However, Commerce professionals leaned toward building a strip on Jarvis Island, many miles to the east.

Further, Daniel Roper, head of the Department of Commerce, had said the Department was against "flights which have publicly as their only goal."

Since US Island possessions were supposed to be administered by the Department of the Interior, its Secretary, Harold Ickes, also should have been involved in the Howland airstrip plan. Instead, according to Ickes's diary, FDR was privately conferring with Ernest M. Gruening, head of Interior's Division of Territories and Possessions and another Panamanian, who usually was furtious.

Also prevailing the "stepping-stones" concept was an intense, behind-the-scenes rivalry for the ocean routes between Pan American Airways (seaplanes) and Transcontinental and Western Airlines (TWA) (landplanes). TWA later dropped out.

After Roosevelt's surprising reelection, this became academic. Commerce shifted gears, and on 7 December, approved the airstrip for Howland. Richard Black has said he was never able to determine why, showing that the Navy was not implicated in this specific. It wasn't until 29 December that Commerce invited them to send an "observer" along.

But the project never got underway. On 8 January 1937, Earhart again wrote FDR, probing him. Within days, $3,000 of Works Progress Administration (WPA) money was appropriated. Cress left for Howland on the 15th.

Implying that FDR and Eleanor knew all along that the venture would be a money-making "stunt flight," their files contained no letters signed by them to Earhart or Patrnan on the subject. Aides wrote them.

After the disappearance, the search effort was shornly criticized on the floor of Congress. Commerce Secretary Roper again vowed to stop "publicity stunt" flights. Strippel says Navy and Coast Guard brass developed a "boiler mentality." It was almost a year before the Coast Guard fully told its side of the story to the Oakland Tribune. All those convoluted bureaucratic and political elements, he believes, have been misinterpreted as "evidence" of a spy plot.

SNIPPETS

WITNOUS A THREAD

There are other "theories." Some, educated guesswork. Some downright bizarre. Most demand that they be proven wrong—not that the speculations be proven.

A former US Marine from Amarillo, Texas, got headlines when he claimed he saw Earhart's aircraft offshore Marcus Island in the Marshalls during the Pacific War. Later, under hypnosis, he told of its having had windows.

Jim Golden of Las Vegas, a Marine Intelligence officer in the South Pacific during WWII, an ex-Secret Service agent and former investigator for the Justice Department, claimed there still exists a Naval Intelligence file. He says he read it in 1945, and that it contains statements from natives who say they saw an "American" woman on Roi-Namur Island in the Marshalls in 1943; and that a Hawaiian-born interpreter, one of a team that interrogated Earhart, lives in Japan.

"The Marshalls were not Islands of mystery," Dick Strippel asserts. The University of Hawaii had an on-going Polynesian Studies program that sent students and faculty there each summer. The Bishop Museum in

Amelia by the entrance door of her Vega SC Special. Among other record flights with this aircraft, she flew from Los Angeles to Mexico City nonstop on 19-20 April 1938 and on 9 May of the same year she made the first nonstop flight between Mexico City and Newark, New Jersey.
Hawaii was also involved.

Even author Willard Price and his wife visited the islands during the 1930s, and wrote books and magazine articles, illustrated with their photos.

THEY LANDED AT MILI?

Mili Atoll in the Marshalls is often mentioned as a possible Earhart crash-landing site. The Japanese, the story goes, were building a “secret” air base and captured the flyers. Snippets in strike reports of the February 1942 US Navy air attack on Mili Atoll, an authorized history of US Marine Corps aviation in WWII, and the official post-WWII “United States Strategic Bombing Survey” which specifically state that neither fortifications nor an airstrip had been constructed there at the time of the raid. During the closing days of the Pacific War, a Marine on Roi-Namur island claimed to have met another leatherneck who had found a suitcase containing women’s clothing and an “Amelia Earhart diary.” (She shipped her suitcase home from Luz – it’s in Pudacz’s archives as her trip diary; she never kept a conventional diary.) He told a friend that the man should turn it in to Intelligence. No records exist.

