



Underwood & Underwood

THE discovery on captured Saipan Island of an album filled with pictures of Amelia Earhart has aroused more than academic interest in a question which may not be answered until after the war:

Did America's foremost aviatrix fly over Japanese mandated islands during her transpacific hop in 1937 to make a survey of the Japs' secret island bases, and if so, was her \$80,000 "flying laboratory" shot down by the Japs instead of being lost at sea?

There is even the possibility, advanced by Dr. M. L. Brittain, president of song-famed Georgia Tech, that the wiry, durable aviatrix is still a prisoner of the Japs on some Pacific isle and may be rescued one of these days by a contingent of the same advancing U. S. Marines, such as those who found the collection of snapshots in a seized barracks.

So far there has been no proof that the album, which was stuffed with photos of the flier in her sports togs, had been carried on the big ship in which she and her navigator, Fred J. Noonan, left Lae, New Guinea, for a 2,556-mile jump to tiny Howland island in the mid-Pacific. This was the most perilous leg of a round-the-world flight with nearly three-quarters completed.

However, Dr. Brittain and several others feel that there must be some definite connection between the album and the disappearance of the Earhart plane on July 2, 1937.

Even last February, long before the pictures added their evidence to a constantly increasing suspicion, Representative James J. Heffernan of Brooklyn, N. Y., demanded an Army-Navy search for the missing aviatrix among the Jap-held Pacific islands.

He suggested that Miss Earhart might have been forced or shot down while she was flying over the Marshall Islands, which the Japanese were fortifying, despite their assurances to the contrary.

Dr. Brittain, who, with several other university presidents, was a guest aboard the battleship Colorado on a Pacific cruise, said that President Roosevelt had radioed the Colorado to join the wide search which other Naval vessels were making for the Earhart plane.

"On board," he said, "the officers were discussing the number of persons that had attempted vainly to discover whether the Japs were building airfields and fortifications on isles that they held in the Pacific."

"We got a very definite feeling that Miss Earhart had some sort of understanding with government officials that the last part of her voyage around the world would be over some Japanese islands, probably the Marshalls, which were only a little north of an airline from New Guinea to Howland Island, where she was to refuel."

The interest taken in her flight not only by American officials, but also by the British, New Zealand and Australian governments, tended to bear out Dr. Brittain's belief. Flotillas of the several governments were sent into the Pacific expanses to join in the widespread search.

But the Japanese Government maintained an enigmatic silence.

The public was informed at the time that the Coast Guard Cutter Itasca, which was waiting near Howland Island, had received a sputtering radio message that the plane was approaching but was running out of

gas. Much later, however, the confidential files of the cutter showed that Miss Earhart's communications with the vessel did not conform at all with the previously arranged plan.

Some officers expressed the belief that the message had been faked or that Miss Earhart, made a prisoner by the Japanese, had been forced to radio a false position to the Itasca.

After we invaded the Marshalls, Lieut. Eugene T. Bogan, a former New York tax lawyer, and Lieut. James Toole, of Washington, said this story was told them by a mission-trained native named Elieu:

"Ajima, a Jap trader, said three and a half years ago that an American woman pilot came down between Jaluit and Ailinglapalap Atolls and was picked up by a Japanese fishing

boat crew. She was taken to Japan." Saipan is far north of the Marshalls, but it was pointed out that she might have been detained there for a while. No clue to the fate of Noonan, her navigator, has ever been found.

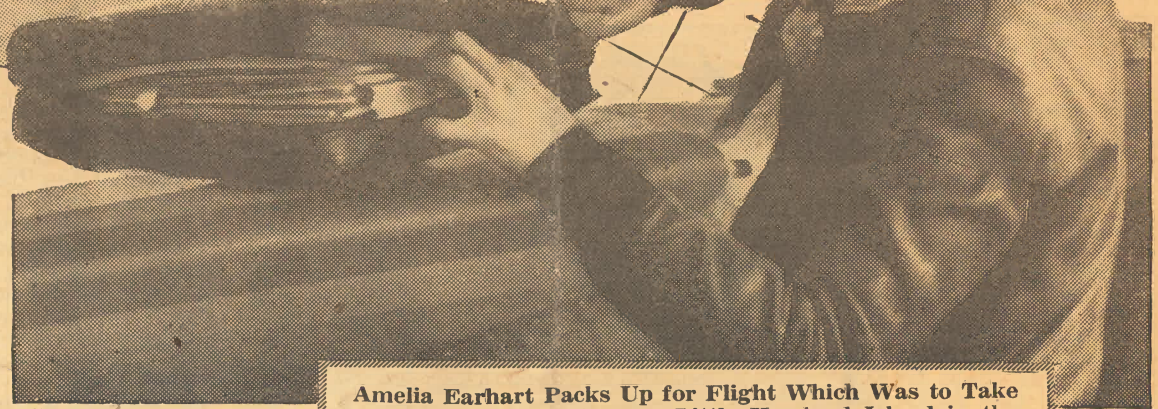
The disappearance of Miss Earhart was a distinct loss to aviation. In addition to her last and greatest venture, she was the first woman to fly the Atlantic, to fly the Atlantic alone, to fly the Atlantic twice, to fly an autogyro, to cross the United States in an autogyro, to make a transcon-

Amelia Earhart

How Long a Mystery?



Does an "Earhart Album" Found on Saipan Indicate That America's Foremost Aviatrix Was Shot Down by the Japanese While Flying Over One of Their Secret Island Bases?



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Amelia Earhart Packs Up for Flight Which Was to Take Her From New Guinea to Little Howland Island in the Mid-Pacific.

tinental non-stop flight, to fly from Hawaii to the United States and to receive the Distinguished Flying Cross.

One of her first backers was George Palmer Putnam, New York publisher, whom she married on Feb. 7, 1932. If she should be discovered alive, Putnam would be in a strange position. The publisher, now a Major in Army Intelligence, was made administrator of her \$27,000 estate after she was declared legally dead in January, 1939. Four months later he and Jean Consigny James were married.