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8 August, 1990

Dear Professor Maude,

Regarding my original inquiry of 18 October 1989, on the Amelia Earhart plane crash.

Your comments about Nikumaroro and McKean were published by the Pacific Islands Study Circle of Great Britain, and the most plausible response that I have received was from the Civil Aviation Authority Information Service of Great Britain, which supplied me with an article by Roy Nesbit that was published in the January-February, 1989, editions of *Aeroplane Monthly*.

Enclosed are photocopies of the Nesbit article, which is entitled "What did happen to Amelia Earhart?".

Yours faithfully,



Keith Fitchett

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I will photocopy the Nesbitt article and the Second Progress Report for the Phoenix Islands Settlement Scheme and return them forthwith.

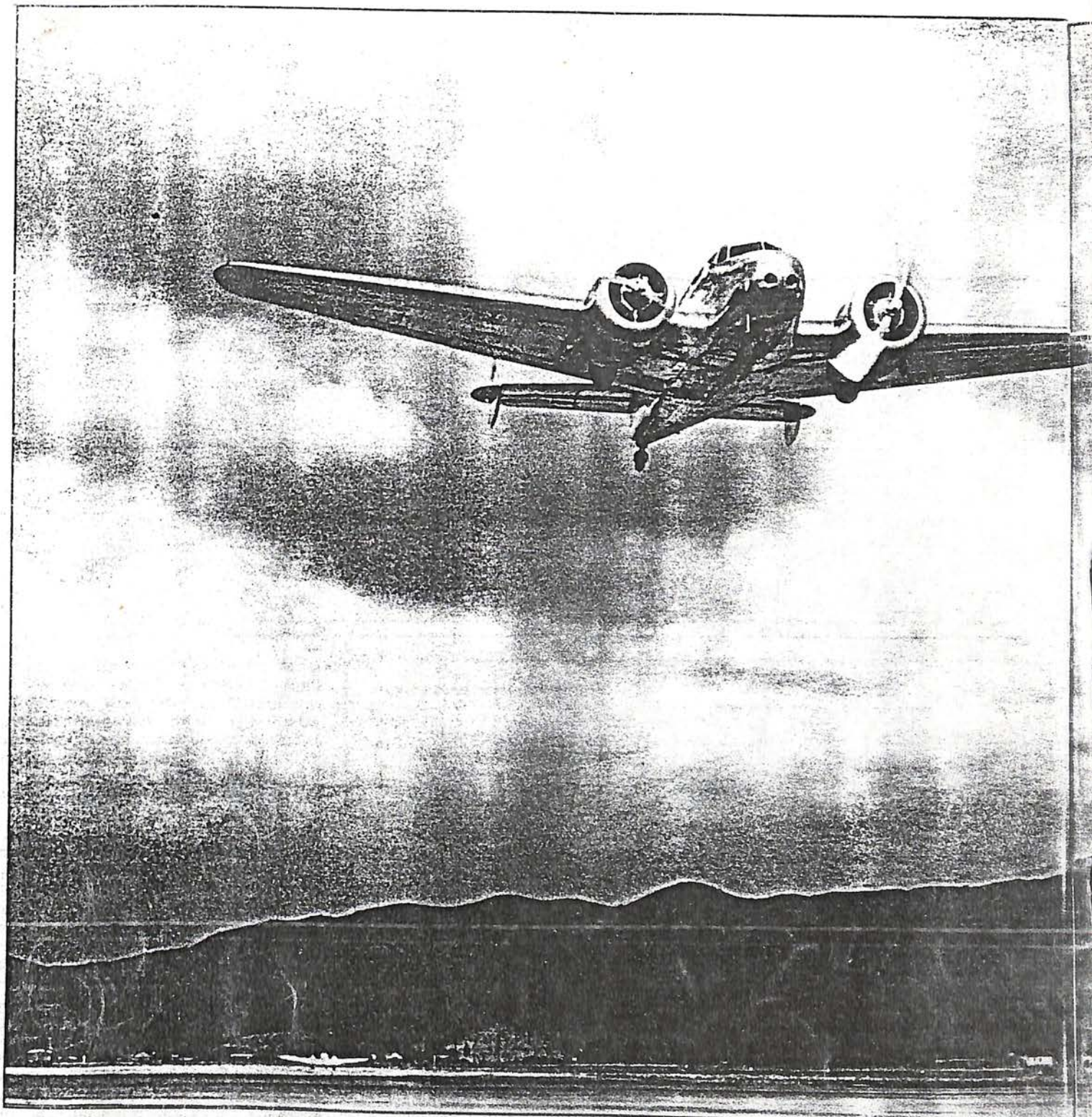
The Nesbitt article contains certain crucial misinformation, particularly where it stipulates the amount of petrol the Earhart plane was carrying when it left from Lae, New Guinea. I will attach the proper evidence when I return the Nesbitt document.

Mr. Gillespie and TIGHAR are still pushing two bankrupt theories to support the possibility of an Earhart/Noonan presence on Nikumaroro.

First, they cling to the bogus information that "a female skeleton wearing women's shoes" was found circa 1938 on the shore of Nikumaroro. When this concoction first surfaced in the 1960's, we at CBS contacted the Central Archives of Fiji and the Western Pacific High Commission, and the archivist (Tuinaceva) replied that "no skeleton has ever been reported found on Gardner Island." At the time I filmed the television documentary THE BATTLE FOR TARAWA at Betio and Bairiki in November, 1968, Mr. Roberts questioned some of the Gilbert Islanders for me, those who had lived at Nikumaroro. They reported that there was a "legend" about a Polynesian man being found on Nikumaroro, and there was a funny story about someone finding some "high-heel women's shoes" on Nikumaroro, but this was not connected to the Polynesian. The Polynesian incident was supposed to have happened "long before" 1937, and of course, Miss Earhart did not wear "women's shoes" when she was flying. She wore men's low-heel brograns. I wish I had asked more questions in 1968 at Tarawa, but what I learned was enough to quench my modest interest in the matter. By the way, are you familiar with Tuiniceva, The Archivist?

The second Gillespie and TIGHAR claim concerns a supposed "Earhart and Noonan survival camp" on Nikumaroro. Gillespie states that the Navy report filed by U.S. Navy Lieutenant John Lambrecht, who flew one of the Navy planes over Nikumaroro July 10, 1937, in search of Earhart and Noonan, indicates a sighting of "recent human habitation." It is true that Lambrecht made such a report, but in my personal conversations with Lambrecht, he said all he and his observer had seen was "some stones piled up that might have once been walls." Lambrecht went on to say that he and his observer certainly had not seen anything that would lead them to believe that the island was inhabited in July, 1937, and they had not seen anything that could possibly indicate that Earhart and Noonan had ever been on the island.

It may interest you to know that I first found mention of Mr. Gallagher's name in the NZPAS files at the National Archives in Auckland, New Zealand. That led me to believe that he was a New Zealander until you put the matter straight.



WHAT DID HAPPEN TO AMELIA

One of the most interesting aspects of any enquiry into the disappearance of Amelia Earhart is that there were several voice-to-voice transmissions from her before the Electra was lost. The exact content of some of these messages has been the subject of some dispute but, even making allowances for differences in records, they provide important clues to the fate of the aircraft and its occupants.

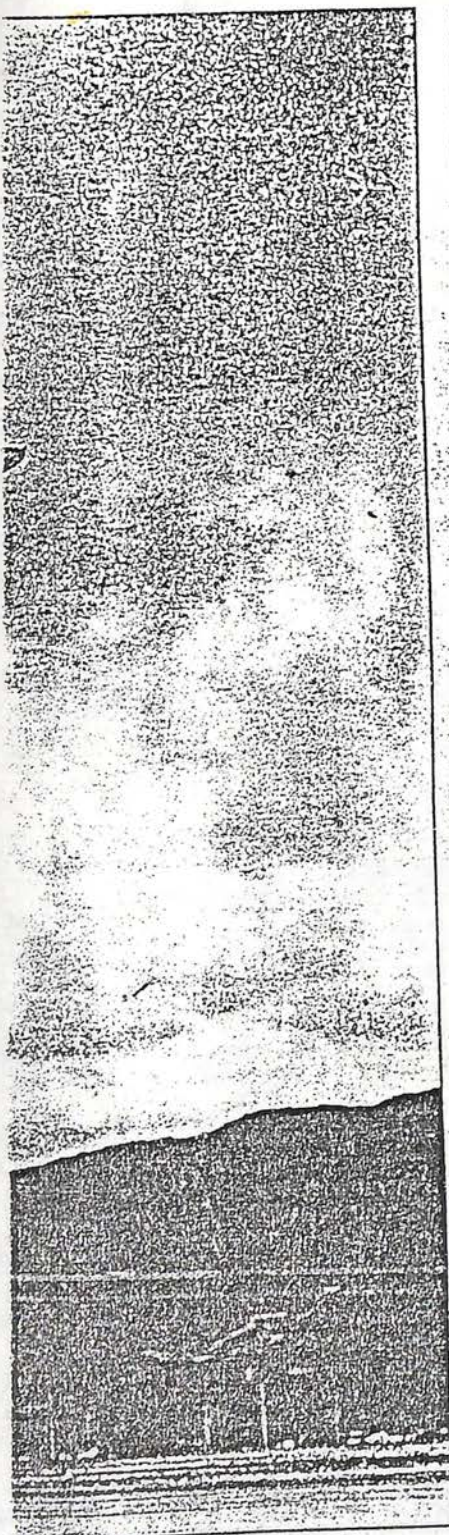
Throughout her world flight, Amelia broadcast every half-hour as a matter of routine, using her call-sign KHAQQ, but not knowing with any certainty whether she could be heard. The crystals available

ROY NESBIT concludes his major two-part investigation into the mysterious fate of the legendary American aviatrix

for the radio set installed in the Electra gave her the facility of calling on 6,210kHz, which was the frequency normally used during the day, and on 3,105kHz, which was the night frequency. It is difficult to establish the range of these medium-frequency transmissions. The equipment was considered to have a range

of up to 400 miles, but transmissions were better over sea than land. Moreover, there is a phenomenon of "skip distance", when sky waves bounce off the layer of ionized gases round the earth's atmosphere, known as the "Heaviside layer", giving much longer ranges than the ground waves, especially at night. Even in those days, radio operators could quote instances of receiving freak messages, sometimes from thousands of miles away.

It is simpler to relate Amelia's messages in terms of GMT, since she took off at precisely 0000hr GMT on July 2, 1937 and then flew through a number of time zones. Indeed, it seems obvious that Amelia



EARHART?

nose this take-off time deliberately, so that she could check her progress easily on her watch, knowing her calculated flight time. Her ETA at Howland Island was 800hr GMT, which was only a few minutes after sunrise there. The early part of the flight was in daylight, during which period they must have passed over several islands to give visual pinpoints, while the night flight took place mainly over the open sea. Noonan would have expected to use astro-navigation at night, when there were plenty of stars and planets to select, provided the sky was clear enough. An astro shot gives the angle between the horizon and the body and from this the



Above, Amelia Earhart was 38yr old at the time of her disappearance on July 2, 1937, while over the Pacific Ocean on a round-the-world flight.

navigator obtains a single position line at right angles to the direction (or azimuth) of the body. Thus, Noonan could obtain a position fix from several position lines at night, but during the day he had only the sun to give a single position line.

At Lae, the radio operator heard Amelia very clearly during the first hours of her flight. She reported at one stage that she could see clouds ahead and was reducing altitude from 10,000ft. At 0720hr GMT, she gave the only positive position report of the flight. This was 04°33' South 159°06' West, which was 13 miles west of the Nukumanu Islands. This position is significant for three reasons. The first is that she was over 900 miles away, so there must have been excellent radio conditions at the time. Secondly, the Electra was making a groundspeed of only 128 m.p.h., which indicates that there were headwinds. Her forecast wind had been very light, only 12 m.p.h. from the south-east. But an examination of the reported winds for the day, at the Meteorological Archives at Bracknell, shows that the wind for the day was about 25 m.p.h. at medium height, from due east; this was recorded farther east along her track, at Nauru Island, a territory administered jointly by Britain, Australia and New Zealand. Thirdly, the position shows that the Electra was on an almost direct route to Howland Island.

It is probable that Amelia flew over Nauru at night, at about 1100hr GMT. The radio operator there picked up transmissions which seemed to be Amelia's voice, but had difficulty making out the content. There are varying reports of what he heard, including "land in sight", "a ship in sight" and "lights ahead". The American tug *Ontario* was well to the south of Nauru and the radio operator heard nothing. It is likely that she saw the lights of Nauru from the phosphate workings on the island, for she had been notified in advance of these.

From Nauru, the route of the Electra must have taken it over the British Gilbert Islands, a long string lying athwart its

track, but it seems that the authorities there had not been asked to assist in any way. I could find nothing in the records at the Public Record Office.

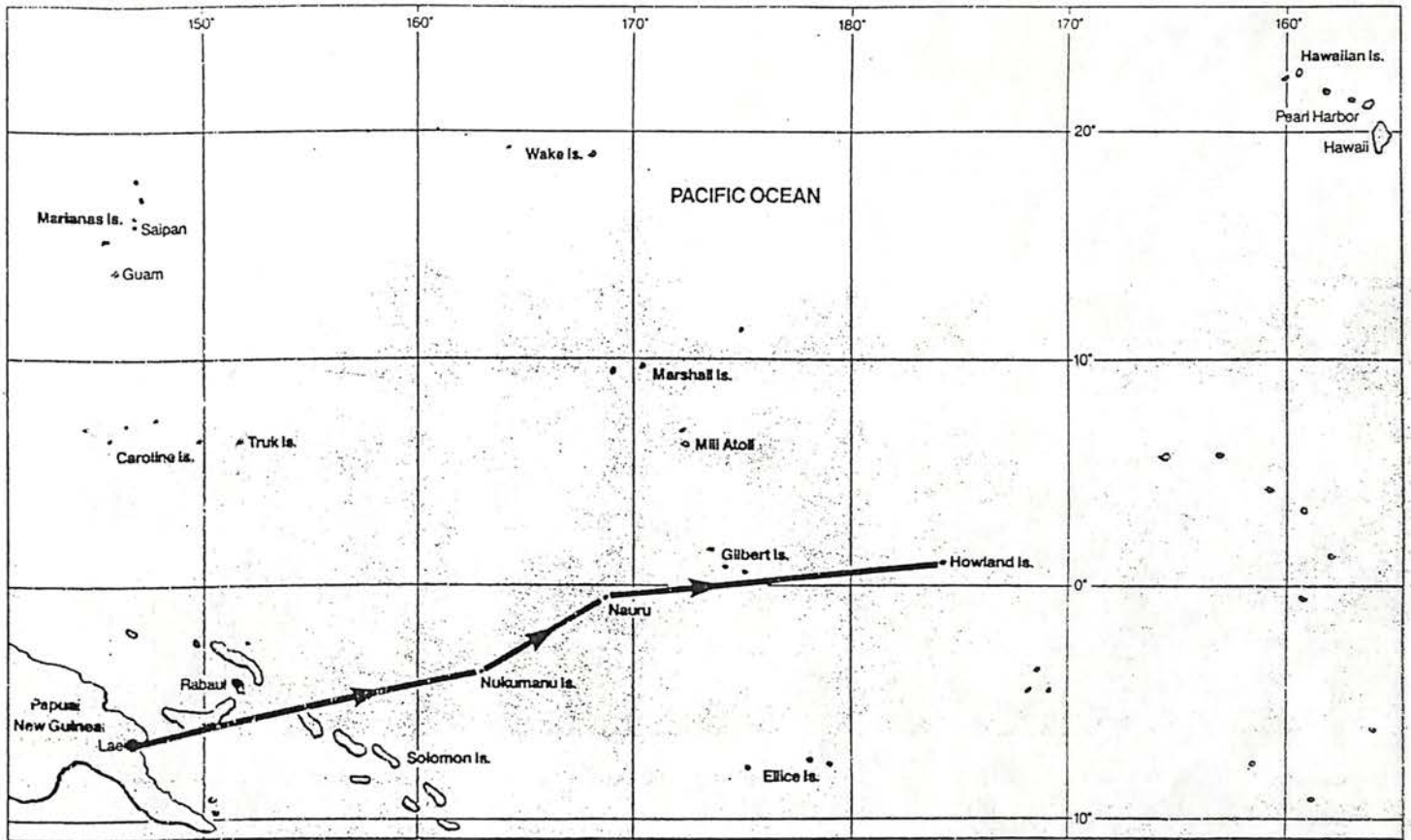
The most dramatic calls were picked up by the US Coast Guard cutter *Itasca*, positioned near Howland Island specifically to assist in the last stages of the navigation. At 1745hr GMT, only 15min before the Electra was due to arrive, they heard Amelia call "200 miles out and no landfall". Significantly, 1745hr was the time of sunrise over the island; but Amelia had not yet seen the sun. She seems to have been emphasising their lateness and was probably beginning to get worried. Noonan must have been able to work out their position by dead reckoning, probably assisted by astro fixes during the night.