At about the same time, thousands of miles to the west, on Saipan, a US infantryman said he came across a safe in a Japanese office. When he and his companions blew it open, he claimed they found Amelia Earhart “papers.” He, too, told his buddies to turn the materials over to Intelligence, and never heard about them again.

The “Marines” story surfaced during Fred Goerner’s early research; the “Army” story much later. Neither have ever been confirmed by the other participants.

Thomas Devine, 81, of Connecticut, in 1994 says that as a US Army postal clerk on Saipan during WWII, he overheard US Marine officers talking about their discovery of Earhart’s plane in a hangar at Aslito Field. He further claims he then watched it flown, and later saw it deliberately destroyed by the Marines.

No one has ever corroborated his story. Perhaps his reticence stems from the fact that Marines were never near Aslito Field, in the southeast corner of Saipan. The 15th Infantry, 27th Division, US Army captured Aslito Field on 18 June 1944. On 22 June they turned it over to the Army Air Force unit, the 318th Fighter Group, which renamed it Aslito Field.

Lastly, Devine has been identified as having been on Saipan in 1945, not in 1944, during the fighting.

Jim Donahue, 74, of Inglewood, California, in another who cannot substantiate his claims. He asserts that Earhart flew over Jaluit in the Marshall Islands and took night photographs of Japanese operations there. Donovan contends the US government ordered Earhart to land on Hull Island and kept Earhart and Noonan in “protective custody.” He contends Earhart died on American Saipan and Noonan succumbed to alcoholism.

ENTER BOLAM

In the early 1970s, Joe Gervais, now teamed with WWII fighter pilot and TV time-sales executive Klaus, reappeared with one of the more entertaining Earhart conjectures. Still calling themselves “Operation Earhart,” their book, Amelia Earhart Lives, hypothesized that Earhart and Noonan changed to a carbon copy of the one-of-a-kind US Army Lockheed XC-35 high-altitude research craft.

After a spy-in-the-sky mission over the Japanese Mandates, instead of being shot by the USS Colorado (in Hawaii at the time), they were forced down over Hull Island by fighters from the Japanese aircraft carrier Aoi. (Naval aviation historians show the Aoi undergoing a major rebuild in Japan at the time.) Further, Amelia was kept a prisoner of Emperor Hirohito until WWII. She later turned up in Bedford Village, New York, as Irene Bolam.

When the book was published, it was successfully used for an estimated $2 million.
Irene Craigmile O’Crowley Bolam of Monroe Township, New Jersey, and earlier of Bedford Hills, New York, died on 7 July 1982. When she died, Gervais sought permission to photograph and fingerprint the body. His request was denied. That, according to Gervais, is definite evidence of government collusion.

Bolam’s missing person is one of the pieces of evidence, or “jewels,” cited by Robert Myers of Salinas, California, who agrees with Kinas and Gervais. He claims that as a boy of 13, he listened to Earhart on his bedside radio and picked up a transmission in which she said she was “broadcasting” from the wing of the plane (hoping after it went down) She could see a Japanese ship coming toward her. Although he was too young to have been a “hams,” Myers told a US Government-licensed amateur radio operator. Further, he admits he heard the signals on a small home radio, and has no idea what frequency it was tuned.

He said Earhart and Noonan were rescued by the Japanese in exchange for the life of Hirohito after the Pacific War—four years before the war began! In a masterpiece of contrived reasoning, he declares, “I would say to the government, ‘If you can prove I’m wrong, what do you know that I don’t?’”

Myers bases his entire story on the “radio messages” he claims he overheard, and obviously was greatly influenced by Kinas and Gervais’ book. At least one person at the time, a professional radio operator, misinterpreted a dramatized “March of Time” program as actual Earhart radio transmissions.

“GP messages to Earhart transmitted over two Hawaiian AM broadcast radio stations during the search is one example of how the promoter took advantage of the public’s lack of technical knowledge. There’s no way Earhart could have heard on her air-towed radio unless she had specifically tuned it off her communications channel and onto that specific station in the AM entertainment band.

