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APPROVED FOR RELEASE - DISAPPEARANCE OF AMELIA EARHART 2025 REVIEW

MISS EARHART CALLED SPY

California Newspaper Says Aviator Worked For U.S.

Napa, Cal., July 25 (AP)—The Napa Register said today that Amelia Earhart, the long-missing aviatrix, was on a spying mission for the United States Government when she vanished in July, 1937, and subsequently died as a Japanese captive on the Pacific island of Saipan.

In a copyright story summing up a long investigation of the mystery, the newspaper said Miss Earhart succumbed to dysentery and that Frederick J. Noonan, her navigator, was beheaded by the Japanese a few days later.

In Washington, a spokesman for the State Department said its files showed no evidence either that Miss Earhart was on an intelligence mission or that she was captured by the Japanese.

Recovered From Grave

The Register declared that the remains of the two fliers, who disappeared near the end of a flight around the world, were recovered from a grave on Saipan in 1944 and secretly returned to America.

The Register said its conclusion that Miss Earhart and Noonan were engaged in espionage was based on a search of "classified files in the Department of the Navy and Department of State." He added:

"United States officials were concerned about Japanese fortification of the Pacific islands placed under Japan's control by the League of Nations. If Miss Earhart could observe—and possibly photograph—some of these islands, valuable information could be compiled."

Miss Earhart was 38 and Noonan 44 at the time of their disappearance.

Probe Launched In 1960

The Register said the investigation which it joined three years ago, was launched in 1960 by Frederick Goerner, a newsmen of radio station KCBS in San Francisco.

"Literally hundreds of persons have been interviewed," the story said. "Classified Federal files have been examined. Now, for the first time, the full story is being told."

A book of Goerner, "The Search for Amelia Earhart," is being published next month.

The Register story said "scores of natives" had been found on Saipan who remembered a white man and woman being held captive by the Japanese in 1937 and that they had identified photographs of Miss Earhart.

"Looked Vrey Sad"

One native, Maria Arriola Shoda San Nicholas, was quoted as saying:

"I saw the white woman many times. My father's house was not far away. The Japanese would let her walk about a little bit, but not outside the yard.

"When she first came she was wearing clothing like a man, but the Japanese later gave her a robe to wear. She always looked very sad. She never spoke to anyone. I do not think she knew the language.

"Then I didn't see her for quite a while. One day a Japanese officer came to see my father, a tailor, and asked him to make a black cloth for the woman. The officer said she had died."

Died Of Dysentery

Another witness, identified only as the daughter of a Saipan doctor, was quoted as telling investigators:

"The woman the Japanese called the flier died of dysentery. She could not be helped. The man who came to the island with her was executed several days after her death. The Japanese beheaded

him with a samurai sword."

In Tokyo, Fuminiko Nakajima, who lived in Saipan and adjoining islands as an industrial development technician from May, 1935, to January, 1946, said he had never heard of any such incidents.

"It is quite unthinkable that Miss Earhart and her navigator were captured by Japanese military forces in Saipan," Nakajima commented. "There weren't any soldiers on the island in 1937."

Two Former Marines

The Register said two former United States marines—Everett Henson, Jr., of Sacramento, Cal., and Billy Burks, now living in Texas—had told of digging up a grave on Saipan under supervision of a marine officer in 1944 and finding remains of two bodies.

The Register said Henson related that he asked the officer "What are we looking for?" and the officer replied "Have you ever heard of Amelia Earhart?"

Miss Earhart and Noonan had left Lae, New Guinea, on a scheduled flight leg to tiny Howland island on the day they disappeared. From Howland they planned to fly on to Honolulu and then to Oakland, Cal.

Wide-Ranging Search

The Coast Guard cutter Itasca, awaiting their arrival at Howland, reported the last message heard from the twin-engined plane was a radio call by Miss Earhart saying:

"Gas is running low . . . been unable to reach you by radio . . . we are circling but cannot see you."

A wide-ranging search by United States Navy ships and planes, assisted by Japanese vessels, turned up no trace of the plane.

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