

Resource I

Amelia Earhart Fact File

Amelia Earhart was born on 24 July 1897 in Kansas, USA. She fell in love with aviation when, as a child, her father took her to an air show. She took an open-cockpit flight over Los Angeles. In July 1920, aged 23, Amelia bought her first plane. She called it The Canary because it was a bright yellow Kinner aeroplane.

In October 1922, a few years after taking up flying, Amelia began trying to break records. She first broke the altitude record of 14,000 feet. In May 1932, Amelia flew across the Atlantic and broke four records:

- the first woman to fly solo across the Atlantic;
- the only person to cross the Atlantic twice;
- the longest flight by a woman; and
- crossing the Atlantic in the shortest time.

In 1935 Amelia started planning a round-the-world flight, but she crashed on take-off on her first attempt. She had to wait until 1937 to try again. On 1 June 1937 her plane was repaired and she set off again with her co-pilot, Fred Noonan.

First she flew to San Juan in Puerto Rico. Then she flew toward Africa. Then she went to the Red Sea, Karachi in Pakistan and Calcutta in India. They continued their journey to Rangoon in Burma, then Bangkok and Singapore. When they arrived in Port Darwin, Australia, they made crucial repairs to their aeroplane.

Amelia became an international hero.

She reached Lae in Papua New Guinea on 29 June 1937 after flying 22,000 miles. She had only 7,000 left to travel. However, shortly after she left New Guinea on 2 July, she sent several distress calls. Amelia and Fred were lost over the Pacific Ocean. They did not have enough fuel to reach their target, The Howland Islands.

Amelia and Fred were never seen or heard from again.

President Roosevelt sent nine naval ships and 66 aircraft to search the area. They searched for 14 days but, on 18 July, he called off the search.

There are many theories about Amelia Earhart's disappearance. Some say her plane crashed in the ocean and she drowned. Others say the Japanese, who occupied many of the Pacific islands, took her prisoner.

We will probably never know what happened to Amelia Earhart, but she remains a hero and an inspiration.