After Bolam’s death, her background was thoroughly investigated by a team of reporters for the Woodbridge News Tribune, New Jersey. In 1982, a twelve-day series of multi-page, highly-documented articles disclosed major physical differences between the two and established an unbroken continuum for Bolam’s life, thereby completely disproving she was Earhart.

NEW “EVIDENCE”?

In 1997, a fresh shred of “evidence” emerged. Patricia Morton, 58, a deputy examiner of foreign service applicants for the State Department in Washington, D.C., and an Earhart enthusiast, said she had found a “book message” and related correspondences three years earlier in the obscure National Archives File. To some, it implies that Earhart was interned by the Japanese at Weihshan, China, at least until 24 August 1945.

That was the date (ten days after the Japanese surrender) on a 17-page compilation of brief messages from former detainees. The communication had been sent to Washington by Naval radio from Weihshan through the US Embassy in Chungking. One of the many
addressed was George P. Putnam at 10042 Valley Spring Lane, North Hollywood. Unnamed, his portion simply stated, "CAMP LIBERATED ALL WELL VOLUMES TO TELL LOVE TO MOTHER." There was no mention of Amelia Earhart.

According to Morton, two weeks after the State Department's Special War Problems Division distributed the messages, a reply was received from Putnam. "I have just received the message you sent yesterday from your office and would like to fill you in on the facts of any other messages we have received from overseas." It was signed George Palmer Putnam. He gave the new address as "Shanghai, Putnam, Lone Pine, California."

Neither Morton, nor anyone else, has taken the mystery further. Why Earhart would send such a message to Putnam, from whom she had been all but estranged, instead of to her mother, is a challenge to the imagination.

THE MAN WHO STARTED IT ALL

In 1960, Paul Brائد, then an English professor at the Air Force Academy, wrote a rather superficial, dispassionate, cliché-ridden Earhart biography. However, buried on the end of the otherwise lightweight piece was a chapter which told the story of Japanese dental assistant Josephine Isao Aikawa. She claimed that in 1937 she had seen a white man and a white woman brought ashore from a plane that crashed in the harbor. "Shots rang out. She believed a "drammed" execution had taken place. Brائد died in 1966.

One of those interested in Brailand's story was San Francisco CBS Newsman Fred Goerner.

Brائد produced two Japan-based Air Force officers, Joseph Gallatin and Robert S. Dinger, to corroborate an official "Operation Earhart" who added details to the story. Consumed by the Air Force for their outspoken claims and announced intention to visit Saipan, the pair broke up. Gallatin later found a new partner in Joe Mank, and carried on his interest.

Gerbasi persists with his Saipan theory. In September 1991, he and a new colleague, retired Air Force Col. Rollin C. Reineck, released a photograph which shows what they claim in Earhart "alive, but not well" in Japanese custody. Gerbasi claimed he received the photograph anonymously in 1980, but did not show it at the time. He said he sent it to National Geographic for analysis. Researcher then confirmed it was from 1937 or slightly later.

Almost immediately, Joyce Anderson of Chiccagow Beach, Florida, a daughter of Walter E. Peterson Sr., a former Army photographer, said the photo was among a series her father took after Earhart's plane grounded while attempting the takeoff from Luke Field in Hawaii.

"I wish my dad was alive," she said. He would get a big kick out of this.

In the 1960s, another photo taken at the same time was similarly misinterpreted as showing Earhart "in chains" (actually she was wearing a bracelet).

GOERNER'S ROLE

In 1969, Fred Goerner filed the first of a series of "Earhart News Bulletin," a magazine Earhart's earliest theory as set forth by Brailand, and it was not until 2000 that a new theory was established by the Japanese. Fred Morgan of CBS News broadcast the story on 1 July. It was instantly denied on wire services by Tatsuo Honma, a former Japanese official charged with keeping execution records.

Leah, Goerner told of numerous reports from those who claimed they had seen an American man and woman, said to be advisors, being guarded, on various islands. All of these reports, he maintained, had been obscured by the Japanese over the years to protect the nature of Earhart's mission.

