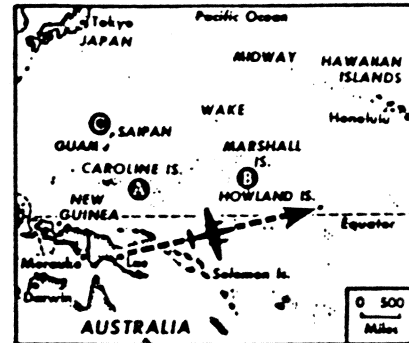




Ships Participating in the Amelia Earhart Search July 1937



On the morning of July 2, 1937 at 10:00 a.m., Amelia Earhart and Fred Noonan took off down the runway of the airport at Lea, New Guinea. This was the first leg of their three hops across the Pacific to complete their "Around the World Flight," which would be completed at Oakland, California. This leg would be the longest (2,556 miles) and most hazardous (20 hours) of the flight. The plane had to be stripped of everything that was non essential so they could carry 1,150 gallons of gasoline. This would allow them enough fuel to reach their destination, the tiny little Howland Island (two miles long). Its location, just east of the International Date Line and just north of the Equator.

Navigational aids, homing devices, and air to ground radio were still in their infancy and not very reliable. The Coast Guard Cutter "Itasca" was assigned to station just off of Howland Island with several radiomen detailed to operate the ships low frequency direction finder. A high frequency direction finder was set up on the island. Even with this modern technology, for this time period, Amelia Earhart was unable to pick-up a homing signal from this tiny island or the ship.

The U.C.G.C. "Itasca" first picked up the voice of Amelia Earhart at 2:45 a.m. and continued to receive her periodically until 8:45 a.m., however she could not pick up the voice transmission from the "Itasca." They kept requesting her to transmit so they might get a fix on the plane, but since she did not hear them, she did not comply.

At 10:40 a.m., after 2 hours with no contact, the "Itasca" started the sea search for the missing plane. Several hours later President Roosevelt ordered the Commandant of the 14th Naval District to join the search and to continue it for 30 days. The Commandant ordered the following ships to the area and start the research immediately.



U.S.S. Swan	AM 34
U.S.S. Colorado	BB 45
Was on NROTC Cruise and assisted until 22 July when she had to continue the cruise.	
U.S.S. Lexington	CV 2
U.S.S. Lamson	DD 367
U.S.S. Drayton	DD 366
U.S.S. Cushing	DD 376
U.S.S. Perkins	DD 377
U.S.C.G.C. Itasca	
Assisted until 16 July when she returned to Pearl Harbor because she was low on fuel.	

**These ships and others passing through this area continued until the end of July
when the search was called off.**

T.H.P.