**Richard Evelyn Byrd**

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| **Richard Evelyn Byrd** | |
| October 25, 1888(1888-10-25) – March 11, 1957 (aged 68) | |
|  | |
| **Place of birth** | [Winchester, Virginia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Winchester,_Virginia) |
| **Place of death** | [Boston](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Boston), [Massachusetts](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Massachusetts) |
| **Place of burial** | [Arlington National Cemetery](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arlington_National_Cemetery) |
| **Allegiance** | [United States of America](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States) |
| **Service/branch** | [United States Navy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Navy) |
| **Years of service** | 1912-1927 1940-1947 |
| **Rank** | [Rear Admiral](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rear_admiral_(United_States)) |
| **Battles/wars** | [World War II](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_War_II) |
| **Awards** | [Medal of Honor](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Medal_of_Honor) [Navy Cross](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Navy_Cross) [Navy Distinguished Service Medal](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Navy_Distinguished_Service_Medal) [Distinguished Flying Cross](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Distinguished_Flying_Cross_(United_States)) [Legion of Merit](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Legion_of_Merit) |

[Rear Admiral](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rear_admiral_(United_States)) **Richard Evelyn Byrd, Jr.**, [USN](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Navy) (October 25, 1888 – March 11, 1957) was a pioneering [American](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States) polar explorer, aviator and a recipient of the [Medal of Honor](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Medal_of_Honor).

**Ancestry**

He was a descendant of one of the [First Families of Virginia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/First_Families_of_Virginia). His ancestors included planter [John Rolfe](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Rolfe) and his wife [Pocahontas](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pocahontas), [William Byrd II](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Byrd_II) of [Westover Plantation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Westover_Plantation), who established [Richmond](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Richmond,_Virginia), and [Robert "King" Carter](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert_Carter_I), a colonial governor. He was the brother of [Virginia Governor](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Governor_of_Virginia) and [U.S. Senator](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/U.S._Senator) [Harry Flood Byrd](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harry_F._Byrd), a dominant figure in [Virginia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Virginia) [Democratic Party](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Democratic_Party_(United_States)) between the 1920s and 1960s.

**Education and U. S. Navy**

Byrd attended the [University of Virginia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/University_of_Virginia) before financial circumstances inspired his transfer to the [United States Naval Academy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Naval_Academy) in 1912. He learned to fly in [World War I](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_War_I) during his tour with the [United States Navy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Navy). He developed a passion for flight, and pioneered many techniques for navigating airplanes over the open ocean including drift indicators and bubble sextants. His expertise in this area resulted in his appointment to plan the flight path for the U.S. Navy's 1919 [transatlantic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Transatlantic) crossing. Of the three [flying boats](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flying_boats) that attempted it, only [Albert Read](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Albert_Read)'s aircraft the [NC-4](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/NC-4) completed the trip; becoming the first ever transatlantic flight.

**Claimed North Pole flight, 1926**

On May 9, 1926, Byrd and pilot [Floyd Bennett](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Floyd_Bennett) attempted a flight over the North Pole in a [Fokker F-VII](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fokker_F-VII) Tri-motor called the *Josephine Ford*. This flight went from [Spitsbergen](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spitsbergen) (Svalbard) and back to its take-off airfield. Byrd claimed to have reached the Pole. This trip earned Byrd widespread acclaim, including being awarded the [Medal of Honor](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Medal_of_Honor) and enabled him to secure funding for subsequent attempts to fly over the South Pole.

From 1926 until 1996, there were doubts, defenses, and heated controversy about whether or not Byrd actually reached the North Pole. In 1958 [Norwegian-American](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Norwegian-American) aviator and explorer [Bernt Balchen](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bernt_Balchen) cast doubt on Byrd's claim based on his extensive personal knowledge of the airplane's speed. In 1971 Balchen speculated that Byrd had simply circled aimlessly while out of sight of land.