Goerner said he was denied access to certain parts of Saipan. He later learned this was not in connection with Earhart, but with a secret CIA operation to dig Chinese for warfare on the mainland — probably the reason why Gerbasi and passed. Goerner filed for release and says he found liquefied 16,000 pages on Earhart from six departments with more still to come. He also says that new proof might be buried in some 14,000 feet of reel-film of still-classified pre-1945 Navy and Marine Corps records at the US Navy Supply Depot at Crane, Indiana.

A "CLOWN ACT"

Before his death, Fred Goerner blamed his retreat from publicity on "a pack of Earhart hounds, recent, reckless and superficial researchers" who he said, comprise the "clown act."... He took some of his friends, called them "jokers" and "hucksters," and fitting it to their proclivities.

He spoke of one man, "Buddy" Brennan, 67, of Dallas. In a book published in 1988, Brennan tells of his visit to Saipan. He claims that a native directed him to Earhart's grave and that he dug into the plot.

During the 1930s, the autogiro was looked upon as something of a flying machine — combining traits of the fixed-wing aircraft along with those of what would become known as the helicopter. Earhart was used to capitalize on publicity for the craft.

Dinger had been refused permission to visit Saipan. In 1961, Goerner supervised the exhumation of seven pounds of human remains which he sent back to the United States for analysis by anthropologists. Another story that took Earhart had been executed on Saipan was registered by Hiroshi Tsubono, the historian of the Japanese Self-Defense Force. The bones then proved to be of five Oriental people. They were returned.

The author of The Search for Amelia Earhart, who died in September 1994, Goerner made several trips to the Pacific in the early 1960s to interview islanders who said they remembered a white man and woman being guarded at various places. Goerner suspects that Earhart did exist — at Midway — in the Marshalls, where she was captured by the Japanese, taken to Saipan and held prisoner before being executed.

When the Freedom of Information Act was
want to hear. And if they're being paid to talk, they definitely will try to please.

"I don't mean all of these people were lying, but you need to be careful with some of this eyewitness stuff."

As an example, Dick Strippel located the daughter of Jacqueline Caberta, a Salopian Fred Greer, who claimed he had spoken to. The daughter said it was not Greer, but a tall red-headed man who asked questions about Earhart. The daughter, living in New Jersey, says her mother denies telling the man about the "spies" Greer said she saw. She could have remembered, the daughter declared. Her mother would have been only two or three at the time (1937).

In a variation of "two stations wagons full of men" giving conflicting versions of an auto accident, Dr. Francis X. Holler of Parkland Preparatory School found six Roman Catholic men and a priest who emphatically contradicted other priests and monks who say Earhart was on Salapu before the Pacific War.

The old Japanese jail in the village of Gorupan, where eyewitnesses reported seeing a tall, slender white woman matching Earhart's description in 1937, has been turned into a tourist attraction.

**THE FINAL STORY**

Vincent Loomis also subscribes to Greer's theory. Loomis and a group including aviation writer Jeffrey Ethell, traveled to the Marshall atolls in 1965 and spoke to "witnesses." They also allegedly offered money for their stories.

Loomis and Ethell's subsequent book, Amelia Earhart, The Final Story, "crashes" the theory. "This is not a new solution, only an offer of weak possibility based on rehearsed theory. This is yet another sad leading of a complex mystery that by depth of intrigue alone has been keeping bad authors in penny-ante royalties for almost 50 years," writes Dean.

Loomis, another retired Air Force officer, says he stumbled onto the wreckage of Earhart's Lockheed Electra in 1952 while placing radar navigation aids on Pacific islands prior to atomic bomb tests. He says he has since tried to find it, despite the fact that the exact positions of the nav aids must have been known and recorded in order to use the nav aids.

Loomis claims that Earhart and Noonan flew to Mili Atoll in the Marshalls as the result of navigational error. There, Dean continues, "(they) were picked up by a Japanese ship, taken to Saipan and held in secret captivity as bargaining chips for military dealings to come. Noonan eventually was executed. Earhart died of dysentery. Japan claimed up. Simple. Makes sense."

