

Amelia

Amelia Earhart, on 2 July 1937, vanished during her attempt to fly around the world in her specially modified Lockheed Electra. She had departed Lae, New Guinea, at 1000 hours, en route eastward to Howland Island, some 2,200 nautical miles away over open ocean. To this day, no one has found a trace of Amelia Earhart or her aircraft. The government's official conclusion is that the Electra, its fuel exhausted, crash-landed somewhere in the Pacific Ocean northwest of Howland, and her navigator, Fred Noonan and she perished. To this day, "lost at sea" is the official story.

It is early 1944 and the Pacific War is raging. Skeptical of that official conclusion, the Director of Naval Intelligence, Admiral Alan G. Kirk, USN, tasks his aide-de-camp, Commander Gregory Thompson, USN, with uncovering the details of the second mystery of Earhart's disappearance. But, after comprehensive research, Thompson has more questions than clues.

Why were so many titans of aviation, including Juan Trippe, president of Pan American World Airways, involved in Amelia's last flight? Why were President Roosevelt and the Secretary of War actively assisting Earhart? Why was the Chief of Naval Operations so interested in her flight? To what extent was the State Department's Bureau of Research and Intelligence involved?

For example, Thompson records his encounter at Station Hypo at Commander-in-Chief Pacific Fleet Headquarters, Pearl Harbor. He asks Lieutenant Commander Joseph (Joe) Rochford, USN the commanding officer, "Have any Japanese 'magic' on Amelia?"

"Nothing to speak about. Good day."

Commander Thompson's official report forms the narrative of this *roman à clef*.