The 1996 release of Byrd's diary of the May 9, 1926 flight revealed erased (but still legible) sextant sights that sharply differ with Byrd's later June 22 typewritten official report to the National Geographic Society. Byrd took a sextant reading of the Sun at 7:07:10 GCT. His erased diary record shows the apparent (observed) solar altitude to have been 19°25'30", while his later official typescript reports the same 7:07:10 apparent solar altitude to have been 18°18'18". On the basis of this and other data in the diary, [Dennis Rawlins](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dennis_Rawlins) concluded that Byrd steered accurately, and courageously flew about 80% of the distance to the Pole before turning back due to an engine oil leak, but later falsified his official report to support his claim of reaching the pole.



The Fokker FVIIa/3M - "Josephine Ford", on display at [The Henry Ford Museum](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Henry_Ford)

Accepting that the conflicting data in the typed report's flight times indeed require both northward and southward groundspeeds greater than the flight's 85 mph airspeed, a remaining Byrd defender posits a westerly-moving anti-cyclone that tailwind-boosted Byrd's groundspeed on both outward and inward legs, allowing the distance claimed to be covered in the time claimed. (The theory is based on rejecting handwritten sextant data in favor of typewritten alleged dead-reckoning data.) This suggestion has been refuted by [Dennis Rawlins](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dennis_Rawlins) who adds that the sextant data in the long unavailable original official typewritten report are all expressed to 1", a precision not possible on Navy sextants of 1926 and not the precision of the sextant data in Byrd's diary for 1925 or the 1926 flight, which was normal (half or quarter of a minute of arc). Some sources claim that Floyd Bennett and Byrd later revealed, in private conversations, that they did not reach the pole. One source claims that Floyd Bennett later told a fellow pilot that they did not reach the pole. It is also claimed that Byrd confessed his failure to reach the North Pole during a long walk with Dr. Isaiah Bowman in 1930.

Considering that Byrd and Bennett probably didn't reach the North Pole, it is extremely likely that the first flight over the Pole was the flight of the airship [*Norge*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Norge_(airship)) in May 1926 with its crew of [Roald Amundsen](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roald_Amundsen), [Umberto Nobile](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Umberto_Nobile), [Oscar Wisting](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oscar_Wisting), and others. This flight went from [Spitsbergen](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spitsbergen) (Svalbard) to [Alaska](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alaska) nonstop, so there is little doubt that they went over the North Pole. Amundsen and Wisting had both been members of the first expedition to the South Pole, December 1911.

In 2008 long-time author-historian and polar veteran [Lisle Rose](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lisle_Rose) vigorously disputed the Balchen/Rawlins thesis. The first person to have complete access to the Byrd files, Rose also consulted the Balchen papers and those of Byrd’s contemporaries –friends and enemies alike – together with lesser known writings of respected polar aviators to produce the first full-scale biography of the self-styled “Admiral of the Antarctic.”

Rose concluded that the oil leak in one of the aircraft’s three main engines was of no threat to the polar flight; once the oil level fell below the level of the puncture it stopped. Moreover, Byrd had chosen the Fokker F-VII precisely because it could effectively operate on two or even one engine. Only Balchen maintained that the plane’s cruising air speed was a mere 85 mph. The Fokker’s design specifications together with the operational flight experience of many who flew the aircraft at the time indicated that its cruising air speed was above 100 mph fully loaded, which Byrd’s plane was not. Several experienced pilots dismissed the contention that for over six hours Byrd and Bennett, who had just completed a rigorous schedule of Arctic flying the previous year in Greenland, did not notice that a brisk headwind was forcing their aircraft’s speed down to a near stall level. The supposed flight “diary” discovered in 1996 and the subject of much sensational speculation was, in fact, nothing more than an episodic “scrap log,” a series of notes, queries, and questions that Byrd jotted on a calendar pad; the same sort of document kept by many flying and seafaring navigators down the years and centuries to set down immediate calculations as quickly and fully as possible to be later checked and refined as to time, accuracy, and detail. It is clear that Byrd did keep a more detailed and formal flight log as he went along, for it was reviewed by both the navy and one of Byrd’s sponsors, the prestigious National Geogrphic Society upon his return.