**THE CASE OF THE MARSHALLESE MEDIC**

"In all fairness," Dean says, "Loomis does produce a Marshall Islander who claims he treated a white couple aboard a freighter at about the time Earhart and Noonan disappeared. But the man's recall is so wavy, he was not interviewed in his native tongue, the questioning was leading, he made no positive identification of the couple whose faces would have been an international imprint, nor was there outside verification of his testimony."

Loomis talked with Bihimi Amman, a businessman on Majuro, who was a medical aide in July 1937. Fred Greer first spoke to Amman in the 1960s. Since then he has been interviewed by many "researchers," including Joe Garvida. In 1979, H. M. (Don) Wade of Marietta, Georgia, writer, lecturer and Earhart investiga-
Their native language is even more imprecise than English," Wade declares. "Its syntax is very basic. When you have a native translator whose fluency is also not that great, you're going off the deep end if you take it gospel anything that comes back to you.

I put more credibility in some Elvis sightings," Wade declares decisionally.

There were many white women (and men) in the Marshall Islands prior to WWII, says Dick Stripling. "Some were family members of missionaries and former officials," he notes. "The islands had been a German colony before WWII, only 20 years earlier — others were family members of German, Australian, British and American truckers and merchants. A German missionary on Juluq served as a correspondent for the widely-read Pacific Islands Monthly. The Japanese, on the whole, did not mistreat the westerners during the war. Many — and their descendants — are still around. But few if any amateur investigators have bothered to interview them, Stripling aver.

There are a number of college-educated Marshallese who lived through the war years. Yet, the 'researchers' choose to rely on native-language third-hand accounts of eyewitnesses whose testimony has been discredited as more than 100 years old, Wade concludes.

Bitman Amran says he went aboard a Japanese cargo ship to treat a Taiwanese man and at the same time saw a Caucasian woman. Loomis said the description given him "fits Amran from head to toe."

A man goes on to say that there was a wrecked airplane on the ship's after-deck. Goerner, Loomis and others then abruptly segue to the brief 1937 Japanese search effort for Earhart which involved the seaplane tender "Kokai" and the Juluq-based coal-hauling survey vessel "Koyak." The search was ordered by navy Minister Mizumura Yozaburo at the urging of Prince Takamatsu, an IJN staff officer and brother of Emperor Hirohito. It was to be a humanitarian effort instead of a military operation to help alleviate Japan's distress over the invasion of China.

No linkage with either vessel has even been remotely, "Kokai," according to Japanese records, was detached from the search within a day. "Koyak," supposedly fueled overnight in order to participate in the search, had no equipment to lift an aircraft the size of a Model 10 Electra from the water.

However, the Japanese did have two converted merchant vessel/seaplane tenders in the Marshalls at the time. Perhaps one of those, suggests Stripling, was a damaged Japanese seaplane on its float, was involved in rescuing persons other than Earhart and Noonan. He believes the key lies with the MS "Pijin" which burned and sank in the Marshalls in March 1937.

Loomis' hypothesis, as presented in the book he and Eibell co-authored, is bolstered by another conjecture, that of Paul Rafford of Indianola, Florida. Rafford is a former Pan American Airways test pilot, and until his retirement associated with NASA's Cape Canaveral facility. He believes Earhart and Noonan diverted from a direct "great circle" course from Lae to Howland in order to overfly Nauru Island. Lights illuminating phosphor phosphor workings there were supposedly kept on to guide the flyers.

But, to accomplish this, they would have had to average between 170 and 190 mph over three hours — after averaging only 115 to 120 mph over the preceding seven-plus hours from Lae to near Ontong Java, the position reported at 0720.

Rafford speculates: instead of Noonan re-computing their course from Nauru, they continued on. Thus, at about 1830 GCT, they found themselves lost somewhere between Howland and the Marshalls. Then, for some baffling reason, Earhart hanged a left and traveled at least another 600 miles to Mill (at 500 mph!), to arrive there at 2010 (the bogus "land in sight ahead" message).

