



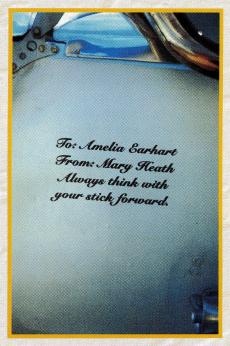


The transcontinental flight will undoubtedly create even more interest in the pioneering aviator.

purchased a Kinner Canary and became a regular feature at the many southern California airfields.

Returning to the east coast to complete college, Amelia became president of the local chapter of the National Aeronautic Association while being employed as a social worker at a settlement house. Whenever she could, Amelia would try to add more hours to her log book. To her surprise, Amelia received a phone call from a woman named Amy Guest. Guest was sponsoring a flight across the Atlantic and wanted a woman as a passenger — a passenger that would become the first female to cross the Atlantic by air.





All of the markings have been faithfully recreated using vintage photographs.

### SPECIFICATIONS AVRO AVIAN 7083

Span	28 ft
Length	24 ft 3 in
Height	8 ft 6 in
Tare Weight	1130 lb
Max Weight	2002 lb
Fuel	35 gal
Climb	650 fpm (initial)
Ceiling	18,000 ft
Max Speed	I02 mph
Cruise Speed	87 mph
Powerplant	de Havilland Gipsy II
	of I20-hp

Thus a deal was struck and although Amelia would not do any flying, she would serve as a goodwill ambassador and wrote that she could not possibley "refuse such a shining adventure." The aircraft for the journey was a Fokker tri-motor fitted with large floats and named *Friendship*. The flight was a success and the aircraft arrived in the United Kingdom 20 hours and 40 minutes after leaving North America.

Being the first woman to cross the Atlantic by air, Amelia received most of the publicity with the pilots being overlooked even though Amelia tried to direct press attention toward the aviators. She became much in demand for speeches and appearances while in

## DR. CARLENE MENDIETA

Inspired as a child by watching Piper Cubs fly over neighboring sheepherders' properties, Dr. Carlene Mendieta knew someday she would learn to fly. Born the daughter of immigrant Basque sheepherders on 18 January 1954 in Winnemucca, Nevada, Mendieta spent her youth tracing the light aircraft through the northwestern Nevada skies as ranch owners surveyed their herds.

While maintaining her romantic notions of aviation, her practical self drew her to pursue a career in dentistry. She graduated from the University of Nevada at Reno and settled in Elko where she worked for a dentist who had a Super Cub. Mendieta became his first passenger and, for the next year, the two of them escaped to the airfield to fly whenever patients canceled or an opportunity arose. In 1986, she completed her dental degree at the University of the Pacific and, in 1988, completed her postdoctoral at the University of California at San Francisco. Soon after, Mendieta started a private practice and, with a growing desire to be more than just a passenger and on-going encouragement from her friends, Mendieta decided to learn to fly.

She began flying Cubs off the airstrip at Schellville, California, in 1998. Surrounded by a community of pilots who owned a variety of vintage taildragger aircraft, she not only picked up on all the subtleties of piloting vintage aircraft but also became a dedicated student of aviation mechanics.

Mendieta purchased her first aircraft, a J-3 Cub with a 65-hp Continental engine, and on 11 November 1998 completed her first solo flight. Shortly after, she flew solo in a friend's Bucker Jungmeister — a rare German-designed advanced aerobatic trainer. In the following months she added a Rose Parakeet, Ryan STA, Monocoupe, and Alexander Eaglerock to her log.

Today, Mendieta owns three vintage aircraft and has accumulated 300 flight hours — approximately the same number of hours Amelia Earhart had when he set out on her record-setting 1928 flight.



With 300 flying hours, Carlene Mendieta has approximately the same amount of time as did Amelia Earhart when she set off on her 1928 flight. Amelia's Avian was listed as canceled on 11 August 1936 and we would be pleased to hear from readers that might have information on the craft's final fate.



The Avro Avian at scenic Lake Forest Airport where Carlene and the biplane were being filmed. Other female pilots that flew Avians included Beryl Markham who chronicled her experiences with her Avian in West with the Night. In 1932, she flew her Avian from Nairobi to London and back with nothing but a map and a compass.