Then, at 1816hr GMT, Amelia was heard to call "approximately 100 miles from *Itasca*, position doubtful". The Electra could not have flown 100 miles in the 31min since the previous message and, even making allowances for "rounding" of distances, it is probable that Noonan had made a revised estimate of their position. He could have done this by checking longitude at sunrise which, assuming that his revised position was fairly correct, would have occurred at about 1755hr GMT. Without using his sextant, Noonan would have noted the exact time that the first rays of the sun appeared above the sea horizon. By comparing this time with the known time of sunrise over Howland Island and converting time into distance, the result would have given approximately 160 miles travelling distance to the island. Taking into account the probable groundspeed of the Electra, the remaining distance would have been 115 miles (or 100 nautical miles in the measurement which navigators used) when Amelia sent this message. This sunrise method of checking longitude was not normally used by air navigators for, as will be seen shortly, there were inherent dangers in calculations, but it was a method which Noonan would have been familiar with as a marine navigator. Indeed, it was the only action he could have taken at that stage of the flight.

"Must be on you now . . ."

At 1912hr GMT, there was a further message, "Must be on you now, but cannot see you. Thirty minutes gas remaining, no landfall, position doubtful. We are flying at 1,000ft." According to one account, the portion "thirty minutes gas remaining" was actually "gas running low". In fact, the Electra was in the air for at least another 83min, but the fuel gauges would not have enabled Amelia to determine exactly how much fuel remained. It is interesting to note that 1912hr GMT is the revised ETA at Howland Island which Noonan would have calculated if he had used the sunrise method of checking longitude and assumed that there were no errors in his calculations.

At 1928hr GMT, the operator heard her at maximum strength say "circling, trying to pick up island". At this point, she also requested a bearing on 7,500kHz, but this was not a frequency on which bearings could be taken. The American sailors expected to take bearings on 500kHz, but

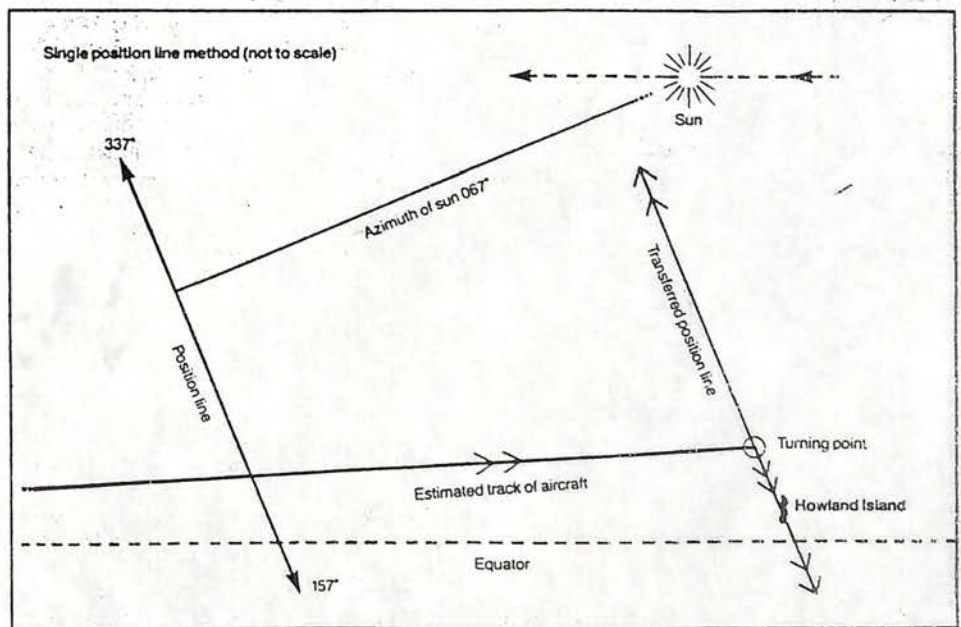


they did not know that the trailing aerial for this frequency had been removed from the Electra. It seems that Amelia was unable to make out any of the voice-to-voice transmissions sent to her, at least at this stage of the flight.

Then, at 2013hr GMT, Amelia sent another message, "line of position 157 to 337 degrees". She repeated this message 12min later, adding "heading north and south", at which stage her voice was considered "broken and frenzied". No further transmissions were heard from her.

This "line of position" has caused some confusion among researchers. However, it means a great deal to astro-navigators, who would regard it as a position line obtained from an observation of the sun. It seems to indicate that Noonan was trying to use a technique which was used by marine navigators, probably for a century or more. It was also known to air navigators and the first to record it was Francis Chichester who, before achieving fame as a round-the-world yachtsman, was a highly experienced pilot and astro-navigator. Some of the instruction in the RAF before and during the Second World War was based on his writings.

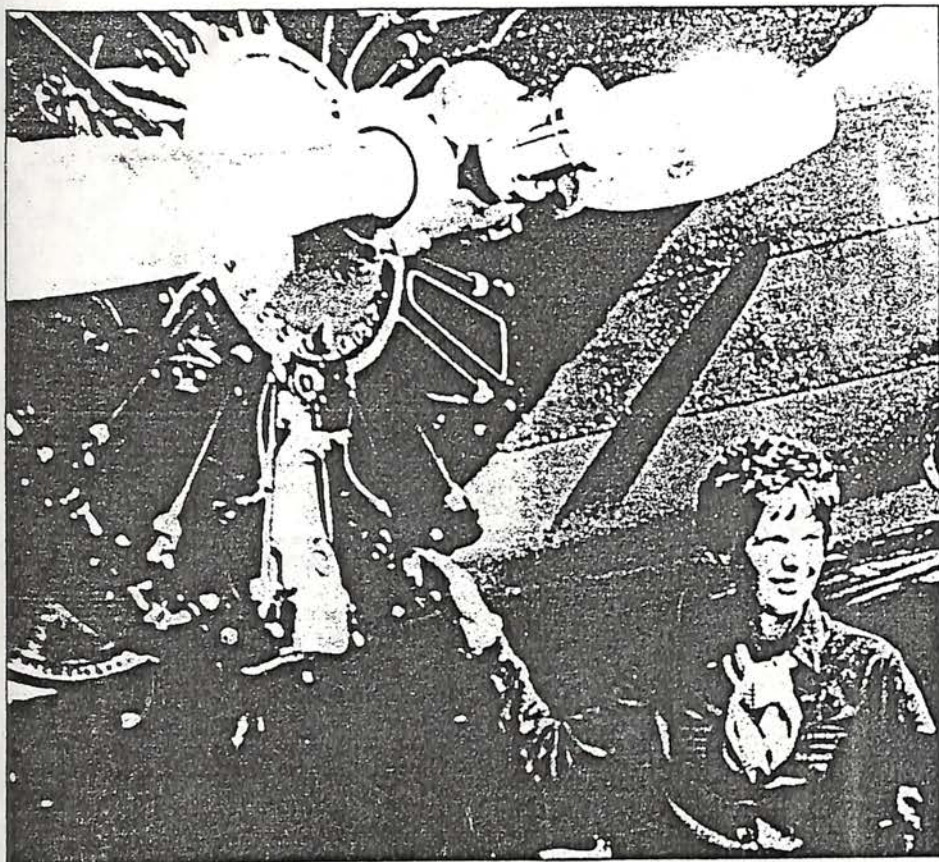
Chichester described the procedure in his book *Astro-Navigation* and called it "Running Down a Position Line". To find an island in daylight with only the sun to give a position line, the navigator did not head straight for his destination but deliberately aimed for one side or the other, sufficiently far to know for certain which side he was on. He then took an astro shot of the sun with his sextant. Using his tables, he then calculated the single position line, which is always at right angles to the azimuth (or direction) of the sun, and drew it across his estimated track on his chart. He then transferred the position line along his track until it cut through the



island and gave a turning point. His estimated ground speed gave the ETA at the turning point so that, if he then flew along the transferred position line towards the island, he would reach it eventually provided his calculations were correct. To illustrate his own experience in using this method, Chichester quoted an occasion in 1931 when he flew eastward in a Moth seaplane across the Pacific from Norfolk Island to Lord Howe Island, a distance of about 550 miles. He extracted the relevant figures from his tables in advance for the time he expected to take the sextant reading, which he took while still piloting the aircraft. A simple sketch shows how this technique might have worked on the approach to Howland Island.

It is certain that Noonan knew of this method but less certain that he was able to use it on this flight. A position line of 157°

to 337° means that the azimuth of the sun was 067°. Looking at the relevant tables for the day, it is evident that this was the azimuth of the sun from the Electra at sunrise, 1755hr GMT. But the sun rose almost vertically at the Equator and this azimuth was maintained for about an hour, although the altitude increased to about 14° in that time. Thus, Noonan might have taken a sun shot in that period and tried to use the Chichester method, but it is unlikely that he was able to do so. There was evidently much cloud about and the sun would have disappeared behind it, with the Electra flying below at 1,000ft. The cutter *Itasca* was in clear weather but the sailors could see heavy cloud to the north and west. Furthermore, fuel was running low and it is unlikely that Amelia would have agreed to fly a dog-leg to Howland Island, especially with her



Above left, Amelia's probable route from Lae to Howland Island. Left, the method of finding an island by means of a single position line obtained from a sextant shot of the sun. It is probable, however, that Amelia's navigator was unable to attempt this method and that they aimed direct for Howland Island. Above, Amelia in front of her Lockheed Electra.

limited appreciation of navigation. Lastly, if a dog-leg had been attempted, the ETA at Howland Island would have been later than 1912hr GMT when Amelia said "must be on you now". It is far more likely that a position line was obtained at sunrise and that they tried to fly direct to Howland Island.

If this reasoning is correct, it is possible to suggest what went wrong. Marine navigators used the sunrise position line (by visual observation and without a sextant), for the sea was their horizon. But the higher one flies, the earlier one can see the sun rise over the more distant horizon. At a height of 1,000ft this "dip correction" (as

it is called) results in an extra distance of about 35 miles. At 3,000ft, it is 62 miles. Thus, the reading from the tables required a correction. One might expect Noonan to have known of this, but he was primarily a marine navigator and he was probably mentally exhausted after working solidly for 18hr. If he had made this oversight, it would have resulted in the Electra flying up and down the position line at least 35 miles to the west of Howland Island and caused Amelia to report that she was "flying north and south".

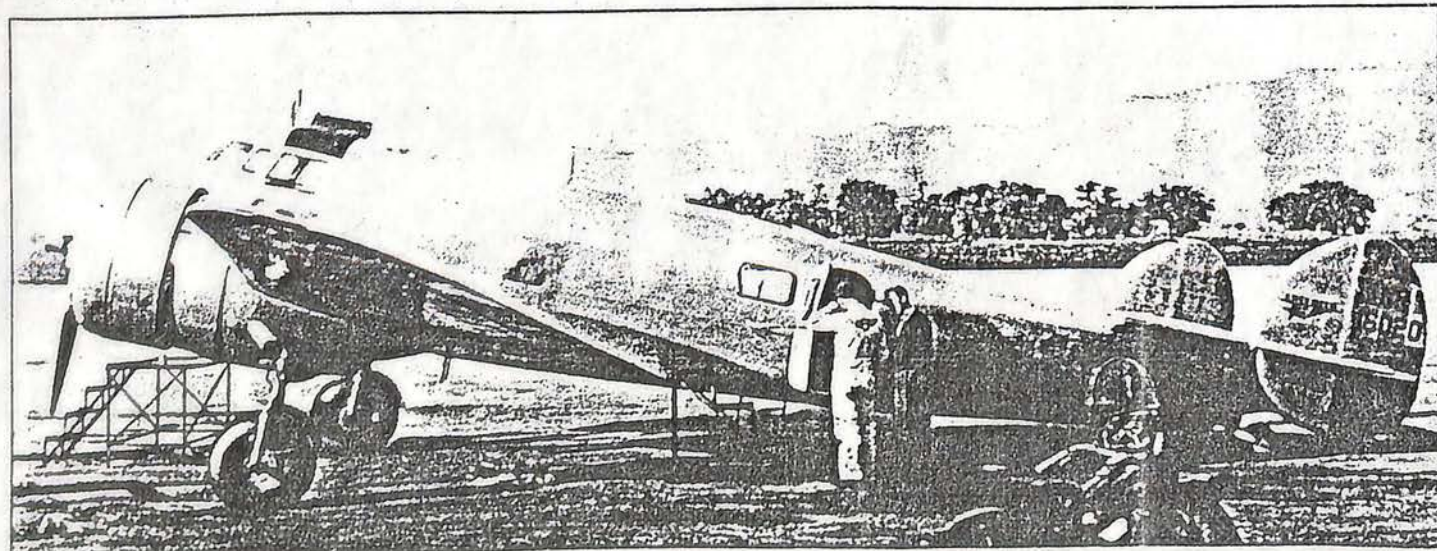
I have tried to put myself in Noonan's position and to think what I would have done when Howland Island failed to appear. I have never been in such a predicament but there were certainly many occasions when I was unsure of my position as a result of adverse weather. One episode which comes to mind was soon after the end of the war when I was navigating a Dakota of 52 Sqn from Dum Dum in India to Pegu in South-east Burma. We were

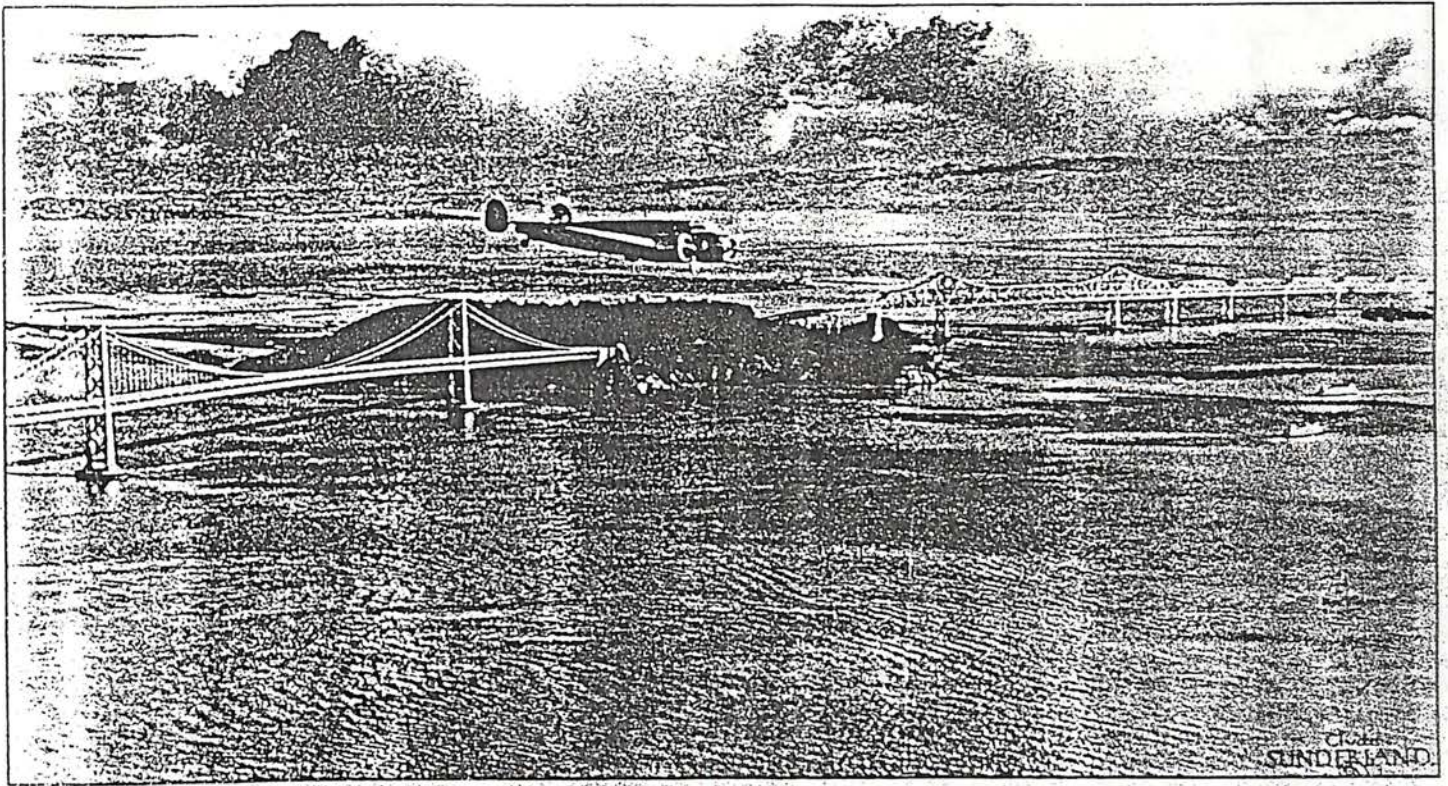
carrying a very heavy load of freight and, for some reason that I cannot remember, the flight had to be made entirely at night and in very bad weather. The only way to find the airfield at Pegu was by astro and I spent much of my time moving between my chart table and the astrodome, looking for breaks in the cloud above. The air was very turbulent and the bubble in the sextant chamber was dancing about; it was difficult to hold the instrument steady. I had only intermittent glimpses of stars but I managed to take several astro shots and transferred the position lines on my chart to give fixes. But I was still worried about accuracy. There was nothing beneath us except low cloud, hills and jungle, and we had no parachutes. Although our fuel situation was not yet serious, I was unhappy about hunting over South-east Asia for somewhere to land. It crossed my mind that I had survived 6yr of war to end up as an undiscovered corpse in the burnt-out wreckage of a Dakota in the jungle. We came down through the cloud; a procedure I always hated when there were hills about, and to my relief the faint lights of Pegu appeared before us.

