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## Amelia Earhart

### Biography

- **Occupation:** Aviator
- **Born:** July 24, 1897 in Atchison, Kansas
- **Died:** She disappeared on July 2, 1937 over the Pacific Ocean. She was declared dead on January 5, 1939
- **Best known for:** Being the first woman to fly solo across the Atlantic Ocean

### **Biography:**

#### **Where did Amelia Earhart grow up?**

Amelia Earhart was born on July 24, 1897 in Atchison, [Kansas](#). Her father, Edwin, was a lawyer who worked for the railroad. She spent a lot of her childhood playing with her younger sister Muriel.

Growing up Amelia and her sister had all sorts of adventures. They collected insects and frogs. They liked to play sports including baseball and football. Amelia even learned to shoot a .22 rifle and used it to kill rats in her Dad's barn.

Amelia's first "flight" was when she was just seven years old. With the help of Muriel and her uncle she made a



*Amelia Earhart*  
from the Los Angeles Daily News

homemade roller coaster. After crashing dramatically she told her sister that it "was just like flying".

When Amelia was eleven years old, in 1908, she saw one of the Wright Brothers first airplanes at the Iowa State Fair. She had no interest in flying and didn't think much of the plane at the time.

### **Before Flying**

After graduating from high school, Amelia wasn't sure what she wanted to do. She first went to the Ogontz School in Pennsylvania, but dropped out to become a nurse's aide tending wounded soldiers from World War I. Then she studied to become a mechanic, but soon was back in school studying for a career in medicine. Eventually she decided to go into medical research. That is, until she took her first plane flight.

### **First Time Flying**

On December 28, 1920 Amelia and her father visited an air show in California. Amelia went on her first plane flight that day. She later said that "I knew I had to fly" as soon as the plane was just a few hundred feet off the ground.

Amelia worked hard and, together with some money from her mother, she was able to pay for flying lessons. Eventually she purchased her own plane. A bright yellow airplane she nicknamed the "Canary". She also got her pilot's license and set a new altitude record for female pilots of 14,000 feet.

### **First Woman to Cross the Atlantic**

In 1928 Amelia was invited to take part in a historic flight across the Atlantic. Together with pilot Bill Stultz and co-pilot Slim Gordon, Amelia flew across the Atlantic Ocean in the airplane Friendship. Amelia was the navigator on the flight. On June 18, 1928 after twenty one hours of flying, the plane landed in Wales. She was the first woman to make the flight across the Atlantic.

Earhart was received back in the United States as a hero. They had a ticker tape parade for her in New York City and she even got to meet [President Calvin Coolidge](#) at the White House.



*Amelia Earhart awaits transatlantic flight 1928  
by Wide World Photos*

### **Crossing the Atlantic Solo**

Amelia was not satisfied, however. She wanted to make the same trip across the Atlantic, but this time she wanted to pilot the plane and make the flight by herself. On May 20, 1932 she took off from Harbour Grace, Newfoundland aboard a bright red single engine Lockheed Vega airplane. She intended to make the same flight that [Charles Lindbergh](#) had made five years before and fly to Paris, France.

The flight was very dangerous. There was bad weather, thick clouds, and often her windshield and wings were covered with ice. Fourteen hours later she had crossed the Atlantic Ocean, but had to cut the flight short, landing in a cow pasture in Londonderry, [Northern Ireland](#).

Amelia became only the second person after Charles Lindbergh to successfully fly across the Atlantic Ocean solo. She received many awards including becoming the first woman to receive the Distinguished Flying Cross from Congress.

## Aviator

Amelia continued to fly over the next several years. She broke many records including being the first person to fly solo from Hawaii to California. Amelia wrote and gave speeches about flying and women's rights.

## World Flight

Although she was the most famous woman pilot in the world, Earhart wasn't satisfied and wanted to be the first woman to fly around the world. On June 1, 1937 Amelia and Fred Noonan, her navigator, took off from Miami, Florida. They flew a number of flights, eventually getting all the way across Africa and Asia to New Guinea in the South Pacific. On July 2nd they took off from New Guinea to fly to Howland Island in the Pacific Ocean, but they were never seen from again.

## Amelia Disappears

The United States government searched for Amelia and her plane for several weeks, but they could not find them. There have been a lot of theories about what happened to the flight, but no one really knows and her plane has never been found.

## Fun Facts about Amelia Earhart

- Amelia went by the nicknames Meeley and Millie. Her sister Muriel was called Pidge.
- She married her book publisher, George Putnam, in 1931.
- When Amelia landed in Ireland after her solo Atlantic flight, the farmer asked her where she was from. When she answered that she was from America, he wasn't quite sure he believed her.
- Howland Island is a mile and a half wide and one mile long. It is located in the Pacific Ocean 2,556 miles from New Guinea. A lighthouse was built to the memory of Amelia Earhart on Howland Island.
- In 1935 she became the first person to fly solo from Los Angeles to Mexico City and from Mexico City to Newark, New Jersey.

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