

The Missing Pilot



▲ The path of Amelia Earhart's 1937 around-the-world flight

1 A Dangerous Journey

On July 2, 1937, Amelia Earhart and Fred Noonan left New Guinea for Howland Island in the Pacific. This was the longest and most dangerous part of their trip around the world. Earhart had trouble shortly after takeoff.
5 The weather was stormy, so she had to fly at 3,000 meters (10,000 feet).
Going this high, the plane used gas quickly.

After about twenty hours, Earhart and Noonan **approached** Howland Island. The island was only about 105 kilometers (65 miles) away, but the **bright** sun was **shining** in their faces
10 so they couldn't see it. Near Howland, a ship, the *Itasca*, was waiting. Earhart contacted the ship: "Gas is low," she said. The *Itasca* tried to **maintain** contact with her but got no **response**. Finally, the *Itasca* called for help. People searched for Earhart and Noonan for days. Despite the searchers'
15 **efforts**, they found nothing.



▲ Not only a pilot, Amelia Earhart was also one of the most stylish women of her time.

Missing!

What happened to Amelia Earhart? No one knows for sure. During the **flight**, she probably **headed** in the wrong direction because the sun was bright and it was hard to see. So she got lost;
20 soon after, her plane ran out of¹ gas, and she died at sea. Another idea is that she survived the plane crash,² swam to an uninhabited³ island, and later died there. Still others think she survived the crash and secretly returned to the U.S. with a new identity.

Although the first theory seems most likely, none of these ideas has been proven.
25 Today, people are still **investigating** Earhart's and Noonan's **disappearance**. (Noonan's body has also never been found.) Whatever happened, Amelia probably died as she wished. "When I go," she said, "I'd like best to go in my plane."

¹ If you **run out of** something, you finish it and there is no more of it.

² A **crash** is an accident in which a car, plane, etc. is damaged or destroyed.

³ If a place is **uninhabited**, it has no people.