

JANUARY 30, 1933

## GREATEST WOMAN FLYER DELIGHTS HELENA CROWD

**SEVERAL THOUSAND ON HAND TO WELCOME AMELIA EARHART PUTNAM. AUDIENCE AT BANQUET IS THRILLED BY DESCRIPTION OF FAMOUS "HOP" ACROSS ATLANTIC.**

Amelia Earhart Putnam, the first woman to make a "solo" flight across the Atlantic ocean, last night delighted nearly 100 Helena people and visiting members of the legislature, at a banquet given in her honor at the Placer hotel. After hearing the story of her flight across the "big pond," told by herself, even the most skeptical were convinced that aviation has a place of high importance in the commerce of the country, and that this method of transportation is far past the experimental stage.

Mrs. Putnam's talk was inspirational in every sense of the word, and it is doubtful if she realizes herself the great service that she is performing for the aviation in-

dustry, and the confidence in aircraft that she is capable of kindling. Her charming personality, manner in which she presented her

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subject, and her sense of humor, won her admirers in Helena who will look back upon her visit here as an outstanding event, and one which will not soon be forgotten.

At the Helena airport yesterday afternoon, the distinguished visitor was greeted by thousands of people as the huge Northwest Airlines plane, with a wingspread of 80 feet, came to a perfect three-point landing shortly before 4:30 o'clock. She was escorted to the administration building by Fred Sheriff, Helena airport commissioner, where she made a short talk from a second-story window.

### Cameras Click

Cameras clicked from all sides as Mrs. Putnam walked through the great crowd, and as she delivered a few words of greeting, in which she congratulated the people of Helena for their splendid airport. During her stay here she is a guest of Mr. and Mrs. Fred Sheriff, 700 Power street. If weather conditions are favorable she expects to take off from the airport here shortly after luncheon, en route to Spokane.

During the course of the dinner last evening Governor Erickson asked Mrs. Putnam if she would not like to visit the legislature when it is in session today. Although her time is limited, and she is making this northern trip on a regular schedule, she said she would prefer it if the governor would "ask her to come back sometime." She said that she started flying in 1920.

### Introduced by Governor

Eddie O'Connell, president of the Helena Commercial club, was toastmaster at the banquet, and after extending a welcome to Mrs. Putnam he asked Governor Erickson to introduce her.

The governor assured the charming guest that Montana people were air-minded, and that they were fully appreciative of the feats performed in aviation by such daring pilots as Mrs. Putnam.

"Some years ago," he said, "I had the pleasure of introducing Colonel Lindberg, and now I have the pleasure to introduce to a Helena audience the most distinguished flyer of the other sex."

Mrs. Putnam, in opening her talk, told the governor that he had given her one of the most pleasant introductions that she had ever received. She said that it was sometimes difficult to tell people who she was not, rather than who she was.

On various occasions she has been referred to as the woman "who swam the English channel," a waiter in a dining car once identified her as the woman who "swam the Atlantic ocean," and a little boy in a middle-western city where she was going to deliver a

lecture called her "Colonel Lindberg's mother."

### Praises Airport

Mrs. Putnam said that she was "surprised at the excellent airport" in Helena, although she did not know what to expect because this is her first visit to Montana and to its Capital City. She said that a city's airport was fast becoming "as important as any other public building."

She said that she had sold her trans-Atlantic ship to a museum, and that another plane which she had ordered was not yet ready for delivery. On her northern trip she is the guest of Colonel L. H. Britton of St. Paul, general manager of the Northwest Airways, Inc.

Mrs. Putnam said she would say a few words, and then would answer questions. She opened by asking her listeners some questions to determine how many had made an airplane trip during the last two years, and how many would and would not take a trip now if they had an opportunity. Several showed that they were not yet "air-minded."

### Speaks to Women

She spoke especially to the women among her listeners and urged the mothers to take their children up in an airplane while they are still youngsters. Safe flying is now possible, she continued, and the young people of today take to flying as they never have before. When she volunteered to answer questions relative to aviation, Mr. Sheriff asked her to relate the story of her trans-Atlantic flight.

"It is not what you fly over," she opened, "but what you fly through. The major difference between land and air flying is the storms which are encountered on the ocean."

### Starts at Night

She said she left Harbor Grace at night, believing that the weather would be more favorable. Taking off on a rocky runway, where there was no airport, she ascended 12,000 feet the first hour. Her plane was carrying 420 gallons of gasoline. From the air, she said, it is possible to see the sun for a longer time than on land. Her last sight, before plunging into the night, was several small icebergs in the water below, and a fishing vessel.

During the next hour the darkness increased, and she saw the moon rise over a great bank of clouds. It was during this second hour that her altimeter stopped functioning, and during the third hour she detected burning oil, due to a faulty exhaust pipe, and she debated whether or not to turn back. Having the vision of the rocky runway—the darkness—and 420 gallons of gasoline on board, she decided that it would be safer to continue.

### Runs Into Storm

It was during the next half hour that she approached a huge dark cloud. Although it would be possible to go over the top of it, she said she would have lost time and fuel, and that it never was advisable to ascend more than 15,000

feet without artificial oxygen. As she started through the cloud, completely blind, rain slashed against the machine. The rain later turned to slush, and she feared that the outside flying instruments might become coated with ice and cease to function.

When she descended she said that the absence of the altimeter was most felt. Fortunately, however, she could see the white caps breaking on the water, and she was better able to judge just how low she could fly successfully. Again she ascended, and finally found an area between the water and the storm cloud which was the least hazardous. She flew through this area for five hours.

### Flies Through Clouds

Before starting on the trip she visualized that dawn on the Atlantic would be beautiful. When dawn came she was between two layers of clouds which looked like snowfields. She felt fatigued from the glare of the sun on these clouds, which made it necessary to wear colored glasses. Even the glasses could not completely overcome the glare, so she descended, in the hope that the undercloud would furnish some shade.

As she neared the Irish coast, she did not see a speck of land get larger and larger, and several times she thought reflections of clouds on the water were small islands. She observed a fishing vessel which she said looked "very attractive" after 12 hours in the air. She circled the vessel three times, and was recognized. It was a lonely feeling, she asserted, as she left the vessel. Flying close to the water, she saw two more vessels before reaching land.

### Illusions of Land

"The last hour was the hardest," she declared, "because of the many illusions of land."

Rather than a gradual approach to land, she said that suddenly she saw a great rocky lump, which was the Irish coast. Following the custom of American pilots when they are lost, she found a railroad and followed it to a village of considerable size, but where there was no airport. She denied to her listeners the story that she killed a cow when she landed in the meadow, but said that because she did not believe an airplane ever landed there before, it was quite possible that one of the cows died of fright. She brought her plane up to the front door of one of the Irish farmers.

"I'm from America," she said as she alighted from the plane after more than 14 hours of flying.

The farmer was not impressed. She asked for a glass of water, which she declared was an extraordinary request in Ireland. She went a mile or so to a telephone, and cabled her husband that she had arrived safe and sound. The cable was delivered three days later. When she returned to the farm house quite a crowd had gathered, and her farmer friend was the hero of the hour.

"... and when she spoke with a woman's voice," he said, "I liked to have fell through the earth."