On that occasion, I was prepared to begin a "square search" for the airfield, and it is my guess that Noonan must have had similar thoughts. This was a well-known procedure whereby the navigator plotted a series of tracks at right angles to each other, at twice the visibility distance apart, in the form of squares which steadily increased in size. Theoretically, the objective would be found eventually, provided there was enough fuel. But the messages received from Amelia do not indicate that a systematic search of this type was begun. Instead we have the messages "circling" and "heading north and south". This sounds as though Amelia was chasing shadows on the surface of the sea, formed by the cumulus clouds above, or was flying towards more distant clouds in the hope that these were the smoke which the *Itasca* was making.

The above record of messages received from Amelia is not intended to represent a full list, but they are the ones which strike me as the most significant for an analysis of the probable route of the Electra.

Below, Amelia's specially-modified Electra, NR16020, photographed upon its delivery from Lockheed.





Within a few hours of the last message, the captain of the *Itasca*, Commander Walter K. Thompson, headed his vessel to the north-west, for he reasoned that the aircraft was most likely to have come down somewhere beneath the stormclouds in that area. At this stage in aviation development, it was believed that all-metal aircraft could float for a long time, provided the fuel tanks were empty. This belief in buoyancy was soon dispelled when all-metal aircraft came down in the sea during World War Two, for it was found that they sank almost immediately. Moreover, it was known that the *Electra* had on board a rubber dinghy equipped with lifebelts, flares, Very pistol, emergency rations and even a signal kite. It was hoped that, at the very least, Amelia and Noonan had been able to clamber into this dinghy and were awaiting rescue.

Meanwhile, the US Navy put into operation a large search, with Catalina flying-boats as well as surface vessels. Destroyers, minesweepers, and even a battleship with reconnaissance aircraft were diverted to the area. The New Zealand cruiser *HMS Achilles*, which was sailing not far away, heard messages from KHAQQ which included "quite down, but radio still working". Unfortunately, the log of this cruiser for 1937 is not in the Public Record Office. It seems probable that this was one of the many radio hoaxes sent out by sick-minded people soon after the *Electra* was reported missing. These messages are not worthy of reporting here, but it is sufficient to say that some were given credence at the time. For the most part, they implied that the *Electra* was floating somewhere but still able to transmit. Paul Mantz, Amelia's technical adviser, pointed out that there was no hand-crank mechanism for electricity and that transmission was impossible unless the *Electra* was on a reef somewhere with an engine ticking over. Nevertheless, at one stage the false messages caused the *Itasca* to be ordered away from her area of

Amelia's Electra over San Francisco Bay.

search to examine the sea south of Howland Island.

George Putnam seized on some of these hoax messages as giving evidence of survival, and made a nuisance of himself with the authorities. A spirit medium who was a friend of Amelia told Putnam that his wife was still alive in the floating *Electra*, although Noonan was injured. Another medium announced that she was in communication with Amelia, who was dead and lying in 12ft of water in a certain position, after having jumped out by parachute; Mantz pointed out that the parachutes had been left behind in Darwin. An immense area of the ocean was searched, covering a radius of 700 miles from Howland Island. There was a flurry of excitement when flares were believed seen, but these proved to be a shower of meteors. An aircraft carrier arrived to help. The search was reported to have involved ten ships, 102 aircraft and 3,000 men, and to have cost \$4 million. Nothing whatsoever was found.

Persistent rumours

There have been persistent rumours and many researches since that date, some of them resting on the belief that Amelia was on a spy mission and was captured by the Japanese. To some extent, these were prompted by a film which appeared in 1943, entitled *Flight to freedom* and starring Rosalind Russell and Fred MacMurray. Obviously based on Amelia's last flight, the couple were sent on a disguised spying mission across the Pacific, but they survived and lived happily ever after, although their identities had to remain incognito. In 1949, Amelia's mother expressed the belief that her daughter was on a secret mission, primarily because she did not discuss the details of the flight with her. However,

Eleanor Roosevelt said that her husband had never hinted that there was anything secret about the flight.

A very painstaking study was published in 1966, entitled *The search for Amelia Earhart* and written by Fred Goerner after some 6yr of investigations, primarily on behalf of the Columbia Broadcasting System. These investigations were begun following a report from Mrs Josephine Blanco Akiyama, who in 1937 was an 11yr-old girl living near Tanapag Harbour in Saipan, one of the Marianas Islands which had been mandated to Japan after World War One. Mrs Akiyama remembered seeing a low-flying aircraft crash in the waters, after which Japanese soldiers brought two white people ashore, one of which she was told was a woman. She thought that they had been summarily executed.

Goerner was determined to track down more evidence of this event and paid three visits to Saipan as well as other islands. He evolved a theory from the testimony which he collected from a number of sources, including local Saipanese and Roman Catholic priests, all of which added up to a convincing account. He surmised that the purpose of Amelia's flight was to spy on the island of Truk in the Carolines, which had been annexed by Japan and heavily fortified in preparation for World War Two. After observing airfields and fleet-servicing facilities, they headed for Howland Island but ran into bad weather. Reluctant to ask for bearings which would give away their position, they waited until 1745hr GMT before telling the *Itasca* that they were about 200 miles away. Noonan made his sun shot at about 2120hr but they could not find Howland Island and turned back to the Gilbert Islands, administered by Britain, with about 2hr of fuel left. But they were so far off track that they landed at Mili Atoll in the south-east Marshall Islands, which had been mandated to Japan. The time was about 2310hr GMT, about the

maximum time that the Electra could have remained in the air with full tanks. Amelia sent out distress signals but was captured by the Japanese and taken eventually to the administrative headquarters at Saipan in the Marianas, together with Fred Noonan, who was slightly injured. Here she died of dysentery, but Noonan was executed. Various witnesses supported this story in the islands concerned, but without knowing names.

Goerner's well-researched account is quite believable at first reading and it certainly gained much credence. But, in my opinion, there are some flaws. One is that he used a cruising speed of 200 m.p.h. Amelia's Electra was capable of a maximum speed of only 190 m.p.h., according to Lockheed, and this could be sustained for only a very short period. Another query is that the suggested timing would have brought the Electra over Truk at night, when Amelia would have been able to see very little. Night photography from the air was not developed in 1937; moreover, none of the many customs officials who inspected the aircraft saw any aerial cameras or flash-bombs. A further snag is that no evidence was ever found in Japanese records, and officers who would have known of such an episode stated emphatically that there were no such westerners in the islands. A Saipanese policeman said that there was a woman spy who died there in 1937, but she was a Eurasian.

Nevertheless, Goerner's account has been accepted by many throughout the world. For instance, the German former diplomat Hans-Otto Meissner, who visited Saipan shortly after the Electra disappeared, stated in his book *Inseln in der Südsee* that he had come to believe that the reason why the Japanese allowed him limited freedom was in case he discovered something about Amelia Earhart. Tourists who take a guided tour of Saipan nowadays are shown the cell "where Amelia Earhart was imprisoned".

A refinement on Goerner's theory arrived in 1985 with the publication of *Amelia Earhart: the final story*, written by the former USAF pilot Vincent Loomis together with the aviation writer Jeffrey Ethell. Loomis dismissed the spying theory and concluded from the evidence of the radio transmissions that the Electra was following the most direct route to Howland Island at its known airspeed. He interpreted correctly the position line technique which Noonan might have used, deliberately aiming to the north of his objective, but reasoned that Amelia turned her aircraft in the wrong direction, after failing to reach Howland Island when they first turned right. She assumed that she was south of the island and then flew north-west for a long distance, before heading back in the expectation of ditching somewhere in the Gilbert Islands. Like Goerner, he believed that they arrived at Mili Atoll. To support his theory, he visited Mili and obtained testimony from the islanders, who confirmed that an aircraft had crashed there and a pair of flyers had been captured by the Japanese. He even found a Japanese medical orderly who remembered giving first aid to someone who answered the description of Noonan. The two aviators were

then taken to Saipan and died there.

These very short accounts do not give full justice to two very well-written and interesting books. Both seemed very convincing to me when I first read them. But this was before I found the material at the Public Record Office.

Commonwealth territory

It will be appreciated that, in order to fly over territory which was part of the British Commonwealth, Amelia first had to obtain the necessary authority. Among the correspondence I have discovered there is an original letter written by Amelia on her headed notepaper and bearing her signature. This is available for scrutiny by anyone who has a reader's ticket at the Public Record Office. It was written on February 13, 1937 to Lt-Col Sir Francis Shelmardine, who at the time was Director of Civil Aviation in this country. I believe that it is worth repeating in full.

"My dear Sir Francis,

"At the suggestion of Jacques de Sibour, good friend of Mr Putnam's and mine, I am venturing this letter. It supplements a radiogram sent today to de Sibour, a copy of which I attach.

"In that cable I tried to outline pertinent facts of the contemplated flight. The State Department here has generously co-operated throughout and apparently is encountering no difficulties in securing necessary permissions. However, I am informed this morning that permissions involving Arabia have not yet been received.

"You will understand, of course, that the plane has an international licence and in all matters pertaining to the proposed flight has the thorough approval of the United States Department of Commerce. Only with that

Amelia in front of her 1929 speed record Lockheed Vega 5A Executive.



approval could the State Department act.

"So far as the ship is concerned, your interest is no doubt in its fuel tankage; i.e. 1,150 gallons. Such amount provides a maximum cruising range of more than 4,000 miles.

"My longest hops over the Pacific are about 2,500 miles—at which time I shall carry probably 1,000 gallons of gasoline. So, actually before reaching the territory there will have been take-offs with that amount of gasoline.

"Beyond the Pacific there will be no necessity for take-offs involving much more than 700 gallons of gas. Even at pretty generous cruising speed that would give me 2,000 miles cruising range. For your information, I have already made numerous take-offs with more than 700 gallons on board, following them up with extensive flights.

"The day before yesterday, for instance, I flew from St Louis to New York, a distance of more than 900 miles, averaging 197 miles an hour, without high favouring winds. The gas consumption is working out very satisfactorily. Apparently the consumption, on normal cruising at 65 per cent power output, will not exceed 25 gallons per hour per engine.

"By actual thorough-going test the ship can remain aloft on one engine on normal loads. As I have fuel dump valves in all but one tank it is possible to lighten the load very quickly.

"I presume that you will know just what has been done in connection with the applications made by the State Department for permission. I have, by the way, informed the Department that I am taking up this general matter with you, supplementing whatever they have done—course entirely agreeable.

"This letter then is to request such permissions as may be necessary and any special instruction and guidance which it is in order that I should receive.

"I am deeply grateful for your interest and such co-operation as you may be able to extend.

Sincerely yours,
Amelia Earhart"

The accompanying telegram was also dated February 13, 1937, sent by George Putnam to Jacques de Sibour at his telegraphic address of Stanair, London. It is also worth repeating in full, giving it normal punctuation for clarity.

"De Sibour only. Permission thus far not received by State Department is Arabia. Amelia writing Shelmardine via steamer *Hansa* sailing tomorrow. grateful his co-operation, hopeful he can start action pending letter's receipt. You know route Lockheed Electra, two H Wasp engines larger than regular equipment, capable of staying aloft on one with normal load. Designed gross load 10,500lb. Maximum gross load contemplated on present journey outside of Pacific hop within 40 per cent overload, with cruising range 2,000 miles. All tanks have dump valves. Total tanks 1,150 gallons but maximum contemplated outside Pacific is 700 gallons. Fuel consumption normal cruising per hour by weight

300lb. Test take-offs with 850 gallons have been made and with 1,000 will be made. Two-way radio, voice and telegraph, automatic pilot. Has NR licence, full official approval. Probably solo, though possibly accompanied navigator Harry Manning, both freshly inoculated typhoid, smallpox. Carrying certificates, no firearms or motion-picture equipment.

Putnam"

In a cordial reply dated March 5, 1937, Sir Francis Sheldermine gave permission for the flight, following approval by the Foreign Secretary, Anthony Eden, provided Aden was the only landing ground in the stretch over Arabia. He reminded Amelia that they had last met on a yacht belonging to Richard Fairey, which was in fact *Evadne*.

The amount of fuel located at landing points is also included in these records. At Lae it was 700 US gal of Stanavo Ethyl 87 octane, with 70 US gal of oil. When the direction of the flight was altered, after the crash at Luke Field, authority was given for the new arrangement, and the quantity of petrol at Lae was increased to 800 US gal.

For any research into Amelia's disappearance, the most important information contained in these records is that she intended to carry no more than 1,000 US gal on her "Pacific hops" and was practising take-offs, building up to that amount. This agrees with her flight from California to Honolulu when she carried 947 US gal, as well as her intended flight from Honolulu to Howland Island when she tried to take off with about 900 US gal but crashed.

Of course, it may be argued that when Amelia reached Lae on her flight in the west-to-east direction, she changed her mind and somehow contrived to take off from a grass runway in a grossly overloaded aircraft containing 1,150 US gal. But there were witnesses who confirmed that she stuck to her original plans. These were the reporters and air correspondents

at Lae. Their evidence can be examined by anyone who has a reader's ticket at the British Museum Newspaper Library at Colindale in North London. The most detailed report was written by the air correspondent of a very responsible newspaper, the *Daily Telegraph* of Sydney, Australia, who obtained his information from Noonan and reported it on July 5. The *Electra* was loaded with a total of 950 US gal. Noonan also stated that the machine was overloaded to the extent of two tons. The normal "gross take-off weight" of the *Electra* was 10,300lb, while the weight on take-off at Lae with 950 US gal was just over 14,300lb, as near as can be calculated. Two US tons are 4,000lb.

So precise were details recorded by this air correspondent that other items mentioned were iced water, hot coffee, hot tomato soup, sandwiches, four hard-boiled eggs and three cakes of plain chocolate.

Last desperate message

According to the predicted figures from Lockheed, in the first part of this article, 950 US gal gave the *Electra* an endurance of 20hr 13min. However, the weight of the *Electra* had been reduced slightly after these figures were compiled, and a somewhat longer endurance must have resulted. Amelia's last desperate message was received 20hr 25min after take-off from Lae. It is evident that she must have come down in the sea a few minutes later, when she believed that she was somewhere near Howland Island.

It may seem extraordinary that such a small safety margin was allowed for the flight, but this is typical of the risks that attended such long-distance flights in those days. Amelia is likely to have thought of the crash at Luke Field, when the *Electra* was loaded with about 900 US gal, and balanced the danger of taking off in an aircraft even more overloaded with the danger of running out of fuel. In the flight from California to Honolulu, she had taken off with 947 US gal and landed with over 4hr remaining, having flown

2,400 miles. The flight from Lae to Howland Island was only 150 miles longer, and the reserve of fuel may have seemed adequate. But they were beaten by adverse winds, poor weather conditions in the last stage of the flight, and inadequate direction-finding facilities.

All the navigational evidence points to the fact that Amelia and Noonan came down in the sea near Howland Island, probably about 30 miles to the west or the north-west. What happened when they tried to ditch can only be a matter of conjecture. According to Commander Thompson of the *Itasca*, the sea was very turbulent when his vessel sailed to the north-west, with waves of up to 6ft. The captain of a Catalina which arrived on the scene soon afterwards, from Honolulu, was astonished to experience snow showers and severe icing at the Equator. Paul Mantz, who remained consistently level-headed when the tragedy became known, gave his opinion in the light of his knowledge of Amelia's flying capabilities. He said that Noonan must have missed the island and the *Electra* must have come down in the sea. Then he suggested two possibilities. One was that Amelia tried to land too high above clear water, so that the *Electra* stalled and killed them both. The other was that, if the sea was very rough, she might have made a bad judgement and flown into a heavy roller, with a similar result.