England and enjoyed meeting many British pilots. One of the pilots was Lady Mary Heath who had recently completed a 8000-mile flight from Cape Town, South Africa, to Britain. A year earlier, she had set an altitude record in the same craft which was a small Avro Avian biplane.

On 6 June 1928, Amelia went to Croydon Aerodrome south of London where the Avian, carrying the British civil registration G-EBUG, was hangared. Lady Heath and Amelia went up for a two-hour flight and Amelia declared that the Avian was the best aircraft of its type. Lady Heath

then made an offer to sell the plane to Amelia and she instantly accepted.

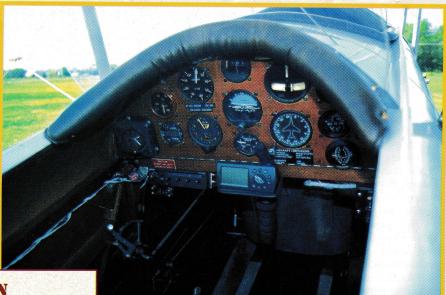
Returning to the United States by ship a few days later, Amelia made arrangements to have the Avian carefully crated and shipped home. The plane arrived at Curtiss Field, New York, at the end of July 1928 where it was assembled and test flown. The aircraft was given the US registration 7083. George Putnam, publicist and publisher, had been involved in the flight of the Friendship and, in order to have Amelia capitalize on

the event, had her quickly writing an "instant book" titled 20 Hrs., 40 Min.: Our Flight in the Friendship. The book was finished in a few weeks and Amelia decided she needed a vacation. She had been giving rides in the Avian and made the decision to fly the craft across the United States and then return — a grand adventure. This was a dream she had for some time and she felt the Avian would be an ideal form of transport.

The adventure started on 31 August 1928 from the polo grounds of Westchester Country Club near Rye, New York—the Putnam home. "Clearly, it was time to get into the air

again. For the moment all I wished to do in the world was to be a vagabond — in the air." The trip would not have specific goals but she did want to be in Los Angeles for the National Air Races.

For the first two legs, she was accompanied by Putnam. From Rye, she flew to the airmail field at Bellefonte, Pennsylvania. Refueling she flew on to Pittsburgh and landed at Rogers Field but hit a hidden ditch. The Avian's weak landing gear collapsed and the plane went up on its nose. It took a major effort to get the craft repaired in just a day and a half. Putnam had leaked word of the flight



The Avian's rather basic instrument panel.

#### THE AVRO AVIAN

After World War One, in a hotly contested civilian market, Avro produced a very successful Golden Age aircraft — the Avian. The prototype flew in the summer of 1926 and for much of its production life, the craft remained an all-wood airplane with no metal tubing in the fuselage. While it was designed to appeal to the growing civilian market for a light sporting aircraft, Avians found their way to the far reaches of the globe. They were used not only by private individuals, but also by many flying clubs and military flight training organizations. In addition to being built in England, Avians were manufactured under license in Canada and the United States.

In 1926, two pre-production Type 594 Avian Mk. Is were produced. Nine Mk. IIs followed these, and in mid-1927 the Mk. III appeared of which 33 were built with the Cirrus II engine of 84-hp, and 58 as the Mk. IIIA using the Cirrus III of 94-hp. The last all wood Avian was the Mk. IV, still with the Cirrus III. One of the principle improvements in the Mk. IV was the strengthening of the landing gear and wing root area to cure the weak gear problem.

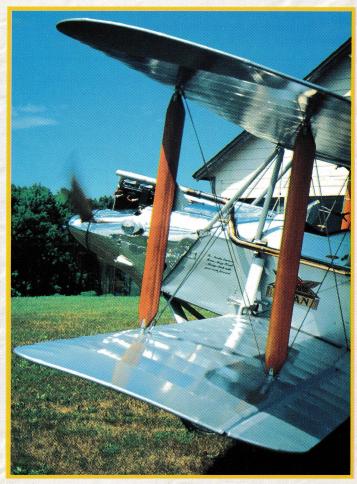
From 1929 on, a steel tube fuselage was introduced and the Type 616 Avian Mk. IVM, powered by the Cirrus III and larger engines, was created. It is the Avian Mk. IVM that was also built in the US and Canada. Amelia's airplane G-EBUG/7083 was the first of the 91 Avion IIIs and was one of the 33 with the 84-hp Cirrus II.

to the press and reporters would follow her across the States.