Earlier, Loomis had taken a group of "investigators" which included South African author Oliver Knaggs to the Marshalls. Upon their return, Knaggs published a book which showed Loomis' flawed hypothesis and methods.

STEPSONS, SISTER SCOFF

The people closest to Amelia Earhart scoff at the spy theories. One of Earhart's stepcousins, David Binney Patman of Boynton Beach, Florida,
thought she "probably would have laughed" at theories of capture and imprisonment. He died on 1 June 1932 at Ft. Pierce, Florida.

"If she had been taken prisoner, I think we would have heard eventually," he said, with no mention of the mysterious Welshman message.

"There is no question in my mind that the plane was ditched near Howland Island," said George Putnam, Jr., another stepson. "The Marshall tried to get a long way from Howland.

But, he added, "it would be nice to know for sure."

"I think it was a tragedy of the sea," said Amelia's sister Muriel on the 50th anniversary of the loss. "She simply did not have the fuel in her tank to carry her where she wanted to go."

Muriel Erhart Morrissey, a retired teacher in suburban Medfield, Massachusetts, was born two and a half years after Amelia and has a life and family of her own. But she has accepted the mantle of carrying on her sister's legacy since she disappeared. She has often given talks on her sister, has answered numerous inquiries and even wrote two books about her life with Amelia.

At 94, she believes the spy stories persist because "Americans enjoy a good mystery story." She has heard all the suppsotions, been amazed by the adventurous and hurt by the ugly, and no longer is intrigued by fresh theories. "I don't have animosity toward all these people who share my feelings," she said. "But Amelia was my beloved sister and we were very close. I didn't know certain people that they had said that."

They were so close, Morrissey added, that Amelia could never have accepted a spy mission without discussing it with her sister. Nor could Earhart have remained in captivity without getting some message to her sister or mother. And again, no mention of the Welshman book message.

"I believe she just ran out of gas and went down off Howland Island," Muriel said. "As far as I'm concerned she was not on a spy mission. She couldn't have been dispatched with people who put up the money."

"It's not sexy, not so dramatic," she continued, "but we feel she ran out of gasoline and has been lost to the rest of us, and with many of our New England ancestors."

"My husband's family were seafarers. As it stands, it is a tragedy of the sea. When the sea has taken, the sea will keep," she says. "Amelia is at rest."

**ELGEN LONG'S SCENARIO**

Elgen Long, 58, of San Mateo, California, a retired airline captain, has decided to go public after more than 20 years of massive research into the mystery.

"What I propose is a search to locate the airplane on the ocean floor — it's still there. Locate it, photograph it, and recover it," said Long. He concurs with the US Navy's official finding. They ran out of gas and crashed northeast of the island. He also believes that her remains are still inside the airplane and likely could be recovered.

He said the plane should be perfectly preserved because there is no light or oxygen at the depth where it presumably lies. The search would be made some 35 miles southwest of Howland Island, near where the US Navy said the Earhart plane ran out of fuel on 2 July 1937.

Long and his wife, Marie, have traveled with this in mind to search for her. At the Cook Hotel in New Guinea, where Earhart and Noonan stayed before the ill-fated flight, they met Ellis Barbel, daughter of the woman who ran the hotel.

"She said she remembered that dreams of fuel labeled "Amelia Earhart" stood under trees in the hotel's back yard of the hotel for several years," Long said. "But this was crucial information. He calculated that because of the heat, the fuel put into Earhart's plane in New Guinea had expanded and weighed 5.6 pounds per gallon, instead of the usual six pounds."

"An aircraft engine, only the weight of the fuel is significant," he said. "When she was going to run out of fuel was determined by consumption in pounds per hour."

Long said he has narrowed the Electra's location to "a reasonable area." He told the ocean floor as "ideal search area," with a flat slope, 16,000 feet. "No battles were fought there. It is not on any shipping lanes, so there should not be a lot of junk around."