Presumably, Noonan scrambled over the fuel tanks to strap himself into the copilot's seat during the ditching. But the dinghy was stowed in the rear part of the fuselage. If he was uninjured, he would have had to get back, jettison the passenger door and throw out the dinghy while the metal aircraft was sinking. It is unlikely that he would have had time to do this.

Amelia always thought that her end might come in such a way. She wrote her own epitaph several years before her last flight: "Hooray for the last great adventure! I wish I had won, but it was worth while anyway".

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Collaboration with:

- Ron C. Cooke, in West Germany.
 Sqn Ldr Dudley Cowderoy RAFVR.
 Barry Davidson, Civil Aviation Authority.
 John Fairey, airline pilot.
 Clive Leach, former airline pilot.
 Flt Lt Ernest Schofield DFC RAFVR.
 Mrs Adèle Stephenson, airline pilot, formerly with Air Pacific of Fiji.
 Michael J. Youngman, in the USA.

VIEW

Los Angeles Times

Maude.

'There is only one possible conclusion: We found a piece of Amelia Earhart's aircraft.'

Richard Gillespie
At right, with map of site where aircraft part was discovered



BERNIE BOSTON / Los Angeles Times



BONNIE KAMIN / For The Times

'We decided the fragment could have come from anywhere . . . anywhere but Amelia Earhart's airplane.'

Elgen Long
At left, with his presentation detailing mismatched rivets

A Theory That Won't Fly?

East Coast experts say they solved the Amelia Earhart mystery. But a West Coast group thinks not.

By PAUL DEAN
TIMES STAFF WRITER

SAN FRANCISCO—Richard Gillespie and his East Coast cluster of engineers and archeologists say they have found a patch of aluminum torn from Amelia Earhart's airplane.

Mystery solved. Case closed. Conclusively, finally and overwhelmingly.

Yet Elgen Long and his West Coast clutch of mechanics and metallurgists say Gillespie's artifact is fiction.

Not by any stretch of measurement or the imagination, they claim, could the piece be from Earhart's airplane. The case remains wide open. Absolutely, unanimously and positively.

"Any engineer acquainted with basic aircraft structure . . . could tell you that the Nikumaroro fragment did not come from a Lockheed 10 aircraft," says Long, 65, a 20-year sleuth of the short life, public times and final flight of Earhart.

Spacing between rivets doesn't match. Nor does the distance between horizontal lines of rivets. A vertical line of fasteners that should be on the fragment simply isn't there.

"But for the umpteenth time we have The Final Solution of Amelia Earhart," Long says, sarcastically. "Why isn't anyone listening to us? Because we've only got boring mechanical reasons on our side and they just aren't nice sound bites."

There were sound bites by the thousands and worldwide earlier this month when aviation researcher Gillespie told a mobbed Washington news conference that he had unraveled the 55-year-old enigma of Earhart's end.

What Gillespie didn't announce was that he had asked Long last month to examine the 23-by-19-inch shard recovered in October from Nikumaroro Island in the central Pacific.



UPI / Bettmann

Aviator Amelia Earhart disappeared during her 1937 attempt to circumnavigate the globe.

Long, a retired airline captain, was briefed by two letters, one with pages stamped *Confidential*. It described the piece's dimensions, outline, markings and rivet patterns in sufficient detail to build a clear plastic template of the fragment.

Gillespie, executive director of the Delaware-based International Group for Historic Aircraft Recovery (TIGHAR), wrote: ". . . the only match found is to a section on the starboard belly of NR16020 [Earhart's twin-engine Lockheed Electra 10E] between fuselage stations 239 [inches from the nose] and 269½ along the aircraft's center line on keel. . . ."

"I look forward to your thoughts on all this."

Long recruited a formidable panel of volunteers: a professor of metals engineering; a structures engineer for Navy patrol aircraft; the owner of two Lockheed 10 airplanes, and the assistant foreman, now retired, of the Lockheed fuselage shop at the time Earhart's plane was built.

The group pored over photographs of the piece. They examined blueprints and engineering orders for repairs to the airplane's underside needed after a takeoff accident ended an earlier Earhart attempt to fly around the world.

And the team visited a 1936 Lockheed 10B at Oakland's Western Aerospace Museum.

The associates placed the template over the starboard belly of the airplane. They slid the piece over all other exterior sections of the airplane. Just in case.

"We decided the fragment could have come from anywhere . . . anywhere but Amelia Earhart's airplane," Long says.

So noted the group's formal report—including a videotape of comparisons to the underside of the museum aircraft—sent to Gillespie in February.

But Gillespie, a 45-year-old former . . .
Please see AVIATOR, E3

AVIATOR

Continued from E1

mer insurance investigator turned aviation archeologist, made no mention of the negative findings during his March 16 news conference at the National Press Club.

Instead, he announced that his own nonprofit group of largely lay historians and aviation detectives had "recovered artifacts that conclusively prove this case."

He displayed the aluminum fragment. Also a Cat's Paw rubber heel that Gillespie said belonged to a woman's shoe. Other beach combings from Nikumaroro—once known as Gardner Island and a British colony—included a portion of a sole presumed to be from the same shoe, a length of copper antenna wire and a bottle cap that might have contained a patent medicine.

Concurrent to his conference, Gillespie wrote an article for *Life* magazine. The story was accompanied by four paragraphs of rebuttal—added, says a *Life* editor, at the magazine's insistence—from Frank Schelling, a structures engineer with the Naval Aviation Depot, Alameda, and chairman of Long's committee.

The rest of Gillespie's article, however, left few doubts unsquashed.

He said a metallurgist from the National Transportation Safety Board, the U.S. agency responsible for investigating all aircraft accidents, had told him: "Looks like you've got it nailed."

The metal certainly checked out as .032-inch aircraft aluminum made by Alclad prior to World War II—identical to the skin of Earhart's Lockheed. A rivet attached to the metal was of '30s vintage—and of the type used by Lockheed when building Earhart's plane.

The rubber heel, said Gillespie, has been examined by officials from Biltrite Corp. of Waltham, Mass., makers of Cat's Paw footwear since the 1900s. It appeared to be from a Size 9 woman's shoe, was definitely of pre-World War II construction and would fit the style of lace-up Oxfords worn by Earhart on her last flight.

"Every possibility has been checked, every alternative eliminated," Gillespie announced. Eureka. "There is only one possible conclusion: We found a piece of Amelia Earhart's aircraft."

Within minutes, Earhart was again playing Page 1 and top of the news around the world.

Just the way it was on July 2, 1937.

Earhart, 39, a record-smashing aviator and pioneer feminist.



BONNIE KAMIN / For The Times

Ed Werner, who supervised construction of fuselage of Earhart plane, examines replica of at Western Aerospace Museum. He is skeptical that recovered fragment is from the lost plane.



BERNIE BOSTON / Los Angeles Times

At a news conference, Robert Gillespie displays plane fragment that he says is part of the fuselage of missing Amelia Earhart plane.

missed a complete line of attachment to a fuselage stiffener.

Gillespie believes his fragment should have never been compared to a Lockheed 10B because Earhart was flying a Lockheed 10E.

Nonsense, says Fred Patterson of Mill Valley, Calif., a World Airways captain who owns two Lockheed 10Bs and is rebuilding a 10E:

"The only differences between a 10B and a 10E have to do with engines and window positioning. There are 12 Lockheed 10s in existence. I've seen all of them. And the fuselages, the rivet patterns, the spacings between stringers and stiffeners, are identical."

A large portion of Gillespie's case hangs on a report of the National Transportation Safety Board.

In his news conference, Gillespie said the federal agency was unable to prove that the metal did not come from Earhart's airplane. The implication here is obvious. In his *Life* article, Gillespie quotes the author of the NTSB report, Joe Epperson, a senior metallurgist, as commenting: "Looks like you've got it nailed."

But Epperson's seven-page report draws no conclusions beyond establishing that the fragment is a piece of old, fractured airplane aluminum with rivet holes. It does not state that the agency was unable to prove the fragment did not come from Earhart's airplane.

Is Gillespie drawing a conclusion?

Earhart, 39, a record-smashing aviator and pioneer feminist, had taken off from Lae, New Guinea. With Fred Noonan riding as navigator, their Lockheed 10E was on a final leg of a circumnavigation that would earn yet another record for the tomboy flier.

Twenty hours and 2,500 miles later, Earhart radioed a Coast Guard cutter moored near Howland Island, site of the next landing. She said she should be approaching the island but couldn't see it.

Her signal strength told radio operators aboard ship that Earhart was close. She said her fuel was down to 30 minutes. Then, silence.

In the half-century since, a hundred theories have enlarged the persons and their journey into a significance far greater than had the flight succeeded.

Did Earhart—as researcher Long believes—crash in the sea and drown near Howland?

Did she and Noonan—as broadcaster and Earhart author Fred Goerner thinks—land on nearby Saipan, only to be executed as American spies by the Japanese?

Was Earhart—as other biographers have claimed—taken to Japan and then smuggled back to the United States at war's end to lead a new life under an assumed identity?

Or did she—as Gillespie believes—miss Howland and fly 350 miles southeast to Nikumaroro?

There, Gillespie theorizes, the couple crash-landed on a reef but died of thirst a few days later. A storm washed the Lockheed off the coral beach and into deep water. *But one piece of aluminum, a belly portion, remained buried in the sand to be revealed by a vicious storm 50 years later.*

Gillespie has spent \$750,000 in private donations on two trips to Nikumaroro. His first findings were false alarms.

A grave that *might* have been Earhart's contained the bones of a native child. A cigarette lighter that *could* have belonged to Noonan was probably lost by one of dozens of Coast Guardsmen who manned a radio station on Nikumaroro during World War II. A navigator's chart box *thought* to have been from Earhart's Electra was finally identified as equipment from a military airplane.

And a deep-water sonar search found no trace of Earhart's airplane in the sea surrounding Nikumaroro.

Now, in a bicoastal war of experts, critics are shredding Gillespie's latest clues.

They have not zeroed in on the bottle cap and other fragments believed inconsequential. They have focused on the aluminum fragment and the Cat's Paw heel.

One of Gillespie's experts, Wil-

he says is part of the fuselage of missing Amelia Earhart plane.

Iam Foshage Jr., president of the Biltrite footwear division, said the heel was made before 1940 and was "the same type of heel, basically," as that worn by Earhart.

But in an interview with The Times, Foshage acknowledged that this Cat's Paw heel was unisex. "It could have been on a man's shoe."

Foshage agrees the rubber heel would have fit a Size 9 shoe. But according to Earhart's sister, Muriel Morrisey, who lives in New Medford, Mass., the flier had tiny, narrow feet and wore a Size 6. That

'If it were our investigation, going from A to Z, we would not be drawing such hard and fast conclusions on the basis of the evidence shown us.'

NTSB SPOKESMAN

size was confirmed by the curator of an Amelia Earhart museum in Atchison, Kan.

Nikumaroro has been visited by thousands since colonization in 1938. First copra traders and Gilbert Islanders. Then U.S. military and resupply teams.

So the shoe could have been dumped by anyone. Or simply washed ashore.

But it is the metal piece, say Long's experts, that completely corrodes Gillespie's conclusions. When contrasted with airplane plans and the Oakland museum's Lockheed 10B, the fragment fails in cardinal areas:

■ Rivet holes on the recovered aluminum are one inch apart. On Earhart's airplane the separation was 1½ inches.

■ The fragment shows four lines where the panel was riveted to stringers, or horizontal fuselage braces. They are 4¼ inches apart. On surviving Lockheed 10Bs, the lines are 3½ inches apart.

■ The aluminum skin of a Lockheed 10 is formed around ribs, or stiffeners, 15 inches apart. On the fragment—which is almost 24 inches long—there is no vertical line to show that the metal was ever riveted to a stiffener.

■ Gillespie says a tab protruding from an edge of the fragment marks where the sheet was riveted to the I-beam forming the keel, or center line, of Earhart's airplane. That tab shows a single line of rivet holes. Yet on the Lockheed 10, says Long, center line panels would be held by a double line of rivets and in a staggered pattern for additional strength.

Long's team does not dispute that Gillespie's artifact is made of Alclad aluminum from an aircraft built in the '30s. They also know that during World War II, military aircraft built in the '30s—such as the PBY Catalina—flew that particular patch of the Pacific and visited Nikumaroro.

Ernest Zehms, 70, a retired materials engineer from Woodland Hills, was a Coast Guard petty officer stationed on Nikumaroro from 1944 to 1945.

"We had a radio technician who used to fly back to the island with things he had scrounged," Zehms says. "Some of it was aluminum, flat stock, Alclad. It had been cut out of the wing or fuselage of a B-25 that had gone off the end of the runway on Kanton Island."

Gillespie acknowledges that his experts and Long's experts are locked in "a great debate on the unknowable. . . ."

Gillespie says his evidence is based on "the knowable, contemporaneous records and hard evidence in the form of artifacts that we can measure." That translates to the age and gauge of aluminum, its obvious use as aircraft skin, a failure pattern apparently consistent with crash-landing and other facets.

He says Long's evidence is "based on opinions," and when his group first reported a verdict on the fragment, "I was disappointed to hear him [Long] make pronouncements that were not true."

Gillespie sees no mystery in variances of rivet spacing and patterns. He believes the positioning was changed when Earhart's plane was repaired after the take-off accident.

Not so, insists Ed Werner, 82, of Santa Cruz, the assistant foreman of Lockheed's fuselage shop at Burbank at the time.

The rivet patterns on the fragment, he says, "just don't follow the engineering orders for the repairs. If those orders weren't followed, the repair couldn't have passed inspection and the airplane wouldn't have been released. And no double riveting along the center line . . . is tampering with the structural integrity of the airplane."

Harvey Christen, 81, of Pasadena agrees. A retired director of quality reliability for Lockheed, Christen was Werner's boss during repairs to the Earhart plane.

"Nobody repaired anything at Lockheed without taking it back to its original configuration, as dictated by the airplane's federal certification," he says. Under such rigid controls, it would be "unthinkable" that any worker or inspector would allow a repair where the riveting

not state that the agency was unable to prove the fragment did not come from Earhart's airplane.

Is Gillespie drawing a convenient conclusion from the unsaid?

"Every one of these [NTSB examiners] are convinced that this piece of metal is from Amelia Earhart's airplane," Gillespie says. "Epperson said to me: 'That's a piece of Amelia Earhart's airplane.'"

(Epperson did not respond to several telephone messages. Gillespie agreed to ask Epperson to call The Times to confirm his private statements, but no call has been received.)

But an NTSB spokesman says conclusions credited to the report were not drawn by the board.

"If it were our investigation, going from A to Z, we would not be drawing such hard and fast conclusions on the basis of the evidence shown us," he states. "We don't jump from A to Z without looking at the 24 points in between."

Meanwhile, Gillespie and his organization are not budging.

He says he can now stand before the world with the final answer to the Earhart mystery and "defend that to any rational person."

But not to Elgen Long.

Long wants the fragment studied "conclusively" by the NTSB or the Smithsonian Institution. He also wants to form an expedition to follow his own theory that the airplane is in 16,000 feet of water off Howland Island.

"Eventually the hype and media will get out of the way, and rational, independent experts will study it and the truth will sort itself out," Long says.

"But then, like J.F.K., someone will come up with a conspiracy theory."

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^AP-Earhart Doubts

^Experts Say Piece of Fuselage Not From Earhart's Plane<

^By JAMES O. CLIFFORD=

^Associated Press Writer=

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) - Two former Lockheed employees who worked on Amelia Earhart's plane said Tuesday a piece of a fuselage found on a remote South Pacific atoll couldn't have come from the lost aviator's Lockheed Electra.

A former airline pilot who has spent 20 years studying Earhart's last flight agreed.

Richard Gillespie, executive director of the International Group for Historic Aircraft Recovery, claimed Monday to have solved the mystery of Earhart's disappearance in 1937 on a flight around the world.

He said a search team found the fuselage fragment, parts of a woman's shoe in Earhart's size and a medicine bottle cap on Nikumaroro, which was called Gardner Island in 1937.

But Ed Werner of Santa Cruz, who was an assistant foreman at Lockheed, said he compared the dimensions and shape of the piece of aluminum with a duplicate of Earhart's plane at the Western Aerospace Museum in Oakland.

"It didn't fit anywhere on the plane," said Werner, 82. "Not on the belly where repairs had been made. Not anywhere."

Gillespie said the items he found prove Earhart and navigator Fred Noonan made a navigational error, landed on the island and died there, probably from thirst.