Finally, Air Force navigator William Mollett . has flown to or near the vicinity of the North Pole over ninety times maintains that Byrd’s official report of the flight contains no less than three evidences of authenticity. First, Byrd’s triangulation on the Spitzbergen mountains during the first hour of flight allowed him to check his drift meter speeds for accuracy. Second, his heading directly at the sun when it crossed the 15E Meridian confirmed his position by the shadow of his sun compass. Third, his report of strong north winds making white caps in Amsterdam Island Bay indicated strong tail winds that would have pushed the aircraft back from the pole at the necessarily high speeds to conform to the time of flight.

Finally, Rose reminds readers that Byrd and Bennett were not alone in their aerial quest for the pole. They barely beat into the air Roald Amundsen, the greatest polar explorer of his time, perhaps of all time. Several days later, Amundsen and a substantial party of men came along the same track that Byrd and Bennett had followed in their dirigible. The high Arctic was still terra incognita and there was speculation that some sort of land formation might exist near the Pole. Byrd and Bennett, therefore, could not risk not achieving the Pole only to be ridiculed for not reporting what was clearly there. For all these reasons, Byrd’s claim that he and Bennett flew to the North Pole must be accepted as true.

**Trans-Atlantic flight, 1927**



Lt. Com. Byrd and aircraft



Byrd's expedition

Byrd was one of several aviators who attempted to win the [Orteig Prize](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Orteig_Prize) in 1927 for making the first nonstop flight between the United States and France. His flight was sponsored by department-store magnate [Rodman Wanamaker](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rodman_Wanamaker), an early visionary of Trans-Atlantic commercial flight. Once again Byrd named Floyd Bennett as his chief pilot, with support from Bernt Balchen, [Bert Acosta](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bert_Acosta), and George Noville. During a practice takeoff with Tony Fokker at the controls and Bennett in the co-pilots seat, the [Fokker Trimotor](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fokker_F.VII) airplane, [*America*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/America_(airplane)), crashed, severely injuring Bennett and slightly injuring Byrd. As the plane was being repaired, [Charles Lindbergh](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_Lindbergh) won the prize. But Byrd continued with his quest, naming Balchen to replace Bennett as chief pilot. Byrd, Balchen, Acosta, and Noville flew from Roosevelt Field [East Garden City, New York](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/East_Garden_City,_New_York) on June 29, 1927. Arriving over [France](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/France), cloud cover prevented a landing in Paris; they returned to the coast of [Normandy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Normandy), crash-landing near the beach without fatalities on July 1, 1927.

**First Antarctic expedition, 1928-1930**

In 1928, Byrd began his first expedition to the [Antarctic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Antarctic) involving two ships, and three airplanes: a [Ford Trimotor](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ford_Trimotor) called the [*Floyd Bennett*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Floyd_Bennett) (named after the recently deceased pilot of Byrd's previous expeditions); a [Fairchild](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fairchild) [FC-2W2](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fairchild_FC-2), NX8006, built 1928, named "Stars And Stripes" (now displayed at the [Virginia Aviation Museum](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Virginia_Aviation_Museum), on loan from the [National Air and Space Museum](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Air_and_Space_Museum)); a [Fairchild](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fairchild) called the *Virginia* (Byrd's birth state). A base camp named "[Little America](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Little_America_(exploration_base))" was constructed on the [Ross Ice Shelf](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ross_Ice_Shelf) and scientific expeditions by [dog-sled](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dog-sled), [snowmobile](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Snowmobile), and [airplane](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fixed-wing_aircraft) began. Photographic expeditions and geological surveys were undertaken for the duration of that summer, and constant radio communications were maintained with the outside world. After their first winter, their expeditions were resumed, and on November 29, 1929, the famous flight to the South Pole and back was launched. Byrd, along with pilot [Bernt Balchen](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bernt_Balchen), co-pilot/radioman Harold June, and photographer [Ashley McKinley](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ashley_Chadbourne_McKinley), flew the [Ford Trimotor](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ford_Trimotor) to the South Pole and back in 18 hours, 41 minutes.

