

“One of the best women pilots in the
United States” ~Boston Globe
(1897-1937)

Amelia Mary Earhart, born July 24,
1897, grew up in her grandparent’s
hometown, Atchison, Kansas. Her family
provided a rich education and affluent home
life for Amelia and her sister. As a child,
Amelia “kept a scrapbook...about successful
women in predominately male-oriented fields” and she was not hesitant to challenge
conventional female behavior. At ten years, Amelia moved to Des Moines with her
family, where she caught her first glimpse of an airplane at the Iowa State Fair.
However, her interest in aviation would not peak for another ten years.

She moved to California where she attended an “aerial meet” with her father. The
next day, she realized that her ambitions for the future sailed among the clouds.
Immediately, she contacted female aviatrix Anita “Neta” Snook for flight lessons at
Kinner Field. After honing her skills in her personal plane, “The Canary,” Amelia set the
record for women’s altitude at 14,000 feet in October, 1922. She joined several aviator
organizations, including the National Aeronautic Association and Ninety Nines. Her
accomplishments and assertive mystique in male-dominated realms attracted reporters
and worldwide fame. Even as she served as a social worker, she continued to promote
opportunities and acceptance of female fliers.

After practice flights with husband George Putnam across the Atlantic, Amelia
planned to solo herself. While conquering yet another feat, “She had broken several
records on this flight...the first woman to fly the Atlantic solo and only person to fly it
twice...the longest non-stop distance flown by a woman...and a record for crossing in the
shortest time.” Amelia’s ventures in flight rose to new heights until she proposed an
around-the-world flight in 1935, which would be her last. As her first attempt failed, she
geared up for a second try in the Electra, leaving Los Angeles on May 21, 1937. She
and navigator Fred Noonan traveled great distances, despite Amelia’s dysentery and
utter exhaustion, but it ended abruptly one evening.

The last positioning contact report received from the Electra was July 2, 1937,
20:14 Greenwich Mean Time. After assuming that the plane had crashed, submerging
itself underwater, President Roosevelt granted \$4 million in an effort to find Fred,
Amelia, and the Electra. Sadly, none was found, but in one of the final letters to
husband George, Amelia Earhart’s legendary words embodied the purport of her life
work: " I want to do it because I want to do it. Women must try to do things as men
have tried. When they fail their failure must be but a challenge to others."

“Courage is the price that Life exacts for granting peace.”
~ Amelia Earhart

Works Cited: Amelia Earhart. <http://www.ameliaearhart.com>, October 24, 2001, 7 PM.
Amelia Earhart. http://ellensplace.net/ae_lflt.html, October 24, 2001, 6:45 PM.

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