

Louise Arner Boyd Dies at 84; Led Expeditions to the Arctic

SAN FRANCISCO, Sept. 16 (AP) — Louise Arner Boyd, a former debutante who achieved world renown as an Arctic explorer, died Thursday night after an extended illness. She would have been 85 today.

A funeral service is scheduled Tuesday in San Rafael, with burial at Mount Tamalpais Cemetery.

Explored New Areas

Miss Boyd made exploration history in June, 1955, when she became the first woman to make a successful flight over an arctic route around the North Pole. She made the flight with a small group whose task was to photograph the area. Previously she had reached the Pole by ship and dog sled.

Miss Boyd's explorations from 1931 to 1938 included regions in and around Franz Josef Land, Spitsbergen, Greenland, Jan Mayen Island and eastern Arctic Canada.

According to historical records, Louise Boyd's ship, the S.S. Veslekari, was the first to sail to the inner ends of Ice Fjord, Greenland. Most of the expeditions she organized between 1926 and 1938 were carried out under the auspices of the American Geographical Society.

In June, 1941, Miss Boyd was chosen to head an investigation of magnetic radio phenomena in Greenland and other waters. She worked then in cooperation with the National Bureau of Standards.

In subsequent years Miss Boyd organized, financed and led several expeditions to the Arctic, including her flight to the North Pole in 1955.

She was honored by the United States Government and a number of foreign governments for her geographic studies and explorations.

In 1960, Miss Boyd became the first woman councillor of the American Geographic Society, an organization of professional geographers and educators.

Born in San Rafael, Calif., on Sept. 16, 1887, she became an accomplished horsewoman and crack shot at a comparatively early age.

Miss Boyd belied the popular image of the Arctic explorer.



Louise A. Boyd in 1938

She was feminine, graceful and gentle. When not on expedition, one of her hobbies was gardening.

Some years ago she was quoted as saying: "I like the pleasant things most women enjoy, even if I do wear breeches and boots on an expedition, even sleep in them at times.

"I have no use for masculine women. At sea I don't bother with my hands, except to keep them from being frozen, but I powder my nose before going on deck, no matter how rough the sea is. There is no reason why a woman can't rough it and still remain feminine."

In Franz Josef Land, Miss Boyd shot a few polar bears—her favorite animal. She not only shot them, but watched them for hours on end, photographing them in every conceivable position.

Miss Boyd's contribution to the search for Roald Amundsen was so valuable that Norway presented her with the Order of St. Olaf, First Class. She was the only foreign woman to receive that honor.

The French Government made her a Chevalier of the Legion of Honor, and the French Navy, through the Minister of Marine, gave her a miniature of the medal set with diamonds, with the inscription, "Hommage, Reconnaissance de la Marine Française a Miss Boyd."