THE SOCIETY'S SPECIAL MEDAL AWARDED TO AMELIA EARHART

First Woman to Receive Geographic Distinction at Brilliant Ceremony in the National Capital

BEFORE one of the most distinguished audiences ever assembled in the National Capital, President Hoover presented Mrs. Amelia Earhart Putnam with the National Geographic Society's Special Gold Medal for her solo airplane flight across the Atlantic.

Presentation of the first of The Society's historic medals to be bestowed upon a woman took place on the evening of June 21, in Constitution Hall, national auditorium of a woman's organization, the Daughters of the American Revolution.

Highest officials of the three branches of the Federal Government participated in the ceremony. On the platform with the President of the United States and Mrs. Hoover were the Chief Justice of the United States, who is a Trustee of The Society, and Mrs. Hughes, and in the audience were enough Senators and Representatives to make a quorum in either House of Congress.

Also attending were diplomatic representatives of 22 countries, including those from European nations which had honored the flyer after her dramatic landing at Londonderry, Ireland; high officers of the Army, Navy, and Marine Corps, and noted scientists, men of letters, and other members of The Society.

A VIVID RECITAL OF HER EXPERIENCES

Dr. Gilbert Grosvenor, President of the National Geographic Society, presided and presented President Hoover. Following her acknowledgment of the medal, highest American reward for geographic achievement, Miss Earhart—Amelia Earhart, she explained, is her "flying name"—gave the first complete narrative of her eventful voyage.

Miss Earhart's vivid account of her epochal flight thus becomes available to the world membership of The Society, as were other noteworthy reports on explorations, such as those of Colonel Roosevelt when he returned from South America and Africa; of Colonel Lindbergh, after his pioneer Atlantic crossing, and of Admiral Byrd, following his flights across the Atlantic and to the North Pole and South Pole.

Thus another first narrative of geographic high adventure is added to the long list of "first-edition" accounts of exploration contained in bound volumes of THE GEOGRAPHIC, which are found in member libraries in every civilized country of the world.

The only added decorations in Constitution Hall on this occasion were the flag of the United States and the flag of the National Geographic Society, which has been carried by The Society's expeditions on sea and land, across burning sands and icy wastes, on every continent and over every ocean, during the numerous explorations sponsored by the organization.

The U. S. Marine Band played as the President and Mrs. Hoover entered, accompanied by Mr. and Mrs. Putnam, who had been guests at the White House for dinner.

Trustees and officers of The Society tendered Miss Earhart a luncheon at The Society's headquarters on the day of the medal presentation.

More than 10,000 requests were received for tickets of admission to the auditorium, whose seating capacity is limited to 3,800. Arrangements were made, therefore, not only for Washington members of The Society to "listen in" over the radio, but for the more than one million member families throughout the country, as well as the general public, to hear the addresses of President Hoover, Dr. Grosvenor, President of The Society, and Mrs. Putnam, the medalist, through a network of 38 stations of the National Broadcasting Company.

OFFICIALS ON THE PLATFORM

On the platform seated with the President, Mrs. Hoover, Dr. and Mrs. Grosvenor, and Mrs. Putnam were Dr. John Oliver La Gorce, Vice-President of the National Geographic Society, and Mrs. La Gorce; the Chief Justice of the United States and Mrs. Hughes, the Minister of the Irish Free State and Mrs. MacWhite,

Photograph by Paramount from Keystone

OFF ALONE TO CROSS THE ATLANTIC

Just at dusk Miss Earhart's plane left the ground at Harbour Grace, Newfoundland, and journeyed through the night. She landed safely in Ireland the next morning.

Mr. and Mrs. William P. MacCracken, Jr., Hon. and Mrs. Theodore G. Joslin, Captain Joel T. Boone, U. S. N., and Mrs. Boone, Hon. John Barton Payne, Dr. George Otis Smith, Hon. Walter H. Newton and Mrs. Newton, Hon. French Strother and Mrs. Strother, Director and Mrs. Raymond S. Patton, Dr. George R. Putnam and Miss Putnam, Colonel U. S. Grant, 3d, and Mrs. Grant, Lieutenant Colonel Campbell B. Hodges, Hon. Charles D. Millard and Mrs. Millard, Captain Charles Russell Train and Mrs. Train, Mrs. Stark McMullin, Hon. Clarence M. Young, Mr. George Palmer Putnam, Miss Mildred Hall, Miss Doris Goss, Lieutenant F. B. Butler and Mrs. Butler, Lieutenant F. V. H. Kimble, Mr. and Mrs. Mark Requa, and Mr. and Mrs. Warren D. Robbins.