Further, Long claims, the combination of an uncalibrated compass, faulty chart coordinates that actually misplaced Howland by several miles, plus head winds unnoticed by Noonan, placed the Electra west and well beyond visual range of the island. He contends that the US Navy chart she was using gave the wrong position for Howland, putting the flight some miles off course and supposedly out of sight of any land at the destination point.

Yes, at 1000 N.E. Earhart's course of vision would be 30 miles.

**OUT OF GAS**

British historian Roy Nesbit also agrees with Long. He sifted through letters from Earhart and other documents in the British Public Records Office, he says that she took off on her last flight with less than a full tank. Under any conditions, he states, she should not have reached Mili Aidi.

Because New Guinea was part of the British Commonwealth, she needed British permission for that part of the flight. In a letter to the British Director of Civil Aviation, Earhart applied for permission and said that, for the first attempt's Howland-Lae leg, "I shall carry plenty of 1000-gallon fuel."

This was less than the full load of 1200 gallons. But 1000 gallons put a strain on the Electra, Nesbit says. Earhart's husband, George Putnam, said she was practicing takeoffs with up to 1000 gallons. (She was carrying 948 gallons when she grounded the Electra at Lae.)

Journalists at Lee, however, say Noonan, said Earhart took off with 950 gallons, according to contemporary accounts in the British Museum and the Daily Mirror. So also says an article in a contemporary issue of the Pacific Islands Monthly. However, in a 28 August 1937 report to the Secretary of the Civil Aviation Board, Commonwealth of Australia, J. A. Colpoy, New Guinea District Superintendent, says the Electra left with 1100 gallons of fuel.

Normally, 950 US gallons would have been enough to get to Howland, 2556 miles from Lae, and provide several hours' reserve.

Twenty years ago, William L. Pollen, navigator of the United States, successfully re-created Earhart's flight with a Lockheed Model 10A, advanced the 950-gallon theory. He showed that the weight of anything more than 950 US gallons would have precipitated a takeoff from the short, grass field at Lae — and that higher speeds meant increasing fuel consumption.

Finally, Nesbit contends that Noonan exhausted and forced to navigate by the sun, a procedure with which Nesbit says he was unfamiliar.

**THE "SINGLE LINE APPROACH"**

Nesbit seems not to know about the "Sunline Linwood Approach," or "Single Line..."
Approach (SLA). Noonan helped refine the technique, which goes back to sailing ship days.


According to Polhemus, Noonan would have measured the altitude (elevation in degrees) of the sun above the horizon and noted the exact time. He then would have calculated a "Line of Position" (LOP), a line at a right angle to the sun's azimuth and at a precise distance from the sun's zenith. Navigational tables confirm that shortly after sunrise on 2 July 1937, an LOP crossing Howland Island, would have been 157-357, the LOP Earhart said she was on.

"To assure hitting Howland with only this "single line," Polhemus says, Noonan would have offset his course, most probably to the north, so they could "run down" the LOP. By following it south, he could be confident that if they missed Howland (they would spot nearby Baker Island), Polhemus believes Noonan probably precomputed the times versus altitudes of the sun that would yield an LOP that crossed Howland, so all he had to do was point, shoot and compare.

GO GET 'EM, TIGHAR!

Did Earhart, after missing Howland, somehow fly another 400 miles south to the Phoenix Islands, and land on remote, uninhabited Nikumaroro Island? The "evidence" for this, presented in 1992 by Richard Gillispie of TIGHAR, the International Group for Historic Aircraft Recovery, includes:

- A 2 x 19-inch piece of aircraft aluminum found washed up on the island. TIGHAR claims it came from an undamaged airplane that had been repaired by Lockheed Earhart's groundloop in Hawaii. In rebuttal, a Lockheed senior engineer, said the rivet patterns on the aluminum sheet did not match those of an Electra.

- Another "artifact" Gillispie showed off: Parts of a shoe, identified as from a woman's size 9 blucher-style Oxford. According to Gillispie, enlargements of photos of Earhart show her wearing this type of shoe. He further claimed Amelia wore a size 9 shoe.

