

A Theory by Robert West,

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CONCERNING THE DISAPPEARANCE OF AMELIA EARHART

WHAT HAPPENED TO FRED NOONAN ?

Basics

Regarding the disappearance of Amelia Earhart, there are some basic theories of what occurred.

1. Earhart and Noonan ran out of fuel and ditched in the water.
2. Earhart and Noonan ditched and were recovered by the Japanese forces occupying nearby Islands and were treated as spies.
3. The plane had enough fuel range and managed to land on Gardner Island (Nikumaroro).

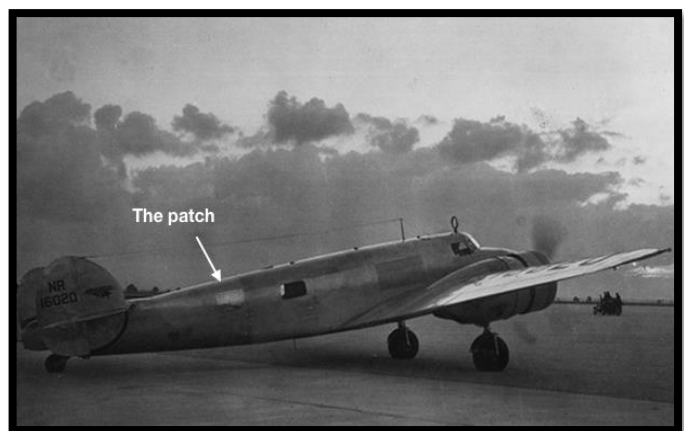
Premise

The Lockheed Electra 10 Aircraft theoretically had enough fuel to reach Howland Island and little more. We know the aircraft then turned south to reach an area known as the Marshall Islands. allowing a chance to find land as there were more islands. The decision to fly the new line 157/337 is based on a couple of factors, one of these is that there were multiple islands to land on or at least be rescued by someone when ditching near One. The other consideration is the possibility Fred Noonan made a calculation error with the international dateline and realized the plane was 60/70 miles south of their target. Proceeding to Howland may have been a literal shot in the dark. By proceeding south and recalculating Noonan seizes the best chance for survival. Yet, there is an issue, ***Fuel Range***. Fred Noonan is a qualified navigator and professional mariner with prior survival experience. He knows the plane is limited and I believe he takes the drastic actions to allow Amelia Earhart a chance to survive.

Noonan I am sure has done all the calculations and calculates the remaining time aloft. He most likely figures that Amelia needs every second she can in the air to make it so he must do what he can to extend the Lockheed Electra's fuel range. Noonan's only action is to lighten the plane by removing material from the aircraft and every pound makes a difference in time. This is something we learn from watching old war movies where crews after battle throw out ammo, guns and other heavy equipment to help the damaged aircraft return.

I believe Noonan goes to the back of the plane and starts to remove everything he can from the craft to lighten up the plane. He most likely throws out every piece of equipment that is not needed, bags, jackets, maybe even the tools if any, but he lightens the ship. He is most likely done removing everything he can. Knowing that he may have made an error and knowing the situation I believe Fred Noonan jumps out as well and takes his 200 lbs. with him.

I am not an aeronautical engineer, but I figure he needed to lose a few hundred pounds to increase the range by another 50-100 miles. Amelia now alone scans the morning light for a place to land or a place to ditch near land and at this point or in the following minutes sees Gardner Island and attempts land on the reef. Amelia if we agree, is alive on Gardner; alone, the fate of Noonan is now sealed, and she deals with her situation, to stay alive and hope for rescue.



The Lockheed Electra 10 E Special

Curosities

In Order to Prove the Theory, lets take a look at some elements of the expeditions and reference materials.

Items Found

According to the internet the following items were found or at least suspected to relate to the Electra.

Shoes a pair of women's size nine show was found. These were size 9 and could have been too big for Amelia Earhart. However, I do not discount the possibility that as a pilot in a cold aircraft and very uncomfortable, Amelia Earhart might have had thick socks on under them requiring a bigger size shoe. She may have changed them after taking off.