Earhart took off from Oakland 55 years ago Tuesday in an attempt to become the first woman to fly around the world. The airplane crashed while landing in Hawaii and was sent back to Lockheed for repairs.

Two months later the pair took off from Oakland again, but this time headed eastward. They disappeared before making it all the way back.

A plastic template of the 19-by-23-inch piece of aircraft aluminum was made from information supplied by Gillespie and was compared against the museum's duplicate craft.

"That fragment did not come from Amelia Earhart's airplane or any other Lockheed Electra aircraft," said Elgen Long, a retired San Mateo airline pilot who has spent 20 years investigating Earhart's last flight.

Werner and other structural experts who checked the Oakland plane said the rivet pattern on the Electra differed from that of the remnant Gillespies' group found.

"The rivet holes on the Earhart plane were three inches apart but the ones on the other piece were four inches apart," he said.

Gillespie dismissed Werner's claims, saying the pattern could have been changed when repairs were made after the Hawaii crash.

But that was contradicted by Harvey Christen, 81, of Pasadena, who was in charge of quality control for Lockheed when Earhart's Electra was repaired.

"The repairs would have to match the engineering drawings," he said. "You couldn't make any changes without FAA approval."

Long contends Earhart crashed some 23 miles northwest of Howland Island - 420 miles northeast of Nikumaroro, or Gardner - after she ran out of fuel.

That's also the end seen by Carol Osborne, who wrote "Amelia, My Courageous Sister" along with Muriel Earhart Morrissey.

Gardner Island was visited by a British inspection team months after the fatal flight. It was also a navigation station during World War II and was often visited by British and American planes, she said.

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Searchers Report Finding Part of Plane, but Puzzle Remains

By JOHN H. CUSHMAN Jr.
Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, March 15 — The most tantalizing and enduring mystery in aviation history, the fate of the pioneering pilot Amelia Earhart, has yielded one of its central secrets, according to investigators who say they found fragments of her plane on a deserted Pacific island.

Amid the coconut palms of Nikumaroro, an island about halfway between New Guinea and Hawaii, a search party from the International Group for Historic Aircraft Recovery found a sheet of metal that they say is from the plane's fuselage.

In that general region on July 2, 1937, a Coast Guard cutter lost radio contact with Earhart and her navigator, Fred Noonan, who were heading east in a highly publicized attempt to circumnavigate the globe near the Equator.

Nothing was found by Federal metallurgists to disprove the group's hypothesis — or to prove it.

Nor does the discovery answer such lingering questions as why the plane went astray, whether any intrigue was involved and if Earhart and her navigator survived their landing and lived on the island for a time.

The nonprofit group has pursued the theory, based on Earhart's last radio message, that the plane went down at Nikumaroro, not at her intended destination of Howland Island, 350 miles to the north. The metal piece, while not the first corroboration of the theory, is the strongest one to date.

Richard Gillespie, executive direc-

ROSS PEROT FOR PRES. HE WANTS TO HELP Americans and needs your help. (212) 730-1202 or (609) 896-0003. Pd. by People for Perot Comm. — ADVT.

tor, of the group, said the puzzle of where the plane disappeared was solved based on evidence — including other fragments and a shoe heel and sole of a size and style similar to Earhart's — built up over four years, his conviction growing as steadily as the coral reef where he believes Earhart ran out of fuel and set her plane down.

The ragged and bent aluminum sheet, roughly the size and shape of a standard pillowcase, is perforated by rows of rivet holes and is made of an alloy used for planes like Earhart's two-engine Lockheed 10-E Electra. It was found in October on the shore not far from the reef where Mr. Gillespie believes the plane landed. He speculates that the bulk of the plane eventually was washed into deep water by the tides or by a storm.

After Federal metallurgists examined the evidence this winter, Mr. Gillespie detailed his conclusions in an article published in the April issue of Life magazine, which has just arrived in the stands. On Monday he will dis-

ments, the sheet of metal appears to have come from the belly of the plane, at a spot on the fuselage where Earhart had repairs made when her landing gear collapsed early in the trip as she took off from Hawaii. A wire antenna was attached to the plane's belly at that point, and a similar wire was found with the piece of metal retrieved by Mr. Gillespie.

But despite the latest evidence, nothing has been found that can be traced irrefutably to the plane or its crew: nothing bearing a serial number, for example, such as the plane's engines or propellers, nor any numbered equipment known to belong to the aviators.

Nor has the search so far found the aviators' remains, although there are some indications that they may have survived the crash and lived for a time on the island. These indications, none of them definitive, include the shoe, some other artifacts, and reports from decades ago that cited unexplained signs of human life on the island, which was only sporadically inhabited over the years.

Until something more definitive is found, contended Thomas Crouch, chairman of the aeronautics department at the National Air and Space Museum of the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, it is best to remain skeptical and to endorse only the view that the plane was "lost at sea, heaven knows where."

Nor could the National Transportation Safety Board, which will make its findings public on Monday, confirm the significance of the find.

"The best that the safety board can say from its examination is that certainly there is nothing to conclude that these pieces of metal could not have come from her airplane," one official said. "We can't rule it in, but we certainly could have ruled it out. We think in general that they have got a pretty strong case."

The Gillespie group, based in Wilmington, Del., enlisted the services of a Houston company specializing in sonar searches for sunken debris last year, but was unable to find the bulk of the plane in deep waters off the minuscule island.

The Fog Lingers

Nor do the findings confirm or refute one of the longstanding, unsubstantiated theories about the lost aviators: that they could have been captured by the Japanese before the outbreak of World War II. But Mr. Gillespie's account would contradict one such theory which had the plane veering far off course and landing near Saipan, where the Japanese supposedly arrested and executed the American aviators.

So there remains enough fog enshrouding the Earhart legend to preserve for a time what may be its quintessential element, its lingering mystery, even if science strips away all doubt — which is the ambition of Mr. Gillespie. He and his wife and partner, Pat Thrasher, will make their third expedition to the island this summer.

Earhart, the second pilot to fly the Atlantic solo, after Lindbergh, held

ed an airline and changed women's roles in modern society.

"I couldn't be more confident," Mr. Gillespie said in a telephone interview today. "The case is not based on any one or half a dozen artifacts. It is based on an array of historic documents, contemporary records, plus the physical evidence that has been recovered. We have not relied in any event upon anecdotes, stories, or recollections, although there are anecdotes that support the case — we have thrown them out."

"Neither are we relying on expert opinions even those of the N.T.S.B."

continued, referring to the National Transportation Safety Board. "The proof here is apparent to any rational person who looks at it. Present the same evidence to any dispassionate observer and they will reach the same conclusion. The case is solved."

But even Life magazine is hedging its bets. As part of its article, it published a dissent by Frank Schelling, an expert on modern Lockheed planes, who examined photos, looked at similar planes from the Earhart era, and wrote: "Gillespie's case doesn't stand up. That fragment did not come from an Electra."

Maude

THE NEW YORK TIMES
MONDAY, MARCH 16, 1992

Maudie

The International Group for Historic Aircraft Recovery

Fred Goerner sent me this book TAX copy

actually we got this only yesterday
October 28, 1991

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

AIRCRAFT WRECKAGE RECOVERED FROM PACIFIC ISLAND MAY SOLVE EARHART MYSTERY

An expedition to a remote, uninhabited Pacific island has returned with aircraft wreckage suspected of being that of Amelia Earhart's Lockheed "Electra" in which she and her navigator Fred Noonan disappeared during an attempted around the world flight in 1937. Also found were personal effects which may shed further light on the fliers' fate.

The International Group for Historic Aircraft Recovery, popularly known by its acronym TIGHAR (pronounced "tiger"), will release specifics concerning its discoveries on Nikumaroro, an atoll of the Phoenix Group within the Republic of Kiribati, only after post-expedition research has confirmed whether or not the wreckage is indeed from the Earhart plane. The month-long, half a million dollar expedition, which returned to Honolulu October 28, is the latest phase in a three-year investigation by the Wilmington, Delaware based non-profit historical foundation which hopes to solve conclusively one of the century's most enduring mysteries.

The organization's research to date, conducted according to stringent standards and acclaimed by the international academic community, has already soundly debunked the once-popular fiction that Earhart was a spy and that Japanese authorities were somehow involved in her disappearance. TIGHAR has also shown that the available documented evidence in the Earhart case argues strongly against the notion that the famous aviator and her accomplished navigator simply crashed at sea after failing to locate tiny Howland Island. Instead, everything points to a relatively successful landing at Nikumaroro, then known as Gardner Island, the only alternate destination available within the aircraft's fuel range and along the flight's last known navigational line. From there the crew broadcast widely heard radio distress calls for three days, yet when Navy search planes flew over the atoll one week after the disappearance no aircraft was visible.

Theorizing that the airplane might be hidden in the island's thick tropical vegetation or in the water just off the island's surrounding reef, TIGHAR mounted an expedition to Nikumaroro in 1989 with the object of searching those areas. Three weeks of operations by searchers hacking through the island's underbrush while scuba divers inspected what they could of the steeply-sloping reef edge revealed no aircraft. However, a search of the island's village, first established a year and a half after Earhart vanished and abandoned in 1963, produced an aluminum box later confirmed to be an aerial navigator's bookcase and, after analysis by the FBI, strongly suspected of having come from the Earhart aircraft. The evidence clearly pointed to a landing on the reef-flat, the broad, level expanse of coral that surrounds the island and dries at low tide to present an attractive landing area. Reasoning that tidal forces may have later washed the airplane seaward and over the edge of the reef, it was hoped that the rest of the aircraft, if still intact, might lie in the deep waters at the foot of the island's reef slope. TIGHAR determined to undertake a second expedition, this time with remote sensing technology which would permit a deep-water search to a depth of 2,000 feet.

To provide this capability, the services of Oceanengineering International of Houston, Texas were engaged to conduct a side-scan sonar survey of the island's perimeter. Any suspicious

Mauds



Air Classics!

CREDIBILITY

I've been meaning to write this letter for the last five years — guess I've been too busy or didn't think it was important enough. While your publication has been the bible for many Warbird enthusiasts, you've also provided a forum in "Airlines" for many of us to express our opinions. Some letters I've agreed with, some I haven't — all were worth the time to read.

I'd like to share a story with your readers. A few years ago, I was visiting a friend and we were discussing my trip to the Far East. One of my stops was Papua, New Guinea. When I mentioned this fact, my friend excitedly told me he had just read in a newsletter that a group called Tighair was en route to PNG that very next month to recover a rare B-17E Flying Fortress from a grass swamp. To say I was skeptical and surprised was an understatement, since I had been in PNG the week before and spent hours with museum director Mr. Bruce Hoy discussing aircraft and related topics. Mr. Hoy was emphatic that no aircraft, parts, wrecks, etc., were to leave PNG without being processed through the museum and the official government agency that oversees antiquities. Since my conversations with Mr. Hoy had been frank and, at times, strident, I was sure he would have mentioned this fact — if he had known about it.

My curiosity rose, so my friend and I called Mr. Rick Gillespie of Tighair and questioned him about the recovery. He described how he was taking a group to PNG to do the deed. He went on to say that if either of us wanted to be a part of this historic event that, for a substantial contribution, we could be included. At this point, I asked him who he was dealing with in PNG and he stated that he had excellent political connections in the US and that PNG would do whatever they wanted. I asked him if he had ever heard of Mr. Hoy — he hadn't.

At this point, I suspected a con job and told him so. He became indignant and told me that they were so well-connected that, in the future, they would become the single entity that anyone would have to deal with if they wanted to recover any US aircraft. They were already working with various senators and congressmen to have Tighair

so designated through legislation. I was, and still am, ticked.

These people took donations from hundreds of folks by leading them to believe they had the authority and ability to recover this rare B-17 variant. I called Mr. Hoy in PNG and, at that time, he had never heard of Tighair and stated emphatically that no one had permission to recover that aircraft. I am told that Tighair did eventually go to PNG, attended some cocktail parties, and announced that the backward local government was not cooperating. The arrogance and gall overwhelms. They had never sought permission to recover the B-17, nor even made the local government aware they were coming.

Over the last few years, I have read or have seen documentaries and press releases about Tighair. They found a piece of wood in a Maine forest that proves Nungesser and Coli made it across the Atlantic before Lindbergh. Bunk! They found a PBV junction box on Howland Island in the Pacific that is irrefutable proof that Amelia Earhart crashed there. Bull! They have located and recovered over a thousand rare aircraft. Not so! They tout themselves as being the authority on aircraft recovery and restoration and are also the world's leading aviation archeologists. False!

Tighair has attacked the nation's leading aviation museums, suggesting these institutions are inept and incompetent and if they'd just send their staffs to Tighair's seminars (for a fee, of course) they'll straighten their staffs out. They have also attacked Warbird owners in general, wanting to ground all Warbirds. Never! Like Butch said to Sundance, "Who are these guys?" Folks, I believe this organization is not what it claims. I don't believe they recovered a single aircraft. I know they haven't restored a single aircraft. To suggest they are authorities about something they have never done is ludicrous.

What Tighair does well is manipulate the media, press conferences, press releases, photo ops, sound bites, and docu-drama extravaganzas. In the process, myth becomes reality and hype overcomes common sense. I would suggest that all aviation enthusiasts, owners, restorers, museums, and archeolo-

gists pay attention to what these people are up to. If we don't keep an eye out, these self-appointed experts may convince some bubble-headed vermin that lives inside this nation's capital that they are for real and give them some legitimacy through legislation in exchange for a press release and a "go see" sound bite. Any individual or group who seeks to be appointed to rule over the rest of us bears close monitoring, lest one day these self-professed experts end up in control of our hobbies, jobs, and lives.

Keep 'em flying,
Roy L. Stafford
9102 Hurlong Rd.
Jacksonville, FL 32210

INVADERS

I am a Norwegian Warbird enthusiast who has a great interest in the Douglas A/B-26 Invader. It is a shame that an aircraft which fought through three major wars has received so little written information. I am currently trying to get in touch with pilots and ground crews to get information on military and civilian Invaders. I am also very interested in the Invaders used in the Congo and Biafra during the 1960s. The 50th anniversary of the first flight of the Invader will be on 10 July 1992, and I hope something will be done to commemorate the event.

Trygve Johansen
Mindes Vei 16
3500 Honefoss
Norway

J. DON'S FANTASTIC FLYING MACHINES

The article in the November 1991 issue really piqued my interest, especially the photograph of the Laird Swallow used by Alexander Industries of Denver, Colorado. It is interesting to note the role Wichita, Kansas, played in early aviation — from designing aircraft to the aviation pioneers who got their start there.

In April 1920, Matty Laird (builder of the Swallow) first tested his three-place OX-5 biplane built in a shed in Wichita. The plane earned the nickname "Swallow" from one of the Wichita hotel men who witnessed the flight, commenting, "It flies like a swallow." The Laird Swallow became the first

Maudie.



Air Classics

TIGHAR

From Mr. Roy Stafford's letter, published in "Airlines" of your February 1992 issue, it is clear that he is very frightened about something he calls "Tighair." He asks, "Like Butch said to Sundance, 'Who are these guys?' " Perhaps the answer will calm his fears.

TIGHAR, pronounced "tiger," is the acronym for The International Group for Historic Aircraft Recovery. The non-profit foundation is a recognized public charity dedicated to responsible aviation archeology and historic preservation and is made up of a growing membership of "guys" and women all over the world. Where Mr. Stafford got the idea that TIGHAR wants "to be appointed to rule over the rest of us" and to "end up in control of our hobbies, jobs and lives" is a puzzlement. TIGHAR is a service organization engaged in a wide range of research, preservation, and educational programs. Fiercely independent, as befits its name, TIGHAR has both criticized and complimented museums, owners, publications, and governmental agencies in its advocacy of aviation historic preservation, but has never sought to control anything. Indeed, the organization's own bylaws prohibit it from owning, selling, or brokering any historic aircraft. Mr. Stafford's concern and confusion about how many aircraft the organization has recovered is like worrying about how many experimental aircraft the EAA has actually built.

Mr. Stafford also has some rather strange impressions concerning TIGHAR's historical investigations into the disappearance of the Nungesser/Coli and the Earhart/Noonan flights. These complex projects are conducted according to rigid academic standards and are intended not only to solve these legendary mysteries, but to set a highly visible example in research methodology. Despite Mr. Stafford's allegations, no final result has been announced for either project.