They had difficulty gaining enough altitude, and they had to dump empty gas tanks, as well as their emergency supplies, in order to achieve the altitude of the Polar Plateau. However, the flight was successful, and it entered Byrd into the history books. After a further summer of exploration, the expedition returned to North America on June 18, 1930. A 19 year-old American [Boy Scout](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Boy_Scout), [Paul Allman Siple](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul_Siple), was chosen to accompany the expedition. Unlike the 1926 flight, this expedition was honored with the gold medal of the American Geographical Society.

Byrd, by then an internationally recognized, pioneering American polar explorer and aviator, served for a time as Honorary National President (1931-1935) of [Pi Gamma Mu](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pi_Gamma_Mu), the international honor society in the social sciences. In 1928, he carried the Society's flag during a historic expedition to the Antarctic to dramatize the spirit of adventure into the unknown, characterizing both the natural and social sciences.

**Byrd's later Antarctic expeditions**



Cover of Byrd's Autobiography

Byrd undertook four more expeditions to Antarctica from 1933–35, 1939–40, 1946–47 and 1955–56.

As a senior officer in the United States Navy, Byrd, performed national defense service during World War II (1941-45), mostly as a consultant to the U.S.N. high commanders.

On his second expedition, in 1934, Byrd spent five winter months alone operating a [meteorological](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meteorology) station, Advance Base, from which he narrowly escaped with his life after suffering [carbon monoxide](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carbon_monoxide) poisoning from a poorly-ventilated stove. Unusual radio transmissions from Byrd finally began to alarm the men at the base camp, who then attempted to go to Advance Base. The first two trips were failures due to darkness, snow, and mechanical troubles. Finally, [Dr. Thomas Poulter](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dr._Thomas_Poulter), [E.J. Demas](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=E.J._Demas&action=edit&redlink=1), and [Amory Waite](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Amory_Waite&action=edit&redlink=1) arrived at advanced base, where they found Byrd in poor physical health. The men remained at advanced base until October 12, when an airplane from the base camp picked up Dr. Poulter and Byrd. The rest of the men returned to base camp with the tractor. This expedition is described by Byrd in his autobiography *Alone*. It is also commemorated in a U.S. [postage stamp](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Postage_stamp) issued at the time, and a considerable amount of mail using it was sent from Byrd's base at [Little America](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Little_America), which was powered by a [Jacobs Wind](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jacobs_Wind) 2.5 KW. Later a [souvenir sheet](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Souvenir_sheet) was also issued. All of this philatelic material is readily available at modest prices.

In late 1938, Byrd visited Hamburg and was invited to participate in the 1938/1939 German "[Neuschwabenland](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_Swabia)" Antarctic Expedition, but declined.

Byrd's [third expedition](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Antarctic_Service_Expedition) was his first one on which he had the official backing of the U.S. government. The project included extensive studies of geology, biology, meteorology and exploration. Within a few months, in March 1940, Byrd was recalled to active duty in the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations. The expedition continued in Antarctica without him. From 1942 to 1945 he headed important missions to the Pacific, including surveys of remote islands for airfields. On one assignment he visited the fighting front in Europe. He was repeatedly cited for meritorious service and was present at the Japanese surrender.