No men's shoes were found.

Sextant

I question the discarding of the sextant as "it was not the type normally used by an Aviator". That phrase seems wildly presumptive and does not consider that this was a backup unit or Noonan's "never go anywhere without it" unit. This may have been from one of the ships he was on in WWI and was attacked. I like him as a former sailor, and navigator and he like me may have brought it along given his prior maritime experience as a spare or good luck item. This may also be explained by the idea that Noonan was dead and as it was his personal item, Amelia Earhart may have tried to return it to his family. This explains why it is intact, and the only equipment found at the site.

Human Remains

There were bones which were tested and stored. These are now lost but the measurements indicated a European Female as the most probable determination. Only one skull was found, and if we think that it is Amelia's Gravesite, where is Fred Noonan's skull? If he was there it would be there somewhere, or still in the plane. The other theory of Fred being injured during the landing has been suggested. My question to this is if the Electra is upright and the landing successful enough for Amelia to walk away, then why not Noonan.

This means if they do find the plane and the body or remains within it, this off course ruins my theory. But if he was not in the plane then that would help prove it. We know on at least one expedition search dogs were used and hit on four graves from other inhabitants as well as hit on the bone location at Site Seven. I believe to date no other identified male bones have been found.

Aircraft Parts

I may be missing something here, but I remember reading among the documentation that there were parts of an aircraft that were taken from a plane and used on a village of dados in 1938/1939. Is there by chance a list of planes wrecked on the island. How many planes fell down in that vicinity in those two years. I am curious since no other plane is mentioned where the inhabitants would get them to use if not the Electra.

Personal Belongings

Very few personal belongings have been found and of what has been found the list seems rather curious, beauty and skin products and a shattered mirror from a cosmetic compact. No razors, no combs, no men's articles, 1 belt buckle not two. I can see a pattern here as all this sounds like what might be left in Amelia Earhart's handbag, which may have been the only thing she had left on the plane. Thought, did he put his lighter in her handbag?

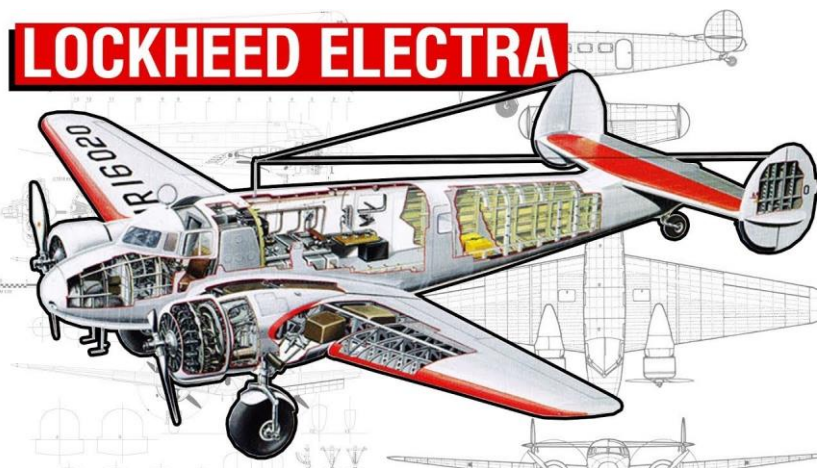
Part Number 40552

A cut section of polymethylmethacrylate (Plexiglas) found in the village during TIGHAR's 1996 expedition matches the material, color, thickness and specific curvature of Lockheed Part Number 40552 the cabin windows of Earhart's Lockheed 10E Special.



Fuel Range

The fuel range according to specifications was enough to reach Howland Island and allow for one or two attempts at landing. The plane may have needed additional range to reach Gardner (this is in dispute). The dispute is that we do not know despite all the previous instructions from Lockheed before the flight if the fuel management protocol was being followed and if the consumption rate was as intended. Since the Electra was already part way to Gardner and if there was a fuel need or to increase the chances of landing on land. The only way for the plane to gain more time in the air to reach it would be to extend the range and the only way to do this was to lighten the ship.