Mr. Stafford can also rest easy that TIGHAR does not want to take his "Warbirds" away from him. Ever since 1987, when TIGHAR first pointed out the alarming rate at which rebuilt ex-military aircraft were being destroyed in flying accidents, the

organization has been accused of "wanting to ground all Warbirds." Let's set the record straight, for the hundredth time, regarding TIGHAR's position on this issue. Rehabilitated ex-military aircraft, no less than other types, serve a valuable purpose in preserving the sights and sounds of the past, not to mention the skills involved in flying and maintaining the aircraft. TIGHAR is not out to ground any "Warbirds." As catalogued each month in "For the Wreckord" in *Air Classics*, the "Warbird movement" is the one doing that, with real ground.

Mr. Stafford's fear of TIGHAR is unfounded, but his letter contains one excellent piece of advice. "I would suggest that all aviation enthusiasts, owners, restorers, museums, and archeologists pay attention to what these people are up to."

Richard E. Gillespie
Executive Director
1121 Arundel Drive
Wilmington, Delaware 19808

ROY STAFFORD REPLIES:

After having read Mr. Gillespie's letter — more dribble — now I have even greater doubts, to wit:

1) He states Tighar is a "non-profit foundation and recognized charity"! Mr. Gillespie, the Salvation Army is a charity! What needy group receives charity from Tighar?

2) He states they are dedicated to responsible aviation archeology and historic preservation and adhere to *rigid* academic standards. Was the PNG B-17 project an example of the rigid standards at work?

3) Where did I get the idea that they want to rule over the rest of us? From Mr. Gillespie.

4) How many historic aircraft has Tighar located, recovered, or preserved? Is zero a whole number?

5) Am I confused about the Nungesser/Coli claims? Is anyone else out there who saw the docudrama extravaganza confused about what claims were made?

6) Don't want to take my Warbirds away — look at their letters on the subject! *No one* has been more critical of his peers' attitude toward safety in the Warbird movement than

myself. See my past letters in this magazine. But I'll tell you what, I have and will defend any person's right to use their own property. And there's a great movement toward responsible operation led by the EAA, T-34 Association, North American Trainer Association, Lone Star Flight Museum, The Air Museum, etc.

7) I still want to know, "who are those guys?" and how much and where the charity goes!

Roy Stafford
9102 Hurlong Road
Jacksonville, Florida 32210

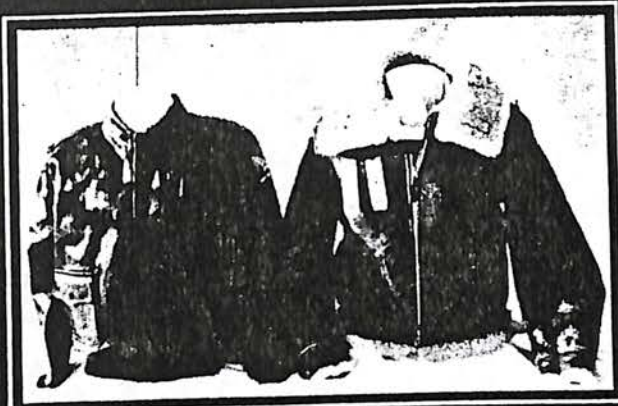
I heartily applaud Mr. Roy Stafford for taking the time to share his perception of TIGHAR and Rick Gillespie with your readers, and *Air Classics* for the service you provided by printing it. It would be a travesty if Gillespie and/or his wife, Pat, or their business enterprise (masquerading as a philanthropic organization) should achieve any official Congressional appointment or status.

One only has to attend (for \$250 — required of all prospective expedition participants, in addition to the healthy contribution to the project of their interest) one of his third-grade level "Aviation Archeology Courses" to detect the scam they perpetrate with their self-made "expertise." Neither Gillespie nor his wife, Pat, have any formal education in the field or science in which they promote themselves as experts. They have skillfully charmed (conned?) their way into legitimate scholarly international aviation and scientific circles around the world by picking up technical terminology from metallurgists, crime lab staff, aircraft designers and manufacturers.

They had been trying for years to establish their business into a lucrative livelihood, operating on OPM (other people's money), when they hit upon the popularity of the Amelia Earhart mystique. Using AE as a "hook," they succeeded in more than doubling their membership, and through one of their affluent members with media connections, are thriving on the sensational publicity they receive in the press. According to TIGHAR's own published accounting,

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AIRLINES

fully one-third of the \$300,000+ budget from contributions they received for their first expedition to Gardner Island went into their pockets as Project Directors and consultants!

Gillespie is articulate and charming! He could sell ice cubes to Eskimos! But a Congressional appointment and agency of his own? Without a doubt, his first act would be to have it Constitutionally mandated to prohibit every owner of a rare aircraft from flying it!

PLEASE! We could recreate the entire WWII air fleet for a tenth of what it would cost the taxpayers to maintain TIGHAR, always chasing its own tall tale!
Name withheld at writer's request

ALASKAN COMMANDOS

I have one small correction to the article about the "Alaskan Commandos" in a recent issue. As Director of Maintenance, I, among many others, had a hand in the work on One Nine Zulu. The correction is that she didn't work when she got here. She just sat basking in what sun there was until last year when work started in earnest on getting her going. We finally convinced her this summer that it was time to fly again. And when she did, when she at last was no longer earthbound, she decided that her approximately thirty years as a ramp weight was just so much wasted time that she was not going to do it anymore! The first month or so went by getting the bugs out and then it was time to roll up her sleeves and get to work. We have recently completed the third 100 hr inspection since then and she had very little wrong. And she is fast for a C-46. Of course, when you're a YOUNG 47-year-old with only 6000 hours, this flying stuff ain't nuffen! The other 46s may have more stories to tell, but they've been working all these years while she's been resting. "Now," she says, "it's my turn!"

Of course, all this work did not come free. She now sports nose art as do our other flyable 46s. I'll bet you can tell which one she is. We have *Salmon-Ella*, *Dumbo*, and *Maid-of-Money*. The first one is our main fish hauler in the fishing season, the second our prime 46 fuel hauler year round and, you guessed it, the last is One Nine Zulu.
Marty Hall
Fairbanks, Alaska

HOLLYWOOD LEGEND

Enjoyed the article on "B-17: The Hollywood Legend." The author makes reference to the movie *Bombardier*. I was at Kirtland

(Continued on page 64)

maude.

PROFILE

Aviation Buff's Claim Stirs Controversy Over Earhart

Richard Gillespie recovers and restores aircraft of historic significance. But he is now being called a charlatan.

By LEWIS BEALE
SPECIAL TO THE TIMES

WILMINGTON, Del.—Richard Gillespie admits he didn't set out to find Amelia Earhart's airplane. All he wanted was to take his interest in the discovery and recovery of historic aircraft, to move the whole field out of its "grave-digger-treasure-hunter stage, and develop this fledgling science of aviation archeology as a genuine academic discipline."

So, eight years ago, Gillespie, a former commercial pilot and aviation insurance investigator, founded a nonprofit organization, the International Group for Historic Aircraft Recovery. He and his wife, Pat Thrasher, set up shop in a Wilmington suburb and began, he says, trying to create and professionalize a whole new discipline—that of researching, finding and recovering aircraft of historic significance.

But people kept saying to him: "When are you going to look for Amelia Earhart's plane?"

Gillespie didn't consider the Earhart plane itself historically significant, but he knew the legend of the missing aviator, who disappeared somewhere in the Pacific in 1937, had a chokehold on America's consciousness. When two members of the aircraft recovery group came up with intriguing theories about navigational techniques that Gillespie thought might lead to Earhart, he raised more than \$700,000 and mounted two expeditions to a deserted island in the Pacific.

On March 16 this year, Gillespie stood before an army of reporters in Washington and announced he had found a piece of Earhart's plane on the atoll of Nikumaroro: "We're very confident that the Amelia Earhart case is solved," he said.

Then the you-know-what hit the you-know-what. Gillespie's find was reported in every paper in America, and he was invited to appear on everything from the "Today" show to Italian TV. He was also accused of shoddy research, of being a self-aggrandizing charlatan and of declaring the Earhart find solely to get publicity for his group.

Gillespie, 44, is still recovering from

the avalanche of press attention. In the crumbling ranch house he and Thrasher rent in a middle-class area of Wilmington, boxes filled with faxes and newspaper articles about the find are stashed away in one room while Gillespie, Thrasher and a paid assistant work away in the living room.

"Why bother to speak the truth?" he asked rhetorically, in response to yet another question about the Earhart controversy. "Because we found that the public in general, once they see the evidence, accepts the truth; 99% of the squawks are coming from people who have a financial interest in the [Amelia Earhart] legend."

Gillespie's background didn't exactly prepare him for this kind of controversy. Born and raised in Upstate New York, he learned to fly at age 16, and helped pay his way through college, where he majored in history, by piloting commercial charters. After a brief stint in the military—where he was not allowed to fly because of his contact lenses—he got a job with a large Philadelphia insurance agency, where he serviced airport accounts and investigated accidents.

Gillespie was always something of an aircraft buff, but it wasn't until his brother sent him a magazine article about l'Oiseau Blanc (the White Bird), an attempted Paris-to-New York flight months before Charles A. Lindbergh's famous journey, that he jumped into the aircraft recovery game with both feet. The White Bird had vanished on its flight, and when Gillespie read that it was rumored to have crashed in the Maine wilderness, he suggested to his brother that they spend a weekend in New England looking for it.

Twenty trips later, Gillespie and TIG-HAR still haven't found the White Bird. But that first trip spurred his interest in finding old planes, what he calls "a marriage of my interest in history and airplanes, plus my training as an accident investigator."

Today, his group has 814 members in 15 countries, with an operating budget of \$120,000. In addition to membership fees, money comes from sales of coffee mugs, T-shirts and posters, as well as Gillespie's lecture fees and writing



AL STEPHENSON / For The Times

'Ninety-nine percent of the squawks are coming from people who have a financial interest in the legend.'

—RICHARD GILLESPIE

Gillespie and Thrasher are paid \$30,000 each to run the organization.

The group's goal, says Gillespie, is not so much solving aviation mysteries as "saving historic aircraft for permanent preservation."

With that in mind, it has written criteria for historic aircraft preservation and restoration, has sponsored courses in aviation archeology, raised funds for search expeditions, established a computerized data base of historic aircraft, and acted as a general scold.

"Things we've had to say have not been popular," Gillespie says. "Like telling museums that they're over-restoring their airplanes, or saying to people flying one-of-a-kind airplanes that they shouldn't be flying, it's irresponsible to risk a crash. We're talking about a stewardship responsibility."

Gillespie defends criticisms about publicity and his methods. "We're a tiny nonprofit . . . and we have to let the public know what we're doing," he says, adding that "you're taking eight years of an organization that has literally written the book on technique, focused issues, practically invented a whole discipline, trained ourselves and, ultimately, solved the greatest mystery in air history."

...ence of nuclear weapons re-
search, U.S. officials believe that
Iran is engaged in a determined,
long-term effort to develop nucle-
ar weapons with the help of tech-
nology from China.

Over the last few years, China
has provided Iran with technology
similar to that used by Iraq's
Saddam Hussein in his program to
develop nuclear weapons. Beijing
also furnished Iran with a mini-re-
actor and other items useful for
nuclear weapons research.

"I don't think the Iranians are
going about it in such a brutish
fashion as Saddam Hussein," one
State Department official said.
"Their program is much more sub-
tle and long-term."

Iran now ranks, along with
North Korea and the Common-
wealth of Independent States,
among the top concerns of U.S.
officials worried about the spread
of nuclear weapons.

CIA Director Robert M. Gates
testified in Congress last month
that Iran "is building up its special
weapons capability as part of a
massive . . . effort to develop its
military and defense capability."
He said that Iran is looking to
China to supply missiles and nucle-
ar technology.

China contends that all of its
nuclear help to Iran has been
above-board and that the facilities
is helping Iran develop comply
with the legal safeguards of the
International Atomic Energy
Agency.

A Chinese Foreign Ministry

But U.S. sources said the Bu-
Administration recently has urged
China at "very senior levels" to
stop helping Iran's nuclear pro-
gram.

"We're trying to tell the Chinese
that in this case, you've got to
beyond the letter of the law [U-
IAEA safeguards]," an Admini-
Please see IRAN, A13

Earhart Evidence Offered: Metal, Sole, Bottle Cap

By PAUL RICHTER
TIMES STAFF WRITER

WASHINGTON—Tiny stitching
on a woman's shoe, the cap of a
medicine bottle and letters on a
scrap of metal were held out Mon-
day as proof that legendary aviator
Amelia Earhart died on a waterless
South Pacific atoll, rather than in
the ocean or at the hands of
Japanese soldiers.

At a packed press conference
here, an investigator for a nonprof-
it group asserted that his organiza-
tion's four-year search had solved
a mystery that has puzzled and
fascinated the world since Earhart
and her navigator disappeared
during their 1937 attempt to circle
the globe.

"For 55 years her fate has been a
mystery," said Richard Gillespie,
Please see EARHART, A13

Theory Still Has Skeptics

Continued from A1

executive director of the International Group for Historic Aircraft Recovery of Wilmington, Del., as he stood near a glass case containing the group's evidence. "Today that mystery is solved."

Other experts remained unconvinced, however. Gillespie's group turned its evidence over to the National Transportation Safety Board, the agency that investigates plane crashes. While it found nothing inconsistent with Gillespie's theory, officials also found no absolute proof among the debris.

And Thomas Crouch, chairman of the aeronautics department of the Smithsonian Institution's National Air and Space Museum, said he doubts that Gillespie's evidence will end the long-running controversy. The proof is circumstantial and lacks any irrefutable evidence, such as the serial numbers that appear on so many aircraft parts, he said.

"You don't have AE's signature anywhere; you don't have any serial numbers," said Crouch. "This still requires a great leap of faith. I'm a skeptic."

Gillespie's theory is based on a presumption that after leaving Lae, New Guinea, Earhart failed to find her destination of Howland Island and instead headed for Nikumaroro Island, 1,600 miles southwest of Hawaii.

When they reached the atoll, Earhart and navigator Fred Noonan made a safe landing on a flat, dry reef that was temporarily exposed because of low tide, he said. For three days, they sent out radio distress calls.

Then a punishing storm smashed their Lockheed 10-E Electra aircraft and swept it over the edge of the reef into deep water. Within days, the pair probably died of exposure and lack of fresh water, Gillespie theorized.

Perhaps the most important piece of evidence, said Gillespie, was a 23-by-19-inch scrap of alloy fuselage "skin" that the investigators believe was ripped from the belly of the aircraft when it was pounded by the storm.

The scrap, recovered last year amid beachfront vegetation, is made of the same aluminum alloy that was used to repair the Earhart plane's underside after it was damaged during an abortive takeoff earlier in the journey. Two letters, "AD," that appear on the scrap identify it as coming from the manufacturer's lot that was used on the aircraft.

The letters also establish that it was made before World War II, and thus did not come from any wartime military aircraft. Earhart's craft was one of only three planes that are known to have flown in the region, Gillespie said.

He said that a 34-inch copper antenna wire also found on the island was of the type used on the Electra aircraft. The antenna was attached at one end to the aircraft skin and at the other to the engine.

"The match is perfect with every documentable aspect of that skin," Gillespie said.

He said that examination of a Cat's Paw brand rubber sole found on the island showed it to be a replacement for a woman's shoe sole, probably a Size 9. The examination was made by employees at Bilrite Corp., which now owns the Cat's Paw company.

Although Pacific islanders called the Gilbertese occupied the island from 1937 until 1963, their women never wore shoes, Gillespie said. He showed 1937 photographs of Earhart wearing a blucher-style oxford of a kind that he said would use such replacement soles.

He said that while Nikumaroro has all the beauty of a South Seas island, it also has the harsh conditions that probably would have killed Earhart and Noonan within days. Temperatures on the beach rise as high as 120 degree Fahrenheit, he said, noting that the island got less than three-quarters of an inch of rain that year.

Gillespie said that his group is attempting to raise money so it can return to the site in mid-1993 to try to recover the aircraft, which it believes lies in deep water off the

Edge of the Reef

Maudie.

Fifty-five years ago the world's most famous woman aviator
and execute her? Did she crash into the sea? Now a relentless



vanished in the vastness of the Pacific. Did the Japanese capture
American investigator explains why he believes he has solved

THE MYSTERY OF AMELIA EARHART

by Richard Gillespie

Calling the Navy's search "tragic" and "inadequate," historic aircraft researcher Richard Gillespie led an expedition to a remote Pacific atoll. Searchers found parts of a size-nine woman's shoe and an aluminum sheet (right) that, some experts say, was torn off the belly of Earhart's Lockheed Electra (left).