On 2 September, the Avian departed Pittsburgh and arrived at Dayton where Amelia was given a tour of the Army's aircraft at Wright Field. At this point, Putnam departed the flight and took a train back to New York.

It must be remembered that there were few defined airports at that time and maps were made more for autos than aircraft. Amelia pressed on and made friends wherever she went and, while not really trying to set any records, she became the first woman to fly across America in both directions during her 5500-mile adventure.

Earlier this year, vintage aircraft collector Greg Herrick learned that an Avro Avian might be available for purchase. The aircraft was originally an Avro 594 Avian Mk. II carrying the serial R3/AV/127 and registration G-AUFZ. Fitted with a Cirrus II engine of 84-hp, the aircraft was test flown by Bert Hinkler and then crated and shipped to Australia where it arrived in late 1927. Upon its arrival, Captain F.C.R. Jaques, a World War One Royal Flying Corps pilot who owned the Australian Avro franchise, assembled the craft and used it for



As can be seen, the Avian is in mint condition.

demonstrations, barnstorming, and instruction. Over the years, two significant improvements were made to G-AUFZ (changed to VH-UFZ in 1930). As a Mk. II it had the weaker landing gear and was subsequently converted to a Mk. IV by strengthening the landing gear and wing root areas. A larger, more reliable Gipsy Mk. II engine was also installed which supplied 120-hp.

The craft remained in Australia for the next 74 years until acquired by Herrick. At the time it left Australia, it was the old-



The little Avian is the only example of its type flying in North America.

est registered flying aircraft in the country. Given the plane's long Australian history, removing the craft from Australia was a day of mixed emotions — even for the new owner.

Before VH-UFZ left Australia, its then owner, Land Kidby, took it on a very daring adventure. In 1998, Lang duplicated Bert Hinkler's incredible 11,000-mile flight of seven decades earlier, from England to Australia. Being an admirer of Earhart, Greg was reminded of the flight in her Avian and the idea struck him to duplicate the historic journey.

Accordingly, the Avian was returned to the States and brought back to the condition and appearance of Amelia's 7083. Sponsored by Historic Aviation, the re-creation will begin on or about 6 September 2001 and Carlene Mendieta (see sidebar) will follow Amelia's route as closely as possible — visiting the same places, staying in the same hotels and even eating the same food. The flight will begin at Westchester, close to the original polo grounds, and continue to the airmail field at Bellefonte and then to Pittsburgh for the night. The next day, Carlene will hopefully be able to land at Wright Field, site of today's magnificent Air Force Museum. From Dayton, it's on to Terre Haute and stop to have a "lunch of chicken dinner" just as Amelia recorded in her diary. She then flies to the next field at Belleville, Illinois, for a night stop. Then it's off to Muskogee's famous Hat Box Field. Up the next morning and on to Fort Worth and Meacham Field, from which the first airline passenger ever carried out of the state of Texas had departed just a few months earlier.

After refueling at Ft. Worth, the flight heads due west. On that leg, Amelia wrote "about Sweetwater, I struck some very bumpy air...I would be carried down for 500 feet with the nose of the plane up as far as I could put it without stalling...my map was torn from my knee and I couldn't save it." Running out of light and unsure of her position, Amelia landed on the main street of what was then a "six-month-old boomtown" — Hobbs, New

Mexico. Carlene will also land at Hobbs but hopefully not on the main street.

Up at 6 am, breakfast will be "fried eggs, honey, and bis-(continued on page 72)

# "Feet Wet" by Dave Schweitzer



PRINT SIZE 21" X 32

"Feet Wet" shows a North American RA-5C Vigilante on a combat reconnaissance mission reaching the relative safety of the Tonkin Gulf (going "feet wet" in Navy parlance). The painting is a tribute to the pilots, NFOs and ground crewmembers who flew, operated, maintained or supported this beautiful high-performance aircraft. The A3J-1/A-5A was the U.S. Navy's first Mach 2 nuclear-armed all-weather attack aircraft. Ahead of its time, the first prototype flew August 1958. During the '60s, the Vigilante evolved into a high-speed reconnaissance system with an array of sophisticated electronic, TV, infrared and radar sensors as well as high-resolution cameras. Even 20 years after its retirement, the RA-5C can still lay claim to being the largest and fastest aircraft to fly missions from a carrier.

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