Radio Transmissions

It is clear the Electra could send messages only. This is due to the antenna being damaged on takeoff from Lea. Even though Amelia thought she was near Howland Island the fact that she could not receive messages from the **USCG Itasca** is because she was what we now think was 70 plus miles off course and too far away to receive a reply. Next, we then get more reports for a few days which sound like radio transmissions from Earhart. It is reported to me that the plane can only transmit with the engine running or at least recharge the batteries to send.

Amelia must be alive, the plane's engine is intact, and the plane which had limited fuel to make it somehow had enough to transmit after landing. It would also prove a successful landing. This means the radio is operational as well. We also have to account for conditions, the detailed times of the transmissions which at the time they were reported and how many were assumed as hoaxes.

Position

Information seems a little vague in detail in regard to location after the landing. It is a common theme that she is on an uninhabited island, somewhere southwest of Howland Island. Odd don't you think because if Fred Noonan was alive he would have a good chance with his skills to know where they were. Amelia Earhart was not as a good a navigator but knew her flight time, miles and other things mentioned in the calls which were heard for a few days after her plane ran out of fuel.

Female

There are many messages, and I cannot say I know them all, but the more credible ones are only a female transmitting and claiming to be Earhart. Some of the male voices are long transmissions as if someone was in a room. It is possible, but that would use a lot of power and fuel, so I find it doubtful because that means Noonan is alive and I have more serious doubts about that as I have stated.

Betty's Record

I want to acknowledge this even if it goes against my premise and again we should consider that all radio reports other than *Itasca* are questionable despite documentation as we do not have any multiple listeners to the same transmissions or that has been considered and if so we should time stamp all of them and double check for consistency in content. Betty's Record clearly suggests a "male" voice" was heard. We have no verification is who's female and male voice they actually were.

Fred Noonan

Let's look at these three points;

- a) Noonan survives the landing and walks away.
- b) Noonan Is injured or killed in the landing.
- c) Noonan was never on the plane.

We will look at the first two;

If he survived the landing we see limited physical evidence in any of the recovered evidence that would suggest his presence on the island other than the sextant. there is a serious lack of male goods.

I will move on to (B), where I believe he would then be stuck in the plane. Not good as the idea of 120lb Amelia Earhart would be unlikely to move him to shore. If he is in the plane, it's July and about 130 degrees during the day in the plane on an island where there was little or no fresh water. I give him three to five days in good health stuck in that steel tube on the reef, if injured less. If he is dead but still in the plane, he decays in the seat. The idea of that is a very unpleasant but possible thought.

Survival

At this point as we assume Amelia is mobile, able to transmit and a few people think Noonan is either in the plane or dead because of the nature of the survival scenario. One thing that seems pretty obvious if we except this, Fred Noonan is not mobile and on the island. I come to this theory because of the lack of many things that would have occurred with him being able to function for even a short time. Fred Noonan was a sailor and a scholar. He grew up reading tales from Edgar Rice Burroughs before reaching the Sea, he had been placed in the water multiple times and made it out and made through WWI. The Man was a captain, and I am sure you do not have to be scholar to realize it looks like one person made it out of the plane on to the island. The lack of shelter, materials that would have been removed from the plane and more effort placed on survival as he was a well-versed seaman.

Amelia had no useful training in this arena, She was a skilled pilot. But, But alone on Gardner she would have been in a compromised position. She would have been alone or possibly with a wounded man. No medicines, unable to receive signals, no water, no food, no hope, and little or no skills that were useful to her.

Conclusion

I cannot prove this theory, but I think it should be considered. I hope someone finds the Electra, and some who may see this are actually going to look for it. Please consider the option that was presented in this writing. I am betting you won't find a lot of things in the plane and this might explain why.

Not because they were lost to time, but like Fred Noonan, I am not sure they were on the plane when and if it landed.

Robert West

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