PURDUE UNIVERSITY

P. THRASHER/TIGHAR

A gleaming silver Lockheed Electra crouches on an airstrip in the New Guinea jungle. In the cockpit sits a boyishly lanky woman with bright, bold eyes, a touse of short curls and a startling facial resemblance to the young Charles Lindbergh. With a nod to her navigator, a lean, dark-haired man in his forties, she edges the twin throttles forward. As the engines crescendo to a scream, tropical birds burst from the bordering trees in screeching clots of color. Loaded with more than three tons of gasoline, the Electra trundles down the runway toward a cliff that falls sheer into the sea. With only yards to spare, it lurches off the ground, sails over the brink, then swoops almost to the wavetops before easing into a slow climb. In his logbook the navigator notes the time: 10 a.m., July 2, 1937. At 39, Amelia Earhart has begun her final flight. Within 24 hours she will vanish into silence and mystery, a mystery that has haunted the world's imagination for more than half a century, a mystery that is now solved.

Earhart is the most famous female aviator of all time. Second person after Lindbergh to fly the Atlantic solo, first to fly from Hawaii to the U.S. mainland, she had set speed and altitude records, written books, cofounded an airline, lent her name to a line of luggage and designed practical fashions for women. In a profession dominated by men, Earhart inaugurated a struggle that would one day open aerospace careers to women.

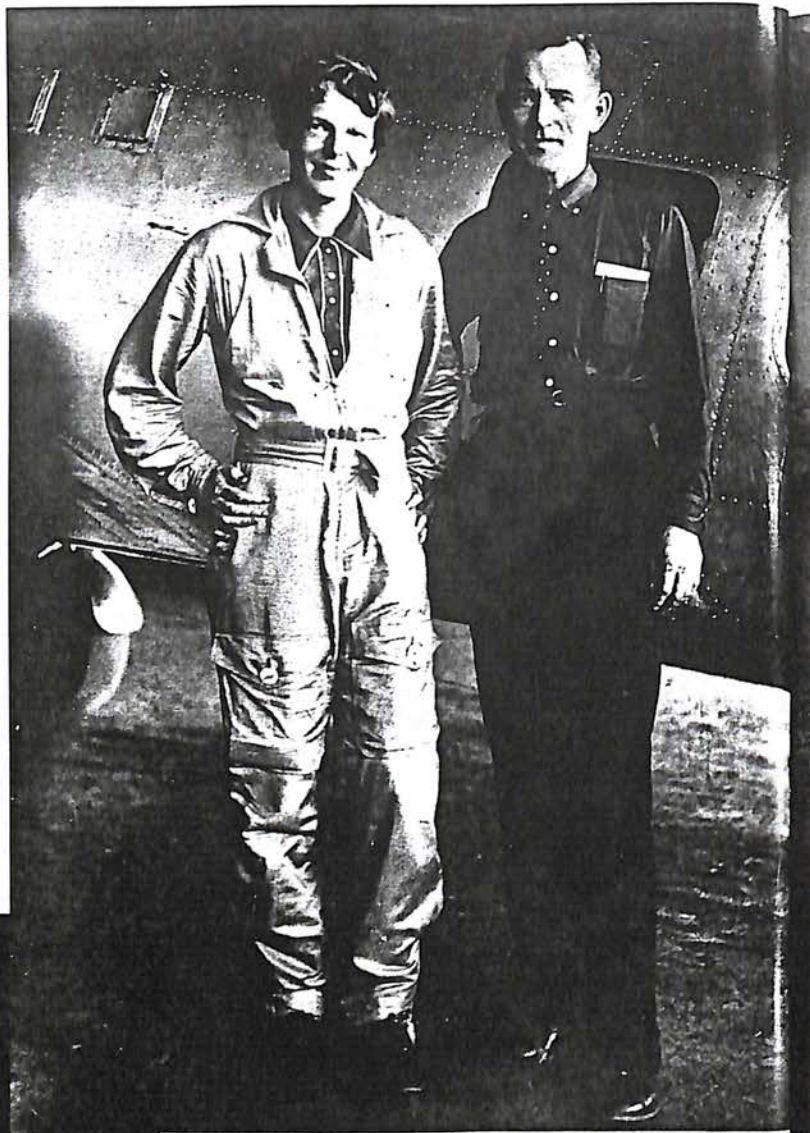
On March 17, 1937, Earhart took off from Oakland on her greatest adventure: a 28,595-mile flight that would make her the first pilot to circle the globe near the equator. But on takeoff from Hawaii for the second leg of the trip, her landing gear collapsed and the plane belly-flopped in a shower of sparks. Back at the Lockheed factory in California, where the Electra was repaired, new aluminum was riveted to the mangled underside. These changes, which made Earhart's aircraft subtly different from every other Electra, would ultimately help to unravel the riddle of her disappearance.

Sixty-two days after the accident, Earhart started off again. But this time, still accompanied by navigator Fred Noonan, she flew east instead of west—across the U.S., the South Atlantic, Africa and India, then through the Dutch East Indies to Australia, and on to Lae, New Guinea, where she took off across 2,500 miles of trackless ocean toward a speck of coral called Howland Island.

At Howland the U.S. Coast Guard cutter *Itasca* was standing by to guide the Electra in. At 6:15 a.m. Earhart reported that she was about 200 miles out and asked the cutter to take a bearing on her signal. The *Itasca* explained that she was using too high a frequency and requested a Morse code signal on a lower frequency. No reply. The *Itasca* did not know that Amelia had removed her low-frequency antenna to save weight, and that, incredibly, neither she nor Noonan knew Morse code. Then at 7:41 a.m. Earhart's voice came through loud and clear: "We must be on you but cannot see you but gas is running low. Been unable to reach you by radio." At 7:50 a.m. Earhart called again: "We are circling but cannot hear you." She then asked for a signal on a very high frequency. The *Itasca* sent the signal. She received it, but her radio was unable to home in on high-frequency emissions. Her last message came at 8:45 a.m.: "We are on the line 157/337 . . . We are running on line." The *Itasca* called and called. Silence.

What happened to Earhart and Noonan? In the 55 years since that grim morning, their disappearance has spawned a mini-industry of speculation. Hundreds of articles, a feature film, a number of television specials and more than 30 books have worried the mystery and dreamed up solutions. Many assume that Earhart ran out of fuel and crashed at sea. Others claim she was a U.S. spy who was captured by the Japanese and died on Saipan.

The public was fascinated. I wasn't. As an aviation risk manager, and later as executive director of The International Group for Historic Aircraft Recovery (TIGHAR), a nonprofit foundation, I had investigated hundreds of airplane accidents and was well aware of the difference between anecdote and evidence. I told Pat Thrasher, my wife and partner in TIGHAR, that "the Earhart thing is a sensationalized circus, and we should stay out of it." And then, on July 17, 1988, a couple of retired military aviators named Tom Gannon and Tom Willi walked into my office in Wilmington, Del.



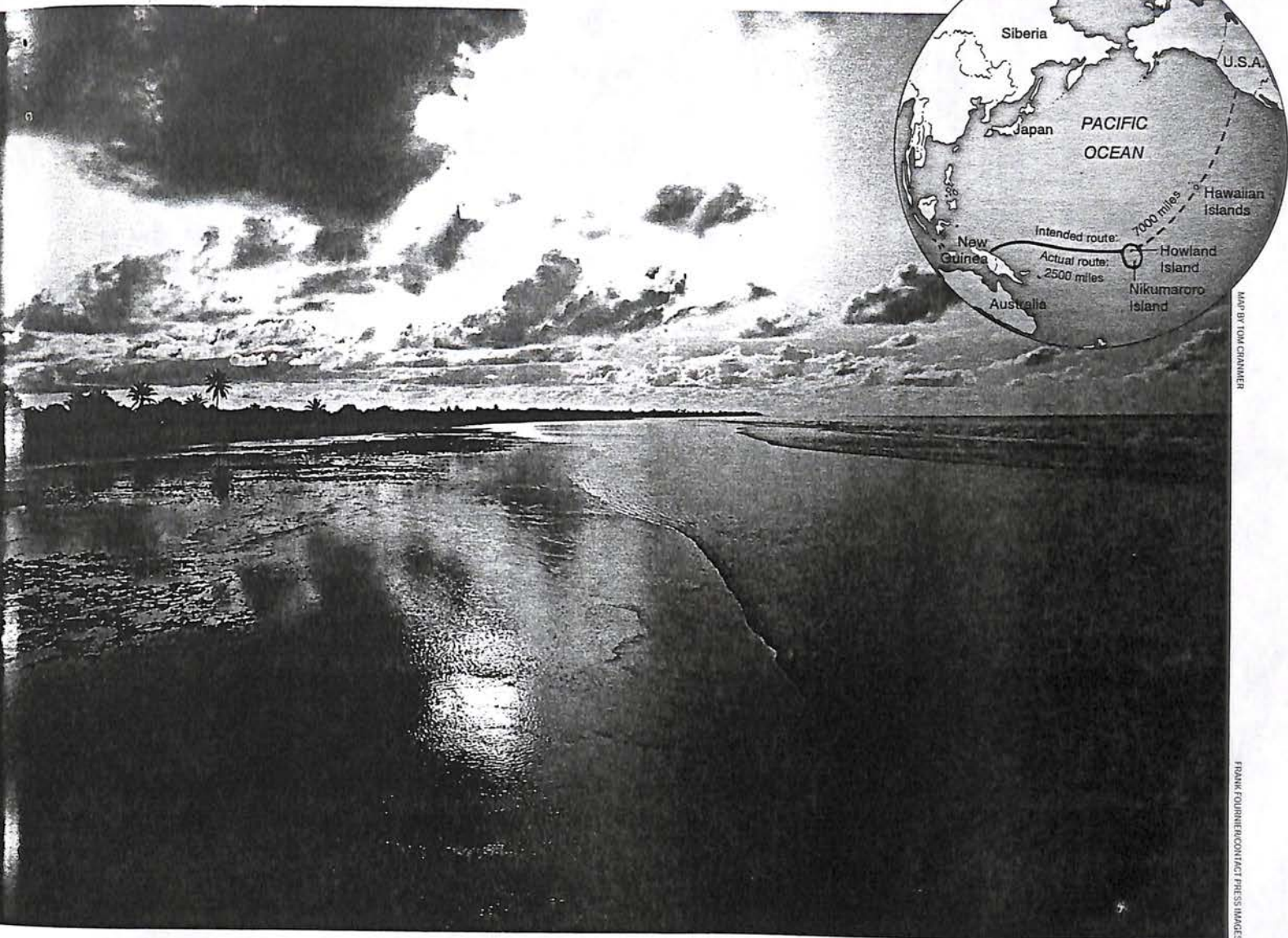
In 1937 Earhart and her navigator, Fred Noonan, took off on a round-the-world flight that may have ended on Nikumaroro's reef flat (right).

**'YOU MEAN,
NOBODY
REALLY
LOOKED IN THE
MOST LIKELY
PLACE?'**

Instead of anecdotes, they presented evidence. Step by step they re-created the exact navigational situation faced by Noonan as fuel ran low, radio navigation proved useless and no island appeared ahead. On a chart of the central Pacific they showed how, even without radio bearings, he could follow a standard procedure: aim his octant at the rising sun and plot a "line of position." Using celestial tables, Gannon pointed out that on the morning of July 2, 1937, the rising sun would have provided the precise line of position Earhart said she was running. By flying southeast along that line, Noonan could be sure that, even if he missed Howland, he would reach an island in the Phoenix group in about two hours. Clearly, it was the safest, sanest course to follow. I traced the line on the chart and read the name of the island: Nikumaroro.

Gannon then supplied a stunning piece of information: During the Navy's hunt for Earhart, no search party was ever landed on Nikumaroro (then known as Gardner Island), and only a brief inspection was made from the air—a full week after Earhart vanished. The planes were launched from the battleship *Colorado*, the only large U.S. warship in the central Pacific, which had to steam 2,000 miles before the search could begin.

"You mean nobody really looked in the most likely place?" Gannon's silence spoke volumes. I knew then that we'd have to go after Amelia Earhart.



We checked Gannon's story against official reports from the 1937 search, and what we found floored us. The Navy had even stronger reasons than Gannon and Willi to believe that Earhart had landed on an island in the Phoenix group. Almost 24 hours after her last message to the *Itasca*, a Navy flying boat reestablished radio contact. Earhart's signal, barely audible but persistent, was also picked up by HMS *Achilles* and by stations all over the Pacific. Lockheed advised the Navy that, given the continuing signals, the plane must be on land and able to operate an engine to recharge its batteries. Pan Am stations at Hawaii, Midway and Wake Island also took radio bearings and told the Navy that triangulation "places plane [in] Phoenix group." After three days, Earhart's signal stopped.

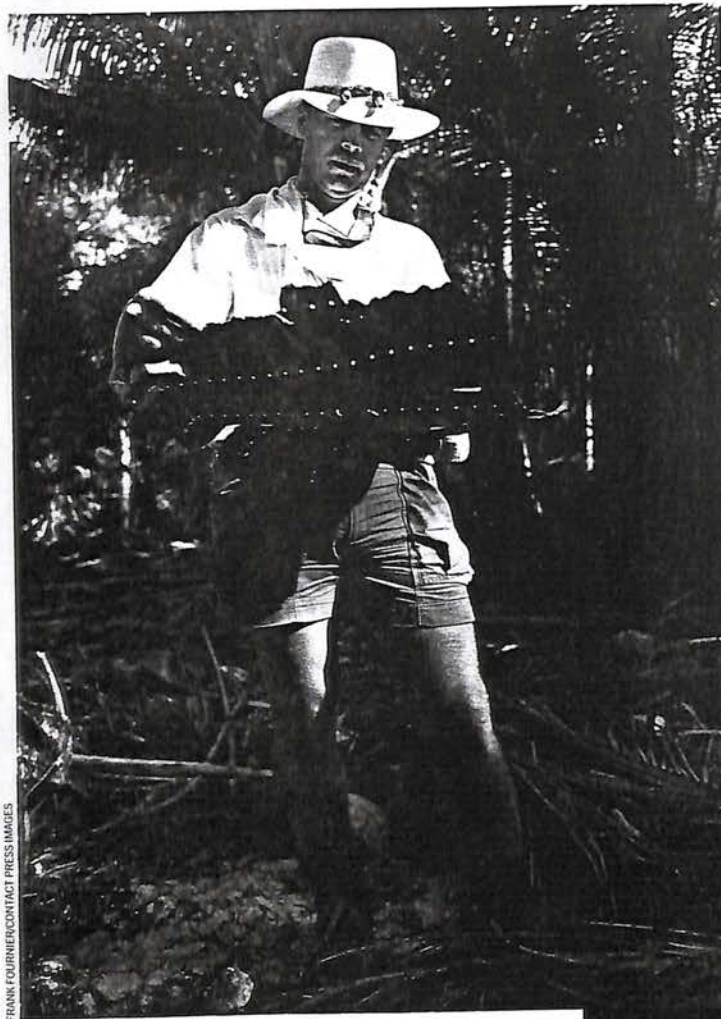
Four days later, on July 9, three biplanes from the *Colorado* flew over Nikumaroro. They saw no airplane on the atoll, but Lt. John Lambrecht's report noted that "signs of recent habitation were clearly visible." However, "repeated circling and zooming failed to elicit any answering wave from possible inhabitants." Lambrecht decided "none were there" and flew off, unaware that those signs of recent habitation were hugely significant: Prior to 1937, Nikumaroro's last known inhabitants belonged to a work party of islanders that had departed in 1892. The searchers had gone to the most likely place, seen something that shouldn't have been there, and left without investigating. Clearly, the Navy's search, though extensive, had been tragically inadequate. What had not been

done in 1937 had to be done now. We would have to search Nikumaroro.

It took a year to raise \$250,000, assemble a team of volunteers and arrange a thousand logistical details, but on September 17, 1989, after a 1,300-mile trip from Fiji by way of Pago Pago, we peered over the bow of a converted Japanese tuna trawler at a thin green line on the horizon: Nikumaroro. Three and a half miles long and a quarter-mile wide at most points, the atoll is only marginally habitable, a slender ringlet of jungle that surrounds a tranquil lagoon. Fresh water depends entirely upon rainfall, which sometimes adds up to less than one inch a year. Nevertheless, in 1938, 17 months after Earhart disappeared, the British settled 10 Gilbert Islanders on the atoll and started a coconut plantation. In 1944, the U.S. Coast Guard built a radio outpost on the island's southeast tip. But in 1946 the station was dismantled, and in 1963 the Gilbertese left.

Deserted since then, the island is covered with scaevola, a writhing entanglement of iron-hard stalks that towered before us. We waded in with machetes, ignoring bees, spiders, rats and giant coconut crabs that have claws as big as a man's hand and can husk a coconut like you'd peel an orange. But the real enemy is heat. Temperatures in the shade exceed 100° F, and the noontday sun can literally fry an egg.