Among those in the audience were the Secretary of State and Mrs. Stimson, the Secretary of the Treasury and Mrs. Mills, the Attorney General and Mrs. Mitchell, the Postmaster General and Mrs. Brown, the Secretary of Commerce and Mrs. Lamont.

Only 12 men have received The Society's medal since the first presentation to Peary, in 1906. Thus Amelia Earhart's name is enrolled on the roster of geographic fame which includes Admiral Byrd, Colonel Lindbergh, Captain Amundsen, Sir Ernest Shackleton, and Dr. Hugo Eckener.

The medal bore the inscription, "Awarded by the National Geographic Society to Amelia Earhart, First Woman to Achieve a Solo Transatlantic Flight, May 20-21, 1932."

INTRODUCING THE PRESIDENT

Dr. Grosvenor, the first speaker of the evening, said:

"Mr. President, Mrs. Hoover, members and friends of the National Geographic Society:

"We are assembled to honor a member of our Society who has made another milestone in the swift progress of the youthful science of aëronautics. Amelia Earhart is the first woman to fly alone across the Atlantic and the only person who has twice crossed the ocean in an airplane.

"She has also achieved the speed record for crossing the Atlantic—16 hours, 12 minutes; and the distance record—2,026.5 miles—for a flight by a woman.

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RESIDENTS OF LONDONDERRY CHEER THE SUCCESSFUL TRANSATLANTIC FLYER AS SHE LANDS NEAR THEIR CITY AFTER HER LONG AND DANGEROUS SOLO FLIGHT

© Harris and Ewing

A TRIBUTE FROM MRS. HOOVER

The "First Lady of the Air" was presented with an exquisite basket of flowers by the First Lady of the Land.

Photograph from Keystone View Company

READY FOR A FLIGHT

That rare quality of courage, together with skill and a sureness of spirit, is reflected in Miss Earhart's flying smile.

"Following her first transatlantic flight four years ago, she addressed our Society. During that crossing, though she was then a skillful pilot, she made no plea to take the controls. She placed success ahead of personal fame.

"Her restraint then, her self-discipline, training, long observation, and thorough preparation for the feat she has just accomplished, remove it from the category of happy accident and stamp it as one of the enduring achievements of aviation.

A PIONEER SPONSOR OF AVIATION

"Your Society has long been a pioneer and sponsor of aviation. Since 1903, when the National Geographic Society printed in its Magazine an article by Alexander Graham Bell, which foreshadowed the practical application of aëronautics to travel, exploration, and shipment of goods, many explorers of the air—Byrd, Lindbergh, Eckener, Ross Smith, Kingsford-Smith, Cobham, Macready, Dargue, De Pinedo, Mittelholzer, Stevens—have recounted for it and your GEOGRAPHIC MAGAZINE their trails through the skies, as have the noted explorers of land and sea.

"Amelia Earhart is the eighth person and the first woman to receive one of THE GEOGRAPHIC'S medals from the hands of the President of the United States since the presentation of our first award to Admiral Peary by President Roosevelt.

"The presentation to Sir Ernest Shackleton, for Antarctic discoveries, was made by President Taft, who was for many years a member of The Society's Board of Trustees. The presentation to Colonel Goethals, as builder of the Panama Canal, was made by President Wilson. Presentations were made to Admiral Byrd, to Floyd Bennett, and to Colonel Lindbergh by President Coolidge, who now is a member of our Board of Trustees.

"A second medal to Admiral Byrd, in recognition of his Antarctic explorations, was presented by President Hoover.

"To-night President Hoover again honors our Society. It is fitting that a medal for aviation achievement should be tendered, on behalf of our Society, by one who, as Secretary of Commerce for eight years and as Chief Executive, has vitally aided development of aviation in the United States.