Admiral Byrd (circa 1955)

The fourth culminating expedition, [Operation Highjump](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Highjump), was the largest Antarctic expedition to date. In 1946, US Navy Secretary [James Forrestal](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_Forrestal) assembled a huge amphibious naval force for an Antarctic Expedition expected to last six to eight months. Besides the flagship [*Mount Olympus*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/USS_Mount_Olympus_(AGC-8)) and the aircraft carrier [*Philippine Sea*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/USS_Philippine_Sea_(CV-47)), there were thirteen US Navy support ships, six helicopters, six flying boats, two seaplane tenders and fifteen other aircraft. The total number of personnel involved was over 4,000. The armada arrived in the Ross Sea on December 31, 1946, and made aerial explorations of an area half the size of the United States, recording ten new mountain ranges. The major area covered was the eastern coastline of Antarctica from 150 degrees east to the Greenwich meridian. The expedition was terminated abruptly at the end of February 1947, six months early, the entire remaining armada returning immediately to the United States. The only explanation ever given for the early termination of the mission was provided in an interview granted to Lee van Atta of International News Services aboard the support ship *Mount Olympus* on the high seas and published in the Chilean newspaper *El Mercurio* on Wednesday 5 March 1947. The following extracts show the abstract manner in which the admiral was thinking and may explain why conspiracy theorists specializing in alleged Aryan or Nazi activities in Antarctica have speculated extensively about this mission: "Admiral Richard E Byrd warned today of the necessity for the United States to adopt protective measures against the possibility of an invasion of the country by hostile aircraft proceeding from the polar regions. The admiral said: "I do not want to scare anybody but the bitter reality is that in the event of a new war the United States will be attacked by aircraft flying in from over one or both poles."

On the subject of the recently terminated expedition, Byrd said that "the most important of the observations and discoveries made was the of the present potential situation as it relates to the security of the United States...I can do no more than warn my countrymen very forcibly that the time has passed when we could take refuge in complete isolation and rest in confidence in the guarantee of security which distance, the oceans and the poles provide. The admiral warned of the necessity to "remain in a state of alert and watchfulness". He said that he "realized perhaps better than any other person the significance of the scientific discoveries made in these explorations because I can make comparisons" (i.e. between now and when he was in Antarctica pre-war). We are abandoning the region after making important geographical discoveries."

As part of the multinational collaboration for the [International Geophysical Year](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Geophysical_Year) (IGY) 1957–58, Byrd commanded the U.S. Navy [Operation Deep Freeze I](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Deep_Freeze) in 1955-56, which established permanent Antarctic bases at [McMurdo Sound](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/McMurdo_Sound), the [Bay of Whales](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bay_of_Whales), and the [South Pole](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_Pole).

**Death**

Richard Byrd died on March 11, 1957 in his sleep at his Brimmer Street home in [Boston](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Boston). Admiral Byrd was buried in [Arlington National Cemetery](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arlington_National_Cemetery).

**Awards, decorations, honors**

By the time he died, he had amassed twenty-two citations and special commendations, nine of which were for bravery and two for extraordinary heroism in saving the lives of others. In addition, he was awarded the [Medal of Honor](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Medal_of_Honor), the [Congressional Life Saving Medal](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Congressional_Life_Saving_Medal), the [Navy Distinguished Service Medal](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Navy_Distinguished_Service_Medal), the [Distinguished Flying Cross](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Distinguished_Flying_Cross_(United_States)), the [Navy Cross](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Navy_Cross), and had three [ticker-tape parades](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ticker-tape_parade). He preferred to dwell on the substance of his global adventures, and the stories of those that had gone awry as *lessons learned*.