- His linkage — in 1960, a US Coast Guardman stationed on Nikumaroro during WWII, told newspapers that a native had found, in 1938, a woman's skeleton wearing American size 9 narrow shoe. William Foshee Jr., president of the Birlstone footwear division, admitted that the heel was made before 1940 and was "the same type of heel, basically," as that worn by Earhart. But he declared that this Cat's Paw heel was "unusual. It could have been on a man's shoe."

According to Amelia's sister, Merid, the flier had tiny feet and wore a size 6. The shoe size was confirmed by the curator of the Amelia Earhart exhibit in Atchison, Kansas.

- A third "artifact": A racial stomach medicine bottle cap that was identified by Warner-Lambert Co. officials as used by accosted William R. Warner Co. Gillispie claimed Earhart was known to suffer from stomach problems.

- Peter Wolf, a Warner-Lambert spokesman, said it was of a type used until the 1950s. However, Wolf said printing on the top of the lid "really didn't look like it had been weathered for 50 years."

Gillispie admitted that his nonprofit organization had spent $750,000 in donations on their two trips to Nikumararo.

Earhart's route to Nikumaroro was allegedly tracked by two retired military aviators, Tom Loomis and naval aviator "Bartholdi redkiss."

TIGHAR returned from the 1998 expedition with an aluminum box which Gillispie claimed it was a navigator's back-up that if came from Earhart's plane. Others say the box was manufactured for WWII PBY Catalina flying boats. The box was sent to the FBI, which reported only that its materials were "consistent with materials that were being used in 1937."

Mary DeWitt, 46, of Fort Worth, Texas, the photographer hired to document the expedition, said the box was found on the first day out. She said it wasn't until the day the expedition left that Gillispie decided to bring it back.

Also during the 1998 expedition, TIGHAR researchers said they discovered a small "grave," which they catalogued along with other items. During the 1991 expedition, TIGHAR dug up the grave plot and found the bones of an infant.

A colony from the British-owned Gilbert Islands had settled on the northeastern section of the island from 1938 to the mid-1960s. A clerk and interpreter for the atoll's first settlement wrote Gillispie that Gilbertese workers told him that they had found bones on the island about 18 months after Earhart's disappearance. This, to Gillispie, corroborated Kitin's 39-year-old tale about the size 9 shoes.

Still another Coast Guard veteran claimed: "I was on Nikumaroro (then Gardner Island) twice in 1944. The 250 natives living there knew nothing about an airplane landing on the reef. Even at the equator, the temperature in the shade of the coconut palms is not oppressive, since the ocean breeze is always relatively cool. When rain water was not available, the natives drank the water from the reef and said they survived up well known to every aviator in the Pacific."

Carol Osborne, a West Coast historian and
IN CONCLUSION

Until something more definite is found, contends Thomas Cronyn, chairman of the aeronautics department of the National Air and Space Museum of the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C., it is best to remain skeptical and to conclude only that the view that the plane was "lost at sea, heaven knows where." Stepping up the efforts of the most serious researchers, Los Angeles Times' Paul Dean writes, "No doubt it exists, wanting to believe that Earhart simply wandered off course fleeing for boot-bananas Howland Island, ran out of gas and crashed in the Pacific and drowned."

"All that seems certain right now is this," says Dean, "Amelia Earhart flew into history, and the mystery that surrounds her is as basic as the wonder in the mind of a child when he has a piece of something beautiful with the grace of a bird. The plane was there, the ditch was there, there was a testament to that mystery, perhaps more so of the quality that sends men into space on rockets, expressed in a poem she once wrote."

COURAGE IS THE PRICE

Courage is the price that life exacts for growing peace.

The soul that knows not it, knows no release
From little things.

Known not the void loneliness of fear
Nor mountain heights, where bitter joy can tear
The sound of whisps.

How can life grow as born of living.

For dull gray selfishness and pregnant hate
Unless we dare

The soul's destruction. Each time we make a choice
With courage to behold resistless day
And count it fair.

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