"Daily many thousands of men, women, and children are traveling by air in complete safety because of the wise policies governing air travel in the United States, many of which Mr. Hoover initiated.

"It is a source of deep gratification to our members to realize that their Society, in its encouragement of science, in its broad educational work, and in its promotion of understanding among people of the world, represents those constructive ideals cherished by President Hoover.

"In the library of the National Geographic Society is a prized volume, which is the first English translation of a Latin treatise of 1556 on mining methods. The translation bears the date of 1912 and the names of the translators, Herbert Hoover and Lou Henry Hoover, who then inscribed herself as 'A. B., Stanford University, Member American Association for the Advancement of Science, the National Geographic Society, and the Royal Scottish Geographical Society.'

APPRECIATION OF MRS. HOOVER'S SUPPORT OF THE SOCIETY

"Mrs. Hoover has been a member of our Society for thirty years, joining it when it was a small group of some 2,500 members. Her encouragement and consistent support have greatly aided The Society.

"In behalf of a present membership of 1,200,000 persons, representing every county and community in our Nation and every civilized country in the world, we thank you, Mr. President, and Mrs. Hoover for your kindness in coming to this meeting and adding to those precious traditions which give strength and permanence to our Society.

"Ladies and gentlemen, the President of the United States."

ADDRESS BY PRESIDENT HOOVER

President Hoover, in presenting the Special Medal of The Society, said:

"It is a great pleasure to come here and share in your honoring of Mrs. Amelia Earhart Putnam. She has shown a splendid courage and skill in flying alone across the Atlantic Ocean. She has often before demonstrated her ability to accomplish the most difficult tasks that she set herself to do. She has been modest and good-humored.

"All these things combine to place her in spirit with the great pioneering women to whom every generation of Americans has looked up, with admiration for their firmness of will, their strength of character, and their cheerful spirit of comradeship in the work of the world. It is significant that she found the first outlet for her energies in social settlement work, and that through all her succession of triumphs in aviation, her transcontinental and transoceanic flights, she has continued active in this warmly human labor.

"Her success has not been won by the selfish pursuit of a purely personal ambition, but as part of a career generously animated by a wish to help others to share in the rich opportunities of life, and by a wish also to enlarge those opportunities by expanding the powers of women as well as men to their ever-widening limits.

"Mrs. Putnam has made all mankind her debtor by her demonstration of new possibilities of the human spirit and the human will in overcoming the barriers of space and the restrictions of Nature upon the radius of human activity. The Nation is proud that an American woman should be the first woman in history to fly an airplane alone across the Atlantic Ocean. As their spokesman, I take pride and pleasure in conferring this rarely bestowed medal of the National Geographic Society upon Mrs. Amelia Earhart Putnam."

THE ADDRESS OF ACCEPTANCE

In accepting The Society's Special Medal, Amelia Putnam said:

"Mr. President, Dr. Grosvenor, Dr. La Gorce, members of the National Geographic Society, ladies and gentlemen:

"I am deeply grateful for the medal you have bestowed upon me. I have no words in which to express my appreciation to you and to the National Geographic Society. I can but feel it is too great an honor for my exploit.

"I am going to tell you something about the trip, which was simply a personal gesture on my part. Four years ago I went on the *Friendship* and, as has been said, was simply a passenger. In fact, in England I was referred to as 'a sack of potatoes.' That all too-appropriate appellation, probably as much as any other single factor, inspired me to try going alone.

"Some features of the flight I fear have been exaggerated. It made a much better story to say I landed with but one gallon of gasoline left. As a matter of fact, I had more than a hundred. The exact quantity I remember because I had to pay a tax for every gallon imported into Ireland!

HAZARDS NOT QUITE SO MANIFEST AS DESCRIBED

"I did *not* land within six feet of a hedge of trees. I taxied to the upper end of a sloping pasture and turned my plane into the shelter of some trees, as a matter of course. It made a much better story the other way, I admit.

"No flames were threatening to burn my plane in the air. I did have some trouble with my exhaust manifold, of which I shall tell you later. There was no extreme hazard from that cause, however.