In 1927, the [Boy Scouts of America](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Boy_Scouts_of_America) made Byrd an *Honorary Scout*, a new category of Scout created that same year. This distinction was given to "American citizens whose achievements in outdoor activity, exploration and worthwhile adventure are of such an exceptional character as to capture the imagination of boys...". The other eighteen who were awarded this distinction were: [Roy Chapman Andrews](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roy_Chapman_Andrews); [Robert Bartlett](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert_Bartlett_(explorer)); [Frederick Russell Burnham](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frederick_Russell_Burnham); [George Kruck Cherrie](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_Kruck_Cherrie); James L. Clark; [Merian C. Cooper](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Merian_C._Cooper); [Lincoln Ellsworth](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lincoln_Ellsworth); [Louis Agassiz Fuertes](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Louis_Agassiz_Fuertes); [George Bird Grinnell](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_Bird_Grinnell); [Charles A. Lindbergh](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_A._Lindbergh); [Donald Baxter MacMillan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Donald_Baxter_MacMillan); Clifford H. Pope; [George P. Putnam](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_P._Putnam); [Kermit Roosevelt](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kermit_Roosevelt); Carl Rungius; [Stewart Edward White](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stewart_Edward_White); [Orville Wright](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Orville_Wright). Also in 1927, the [City of Richmond](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Richmond,_Virginia) dedicated the Richard Evelyn Byrd Flying Field, now [Richmond International Airport](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Richmond_International_Airport), in [Henrico County, Virginia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Henrico_County,_Virginia). Byrd's [Fairchild](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fairchild) FC-2W2, NX8006, "Stars And Stripes" is on display at the [Virginia Aviation Museum](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Virginia_Aviation_Museum) located on the north side of the airport, on loan from the [National Air and Space Museum](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Air_and_Space_Museum) in Washington, D.C.

[Mount Byrd](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mount_Byrd) on Ross Island, Antarctica and the [lunar crater](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lunar_crater) [Byrd](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Byrd_(lunar_crater)) are named after him, as was the [United States Navy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Navy) dry cargo ship [USNS *Richard E. Byrd* (T-AKE-4)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/USNS_Richard_E._Byrd_(T-AKE-4)) and the now decommissioned [*Charles F. Adams*-class](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_F._Adams_class_destroyer) [guided missile destroyer](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Guided_missile_destroyer) [USS Richard E. Byrd (DDG-23)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/USS_Richard_E._Byrd_(DDG-23))

In [Glen Rock, New Jersey](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Glen_Rock,_New_Jersey) there is Richard E. Byrd school which was dedicated in 1931. The Polar Research Center at [Ohio State University](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ohio_State_University), Columbus, Ohio was named in honor of Admiral Byrd in 1984.

Admiral Richard E. Byrd Middle School, located in [Frederick County, VA](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frederick_County,_Virginia), was opened in 2005. The school is decorated with pictures and letters from Byrd's life and career. There is also a Richard E. Byrd Middle school in [Sun Valley, California](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sun_Valley,_Los_Angeles,_California) and a Richard E. Byrd Middle School in [Elk Grove Village, Illinois](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elk_Grove_Village,_Illinois).

In 1958 the Richard Byrd library, part of the [Fairfax County Public Library](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fairfax_County_Public_Library) system opened in [Springfield, Virginia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Springfield,_Virginia).

**Medal of Honor Citation**

Rank and organization: Commander, United States Navy. Born: October 25, 1888, Winchester, Va. Appointed from: Virginia. Other Navy awards: Navy Cross, Distinguished Service Medal, Legion of Merit with gold star, Distinguished Flying Cross.

**Citation:**

For distinguishing himself conspicuously by courage and intrepidity at the risk of his life, in demonstrating that it is possible for aircraft to travel in continuous flight from a now inhabited portion of the earth over the North Pole and return.