"I did not kill a cow in landing—unless one died of fright. Of course, I came down in a pasture and I had to circle many other pastures to find the best one. The horses, sheep, and cows in Londonderry were not used to airplanes, and so, as I flew low, they jumped up and down and displayed certain disquiet. I really was afraid that an Irishman would shoot me as I stepped out of the plane, thinking that I was just a 'smart Alec' from some big town come down to scare the cattle.

"To begin at the beginning, I left Harbour Grace at dusk. I preferred to fly all night and land on the other side in daylight rather than leave during the day and run the risk of landing, when daylight was failing, on an unknown shore. I had at least two hours of daylight or two hours when I could still see the glow of the setting sun if I looked back.

"I started to keep a log, but it didn't continue very long. On that log I jotted down '8:30—two icebergs,' and a little later I recorded the fact that I had seen a small boat a couple of hours out of Harbour Grace. I was flying at 12,000 feet and I blinked my navigation lights, hoping that the vessel would sight me. However, I do not think I was seen because I received no answering signal and probably was too high to be noticed, anyway.

"Two hours after I left the moon came up over a field of little, scattered, woolly

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ARRIVING AT THE WASHINGTON AIRPORT

Appropriately enough, Miss Earhart came to the capital by plane. Officers of the National Geographic Society extended her an official welcome as she landed, while a crowd of interested onlookers accorded her an enthusiastic greeting.

clouds. Those little woolly clouds grew compact and finally covered the ocean with their soft whiteness. I flew along with nothing happening until 11:00, when an enormous dark cloud loomed before me, stretching as far as I could see. Behind it I watched the moon finally disappear. It was entirely too high for me to climb over. I could not waste the gasoline, and flying for any length of time at 20,000 feet, which was approximately the height of the cloud, is too hard on the pilot without special apparatus.

"Two things happened before I struck the storm. One was that my altimeter, the instrument which shows height above a level, had failed me for the first time in 12 years of flying; so that I could not know how high I was above the sea. The other, a weld in my exhaust began to burn through. I knew after several hours the sections would become loosened and tend to vibrate. It was a heavy manifold and very rigidly attached to the cylinders, so that excessive vibration might have been more or less serious.

"I plunged at 11:30 into the storm cloud and met the roughest air I have ever encountered while flying completely blind. By blind I mean I could not see out of my cockpit at all. I had light there which, of course, did not cast much illumination beyond the windowpane, any more than a lamp in a house throws its glow far outside. For about an hour I could not keep my course absolutely. I was tossed about to such an extent that accuracy was impossible.

"I had been told by the Weather Bureau that there were storms south of my course; possibly those storms would come on my course about midnight, but after that I should probably have moonlight and stars.

MENACED BY THE DREAD ICE HAZARD

"I did not get out of the storm area. In fact, I continued in it until daylight came. When I tried to climb out, I picked up considerable ice, and ice is a hazard which all flyers dread.

"In order to get out of the ice area, I came down. Aviators have no other protection, except to get out of the particular temperature zone where ice forms. I went down until I could see the white caps breaking in the darkness. If it had been a smooth sea, I might have gone too far.

"As my altimeter was out of commission, I could not tell whether I was 50 feet off the water or 150. I only knew I was too close; so I tried to climb through again, and again picked up ice, and concluded that I must fly under the altitude, whatever it was, where I collected ice, and over the locality where I thought the water waited.

"When daylight came I could see on my wings traces of the ice which had gathered—droplets of water and very small frozen particles. Probably, if I had been able to see what was happening on the outside during the night, I would have had heart failure then and there; but, as I could not see, I carried on.

THREE TYPES OF COMPASSES SHOWED THE WAY

"Instrument flying is easier sometimes than trying to see an obscure horizon. By instrument flying I mean that type of flying in which the pilot cannot see a horizon—cannot see outside his cockpit, probably. It is a curious fact that our sense of position in space sometimes depends on our being aware of the horizon. A flyer in a fog is just as blind as if he had a bandage tied over his eyes, and his unaided senses may give him the incorrect impressions. Modern instruments have been invented to help our faulty senses under such conditions.

"The instruments I had for flying were three different types of compasses—one a simple magnetic compass, the other an aperiodic, and a third a directional gyro, which has to be set about every 20 minutes with one of the others as checks. It is, by the way, one of the best blind-flying instruments I know.

"I think that instrument flying will be a significant step in aviation. With it developed, I think the weather will not hinder flying any more than it does any other means of transportation. After all, trains are stalled by washouts and ships by fogs; so their performance isn't perfect either. Probably more weather information, possibly through mid-ocean stations, will add further to aviation's reliability.

"In my opinion, any expedition owes 60 per cent of its success to the preparation beforehand. I was fortunate in having Bernt Balchen, the great Norwegian flyer, who was with Admiral Byrd at the South

Photograph by Acme

AT THE WHITE HOUSE

In the group from left to right are: Dr. Gilbert Grosvenor, President Hoover, Amelia Earhart Putnam, and Mrs. Hoover. In the back row: George Palmer Putnam and Dr. John Oliver La Gorce, Vice-President of The Society.

The medal presented to Amelia Earhart Putnam on behalf of the National Geographic Society by President Herbert Hoover, June 21, 1932. She is the first woman to receive The Society's award.

Pole, to help me with my preparations. In fact, he flew me to Harbour Grace to save me fatigue before the actual take-off.

"The motor I had was a super-charged Pratt and Whitney 'Wasp,' developing about 500 horsepower. I carried 420 gallons of gasoline. I had flown my plane for three years; so I really ought to know it and it ought to know me. Of course, I had the advantage of having crossed once before and of knowing something of the conditions which were inevitable—that no one can expect good weather over the Atlantic for 2,000 miles.

"For food I carried a very simple ration—tomato juice. I think that serves as food and drink, and I used just a few swallows of it. I had no sandwiches or anything of that sort with me. The fact is, one doesn't think much about food on such a journey.

NOT TROUBLED BY DROWSINESS

"I have been asked many times whether I was sleepy, and I can say, 'No, indeed,' emphatically. With very concentrated flying, one becomes wider and wider awake. Then, after all, one night is not any particular strain. One can do almost anything for one night; so that I did not have any great fatigue. Possibly, if the night had been a beautiful, clear one, with the moon and stars shining and with nothing for me to do, I might have got somewhat drowsy. Flying in the kind of weather I met, however, made even winking an eye impossible.

"When daylight came I found myself between two layers of clouds. One I should estimate at 20,000 feet and the other a thousand feet over the water. With a glimpse of the water that I had then, which was the first in many hours, I noted that I had a strong northwest wind. I thought then that I must be south of my course, inasmuch as I had run into storms predicted south of my course, and I found myself in a northwest wind. Therefore, instead of following implicitly the course which I had laid out, I tried to allow for what I considered my southward drift. Consequently I hit Ireland farther north than I had expected (see, also, illustration, page 360).

"With my exhaust burned out, as it was by that time, I thought it was common sense to check over the first land available, and I did not want to miss the tip of Ireland. So I corrected too much. After sighting land, I started down toward the southern coast, found thunderstorms in the mountains, and, not knowing the topography of the region, thought it was not very sensible to try to fly through. I then turned north into clearer weather.

"Using United States reasoning in Ireland was not quite effective. I thought if I followed a railroad I should come to a large town, and a large town would have an airport, as they usually do here. I found the railroad, followed it, came to a fair-sized city, but found no port. Consequently I selected the best pasture I could find and settled down in it. I pulled up at the front door of a farmhouse and asked the surprised farmer for a drink of water—an unusual request in Ireland, I found!

"Probably more exciting than actually sighting land was seeing a small fishing vessel about 100 miles off the coast. I was going by, as I wanted to reach land, but then decided to circle, that all might know I had got so far, anyway. I circled and received an answering signal. A whistle and some kind of bomb was sent off. Of course, I could not hear them, but I could see the smoke and the steam from the whistle. It was the first human contact since Newfoundland.

"My flight has added nothing to aviation. After all, literally hundreds have crossed the Atlantic by air, if those who have gone in heavier-than-air and lighter-than-air craft are counted and those who have crossed the North and the South Atlantic. However, I hope that the flight has meant something to women in aviation. If it has, I shall feel it was justified; but I can't claim anything else.

"I am grateful to have had the privilege of coming here to-night, and for the honor which the National Geographic Society has paid me."