Partial List of Medals Awarded to Rear Admiral Richard E. Byrd, USN:

* Medal of Honor (1926) (Rare Tiffany Cross version)
* Navy Cross
* Navy Distinguished Service Medal with Gold Star
* Legion of Merit with Gold Star
* Distinguished Flying Cross (1926)
* Navy Commendation Ribbon
* Congressional Silver Lifesaving Medal (1914)
* World War Victory Medal (1918)
* Byrd Antarctic Expedition Medal, issued in gold (1928 - 1930)
* 2nd Byrd Antarctic Expedition Medal (1933 - 1935)
* United States Antarctic Expedition Medal (1939 - 1941)
* American Campaign Medal (1943)
* Asiatic Pacific Campaign Medal (1942)
* European Campaign Medal
* World War Two Victory Medal (1945)
* Antarctic Service Medal, posthumously awarded (1960)

**Family**

Admiral Byrd was married (January 20, 1915) to the former Marie Donaldson Ames [he named a region of Antarctic land he discovered “[Marie Byrd Land](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marie_Byrd_Land)”] and had four children - Richard Evelyn Jr., (grandchildren Richard Byrd [great grandson Richard Byrd], Leverett S. Byrd, Ames Byrd, and Harry Flood Byrd II); Evelyn Bolling Byrd Clarke (grandchildren Evelyn Byrd Clarke, Marie Ames Clarke, Eleanor Clarke, and Richard Byrd Clarke); Catherine Agnes Byrd Breyer (grandchildren Robert Byrd Breyer and Katherine Ames Breyer); and Helen Byrd Stabler (grandchildren David Stabler and Ann Blanchard Stabler).

**See also**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | [***United States Navy portal***](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Portal:United_States_Navy) |

* [List of Antarctic expeditions](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Antarctic_expeditions)
* [List of Medal of Honor recipients](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Medal_of_Honor_recipients)
* [List of Medal of Honor recipients during Peacetime](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Medal_of_Honor_recipients_during_Peacetime)
* [Laurence McKinley Gould](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Laurence_McKinley_Gould)

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| [**Persondata**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Persondata) | |
| NAME | Byrd, Richard E. |
| ALTERNATIVE NAMES |  |
| SHORT DESCRIPTION | [United States Navy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Navy) [Medal of Honor](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Medal_of_Honor) recipient |
| DATE OF BIRTH | October 25, 1888 |
| PLACE OF BIRTH | [Winchester, Virginia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Winchester,_Virginia) |
| DATE OF DEATH | March 11, 1957 |
| PLACE OF DEATH | [Boston](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Boston), [Massachusetts](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Massachusetts) |

Retrieved from "<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Richard_Evelyn_Byrd>"

[Categories](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Special:Categories): [1888 births](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:1888_births) | [1957 deaths](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:1957_deaths) | [American aviators](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:American_aviators) | [American Episcopalians](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:American_Episcopalians) | [American explorers](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:American_explorers) | [English Americans](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:English_Americans) | [Burials at Arlington National Cemetery](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:Burials_at_Arlington_National_Cemetery) | [Congressional Gold Medal recipients](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:Congressional_Gold_Medal_recipients) | [Explorers of Antarctica](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:Explorers_of_Antarctica) | [Byrd family of Virginia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:Byrd_family_of_Virginia) | [United States naval aviators](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:United_States_naval_aviators) | [Recipients of the Navy Cross](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:Recipients_of_the_Navy_Cross) | [Navy Medal of Honor recipients](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:Navy_Medal_of_Honor_recipients) | [Oceanographers](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:Oceanographers) | [Recipients of the Distinguished Flying Cross (United States)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:Recipients_of_the_Distinguished_Flying_Cross_(United_States)) | [Recipients of the Legion of Merit](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:Recipients_of_the_Legion_of_Merit) | [United States Naval Academy graduates](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:United_States_Naval_Academy_graduates) | [United States Navy admirals](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:United_States_Navy_admirals) | [National Aviation Hall of Fame inductees](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:National_Aviation_Hall_of_Fame_inductees) | [University of Virginia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:University_of_Virginia) | [Virginia Military Institute alumni](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:Virginia_Military_Institute_alumni) | [People from Winchester, Virginia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:People_from_Winchester,_Virginia) | [Discovery and invention controversies](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:Discovery_and_invention_controversies)