While 12 of us hacked through underbrush, four scuba divers scoured the shark-infested fringes of the reef. Nikumaroro is surrounded by a level table of hard coral that extends outward from the beach about 600 feet before dropping almost vertically to the ocean floor 2,000 feet below. For two scorching weeks



FRANK FOURNIER/CONTACT PRESS IMAGES

as having come from the Earhart aircraft." And at Purdue University, TIGHAR member Gary Quigg found a snapshot showing Earhart and Noonan standing beside the open door of the Electra just days before they vanished. Inside, under the navigator's chart table, was an object that looked like our bookcase. Was it the same box? No way to be sure.

Richard Evans, a former Coast Guardsman stationed on Nikumaroro during World War II, opened another promising line of inquiry. Evans said he had seen "a water collection device" on the island's northern shore in 1944. The Gilbertese told him they had not built it. Evans sketched a rectangular tank that bore a remarkable resemblance to the 149-gallon fuel tanks shown in photographs of the Electra's cabin—photographs Evans had never seen. He also sketched a strip of heavy cloth mounted on poles and rigged to funnel rainwater into the tank below. The dimensions of the cloth match those of custom-made engine covers carried aboard Earhart's aircraft. Is this structure what Lieutenant Lambrecht meant by "signs of recent habitation"?

A grim new piece of the puzzle was provided by Floyd Kilts, another retired Coast Guardsman. In 1960 Kilts told the *San Diego Tribune* a story he had heard on Nikumaroro in 1946. The islanders reported that in 1938 newly arrived Gilbertese laborers had found "the skeleton of a woman and the skull of a man." Beside the woman's bones lay "a pair of American shoes, size nine narrow." Kilts's story was corroborated by a Tarawa resident named Bauro Tikana, who in 1939 clerked for Nikumaroro's British administrator. Tikana said natives had told him about bones found on "the other end of the island." And it was on "the other end of the island" that we had found a grave. Could this be the grave of Amelia Earhart?

We had to find out. We had to get back to Nikumaroro with the right equipment to excavate that grave and the right technology to explore the deep water around the island. That would require a bigger expedition and a much bigger budget. We decided to go ahead.

For the underwater search we hired Oceaneering International, the same company that found debris from the space shuttle *Challenger*. Oceaneering would provide side-scan sonar and a small robot submarine equipped with a video camera. To transport the expedition we leased the *Acania*, a 250-ton research vessel. The operation would cost \$483,000, most of it contributed by the general public. A week before D-Day we were \$200,000 short. But at the last minute, friends of TIGHAR offered interest-free, unsecured loans that covered the shortfall.

Gillespie examines a torn sheet of aircraft aluminum, the central piece of evidence in his case, just after it was recovered.

we hacked scaevola and combed beaches with metal detectors. But we found no trace of a flying machine. Suddenly it hit me: We were looking in the wrong places. Earhart would have landed on the reef flat, at low tide an ideal runway, and her plane must have washed off the reef into the abyss. To search those depths, we would need side-scan sonar. For now, we had to make do with the tools we had. After 21 days, we had found only a few interesting metal objects, including a cut-up aluminum box with a number stamped into it. But on a final sweep, three members of the expedition came upon a small grave in a remote jungle clearing. They snapped a photo and hurried back to the ship.

As Nikumaroro dropped astern, it was sobering to contemplate how little we had garnered for our quarter of a million dollars. Yet nothing that had happened—or hadn't happened—diminished the power of the evidence that had brought us to Nikumaroro. Convinced that the atoll held the key to the Earhart mystery, I resolved that TIGHAR would come back and find that key. I was unaware that a piece of it was already in our hands.

The aluminum box, like Aladdin's lamp, was full of surprises. The numbers stamped into it, 28F 4023, confirmed that it was an airplane part—a navigator's bookcase. The numbers also established that it had been designed for a Navy flying boat, the Catalina. But closer inspection produced an unexpected discovery: The holes drilled for screws that attached the box to the airplane were in the wrong places. This box was not suitable for mounting on a Catalina. Could it have been mounted on an Electra? The FBI's forensic experts studied the box and reported: "Nothing was found which would disqualify this artifact

**'THERE
IS NO
CONFLICTING
EVIDENCE.
THE CASE IS
SOLVED'**

On October 1, 1991, the *Acania* sailed from Honolulu with 10 TIGHAR members aboard—including seven who had taken part in the first expedition. Nine days later Nikumaroro surfaced on the horizon. From a distance the island seemed unchanged, but we got a shock when we went ashore. Fifty feet of oceanfront jungle had been ripped out by giant waves and hurled inland.

Two days later a base camp had been established and search operations were underway in stunning heat. Kris Tague, John Clauss, Veryl Fenlason, LeRoy Knoll and Alan Olson swept the beach with metal detectors. At the grave site Dr. Tommy Love, Asya Usvitsky, Russell Matthews and I began a meticulous excavation. Aboard *Acania*, the Oceaneering team towed a sonar "fish" that scanned for wreckage.

On the eighth day, 53 centimeters down into the grave, we uncovered a box-shaped tangle of tiny roots about the size of an orange crate, apparently the remains of a coffin made of green wood that had sprouted. Hoping, dreading, we gathered around the grave. Using dental tools, I parted the tangle of roots and exposed a small brown bone. Then another, and another. I handed them carefully to Tommy, who inspected them under a field microscope.

"Finger? Toe?" I was wishing out loud.

"No. I'm afraid it's a tibia. These are the bones of a newborn baby."

We stood staring at the pathetic little bones as the irony of the moment sank in: We had traveled halfway around the world and spent half a million dollars—to dig up the remains of an unknown infant.

Finally I said, "We need to put this grave back the way we found it." So we carefully replaced the bones, reset the stone markers and brought fresh sea-shells to lay on the bare earth. Then Kris said, "Ric, I think it's important ➤

that we say something." I said what I felt. "We're sorry, little one, to disturb your rest. We've tucked you in as best we can. Sleep well."

By the middle of Day Eight, only two days before we would have to leave, we were all depressed. Despite costly preparations, the second expedition had proved even less successful than the first. All we had to hang onto was a curious find. Not far from the grave, Tommy had discovered the heel of an old shoe with the trademark: "Cat's Paw Rubber Co., USA." A little later we retrieved the remains of what appeared to be a woman's size nine shoe sole, along with a small brass eyelet and another heel, unlabeled—perhaps the same pair of "American shoes, size nine narrow" that were spotted on the island back in 1938.

The next afternoon Pat made the discovery we had all been hoping for. In a welter of fallen palm fronds and coconuts lay a sheet of torn aluminum about two feet long and 18 inches wide. It was stitched with rows of rivet holes, and one rivet was still in place. From a corner of the sheet hung a tangled, 30-inch length of thin copper wire with some of its rubber insulation intact. This was clearly airplane wreckage. Had it lain hidden in the sand for years, perhaps since it was washed ashore from the wreck of the Electra, only to be churned up by the recent storm? There was reason to think so. The wire was so delicately linked to the aluminum that the connection could not have survived 10 seconds in an unruly sea. And what a wonderfully complex sheet of aluminum it was. Everything about it—the rivet, the wire, the faintly visible letters AD on its surface—told a story. We had to learn how to read that story.

Rousing our last energies, we tore that beach apart. Alan found what looked like the broken faceplate of an aircraft radio. And Veryl found a metal ring attached to a rusty four-inch steel pin. As the throb of the ship's engines announced our departure, we assembled the fruits of our labors: two dozen plastic bags, each containing an artifact. Mere debris—or aviation history's Holy Grail?

After four months of rigorous analysis, the contents of our plastic bags proved more eloquent than we had dared hope.

ARTIFACT 2-2-G-7 (Shoe Parts): The Cat's Paw heel and shoe sole were evaluated with the help of William F. Foshage Jr. and Robert L. Oginsz of the Cat's Paw division of the Biltrite Corporation in Waltham, Mass. They reported that these artifacts are the remains of the left shoe of a pair of women's 10-eyelet blucher-style Oxfords, about size nine. The heel is a Cat's Paw replacement heel, somewhat worn. The style was made in the U.S. in the mid-1930s. Photos of Earhart in Lae confirm that this is a precise description of the shoes she was wearing when she disappeared. Footgear worn by British administrators or American servicemen was completely different, and the Gilbertese settlers always went barefoot. Conclusion: There is a high probability that Artifact 2-2-G-7 came from one of Earhart's shoes.

ARTIFACT 2-2-V-1 (Aluminum Sheet): The sheet was examined by Joseph Epperson, a metallurgist at the National Transportation Safety Board, and by Richard Horrigan, head of aircraft restoration at the Smithsonian's National Air and Space Museum. Photographs of the artifact were studied by Delbert Naser, an official at Alcoa, and by Herman Stevens, a retired Lockheed shop foreman. Using scanning electron microscopy, Epperson confirmed that the sheet is made of an alloy known as 24ST. Microscopic examination confirmed that the sheet was given a surface treatment called ALCLAD. Lockheed states

that Earhart's aircraft was made of 24ST ALCLAD. The sheet is .032 inch thick and roughly 18 inches wide by 25 inches long. Since none of the edges is finished, the original sheet must have been larger. Skin #35R, which covered the area on the belly of an Electra where the rear antenna post was normally placed, is .032 inch thick and measures 38 inches wide by 72 inches long. Conclusion: Skin #35R and this sheet are compatible.

Alcoa's analysis of the last two letters of ALCLAD, which appear on the sheet, presented data that proved it was made before World War II. Identical labeling appears on an Electra built at the same time as Earhart's. Horrigan identified the rivet as type AN455 AD 3/3. Common in the mid-'30s, it was replaced by type AN470 during WWII. Lockheed specs call for AN455 AD 3/3 rivets on skin #35R of the Electra. The single-strand copper wire attached to the sheet has been identified as antenna lead wire that was standard in the '30s but discontinued before WWII.

Stevens compared the sheet and Lockheed's repair orders. These repairs, he states, would have been carried out according to standards unfamiliar to modern mechanics, and the repaired belly would differ markedly from the belly of a standard Electra. It would, however, display a rivet pattern identical to the pattern on the sheet found on Nikumaroro. "It's the only way you could do it," Stevens says. Epperson also compared the repair order and the rivet pattern. His comment: "Looks like you've got it nailed."

Epperson further noted the singular manner in which the sheet ripped along a rivet line, then met resistance that caused the tear to jump sideways. Epperson says this indicates the presence of a reinforcing object on that line. Several photographs show clearly that the rear antenna mast on Earhart's Lockheed was mounted near the fuselage centerline in precisely the same position as the reinforcing object Epperson postulates.

When the analysis of the sheet was complete, every feature matched the Earhart aircraft. Might the same be said of some other aircraft? Most unlikely. The rivet, the labeling and the antenna wire all confirm that the aluminum sheet came from a prewar aircraft. But before World War II only three planes flew anywhere near Nikumaroro: Sir Charles Kingsford Smith's Fokker, now in a museum; a U.S. Navy Grumman Duck, which completed a 1939 mapping flight without incident; and Earhart's Electra.

What if an aircraft built before the war had been lost there during the war? No aircraft was ever reported lost near Nikumaroro. What if a prewar aircraft was lost during the war on another island, and pieces of it were brought to Nikumaroro? In all of World War II only four aircraft were known to be lost within 500 miles

of the island. None was built before the war.

Every possibility has been checked, every alternative eliminated. There is only one possible conclusion: We found a piece of Amelia Earhart's aircraft. There may be conflicting opinions, but there is no conflicting evidence. I submit that the case is solved.

Yet mystery remains. How long did Earhart and Noonan survive? Did they die of dehydration? Do their bones rest in the scaevola, picked clean by crabs? Somewhere on Nikumaroro—buried in its burning sands, hidden in its unforgiving jungle, lost among the sharks that shadow its shores—lies more wreckage, another shoe, and who knows what other silent witnesses to the last days of two brave people whose luck had run out. The story is there. The departure date for Expedition III is July 2, 1993. □

AN OPPOSING VIEW

Richard Gillespie's bold claim that he has solved the Earhart mystery will not go unchallenged. If he is right, most other Earhart experts are wrong. Understandably disturbed, one expert, Elgen Long, asked a well-qualified aeronautical engineer to examine Gillespie's photographs and documents. Frank Schelling, head of the P-3 Aircraft Structures Branch at the U.S. Navy Aviation Depot in Alameda, Calif., said this:

Gillespie's case doesn't stand up. After studying the Lockheed repair orders and inspecting a photograph of the aluminum fragment found on Nikumaroro, I examined the belly and other surfaces of an Electra that was manufactured one year before Amelia Earhart's. During that year no structural changes were made. I saw no area of the aircraft where the fragment would fit. That fragment did not come from an Electra.

For one thing, the rivet patterns don't even come close to matching up. Rivets attach the fuselage skin to long structural members called stringers, which run the length of the fuselage. In the standard aircraft examined, these stringers are 3.5 inches apart in the area the fragment is supposed to have come from. But on the fragment, the rivet lines, corresponding to the location of stringers, are 4.25 inches apart. In addition, the rivets on the Lockheed 10 are spaced 1.5 inches apart; on the fragment the rivets are spaced one inch apart. The aluminum sheets on the belly of a Lockheed 10 are fastened to the keel by a double row of staggered rivets. But on the protruding flap, which would have extended across the keel, there is no trace of a second row.

Gillespie maintains that the rear antenna post was mounted where the flap protrudes. I disagree. An antenna post must be mounted on a flat surface, and the keel is V-shaped at that point.

One further point: Gillespie claims that when the aircraft was repaired by Lockheed, the stringer locations and the rivet spacing were changed. He believes that this accounts for the differences between the fragment and the structure of a standard Lockheed 10. Not so. If Lockheed's engineers had intended to change stringer locations and rivet spacing, they would have so specified in their work order. Lockheed would have repaired the aircraft as close as possible to its original configuration to maintain structural integrity.

Experts consulted by Gillespie disagree with this critique. Their observations appear in the text.

Annapolis Seminar & U.S. Naval Institute Annual Meeting

28-29-30 April 1993 • U.S. Naval Academy, Annapolis, Maryland



—Where is— Amelia Earhart?

1:45 p.m. Mahan Hall

- ▶ **Richard Gillespie**, Executive Director, *The International Group for Historic Aircraft Recovery*
- ▶ **Dr. Thomas Crouch**, Chairman, *Aeronautics, Smithsonian Institution*
- ▶ **Rear Admiral Francis Foley**, USN (Ret.), *USS Lexington (CV-2) air searcher, 1937*
- ▶ **Hiroshi Nakajima**, Executive Director, *Pacific Society in Tokyo*
- ▶ **Dr. Mark Peattie**,
Edwin O. Reischauer Institute of Japanese Studies, Harvard University
- ▶ **J. Gordon Vaeth**, former
Director of Weather Satellite Operations, NOAA
- ▶ **Moderator: Jeanne Latter**,
Actress, "Amelia Lives"



Amelia Earhart and Fred Noonan left Miami, Florida, on 1 June 1937, headed around the world. On 29 June, they landed at Lae, New Guinea.

Three days later they disappeared in the vast reaches of the Pacific. Navy searchers looked for them in vain but now a re-search team is convinced it has found their final landing site.

(Proceedings; February 1993)

Additional recommended reading:

- Earhart, Amelia. *Last Flight*. Orion Books, 1937
- Earhart, Amelia. *The Fun of It: Random Records of My Own Flying and of Women in Aviation*. Academy Chicago Publishers, 1992.
- Gillespie, Richard. *The Earhart Project -- An Historical Investigation*. TIGHAR, 1993
- Lovell, Mary. *The Sound of Wings -- The Life of Amelia Earhart*. St. Martin's Press, 1989
- Morrissey, Muriel and Carol Osborne. *Amelia: My Courageous Sister*. Osborne Pub. Inc. 1987.
- Rich, Doris. *Amelia Earhart, A Biography*. Smithsonian Institution Press, 1989.

AMELIA EARHART MISSING IN PACIFIC

★ ★ Home

RED LINE

Herald Chicago and Examiner

COMPLETE SPORTS

BAN RIOT FILM IN CHICAGO

VOL. LVII—NO. 45

Chicago, Ill., July 4, 1937

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MONDAY—JULY 4—1937

Two Sections—Part I—THREE CENTS

HEAR AMELIA'S FAINT CALLS

PIRATES 7, CUBS 6

SECOND GAME																
	AB	R	H	BB	SO	PO	A	E								
Pittsburgh	35	7	13	1	8	2	7	4	2	1	27	9	1			
Chicago	34	6	12	0	10	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Totals	69	13	25	1	18	4	8	5	3	3	28	10	2	2	2	2

RUSH POLICE TO S. CHICAGO STRIKE AREA

Officials Speed Aid as Strikers Gather Near Youngstown's Plant; Post Fifty at Gates
Fifty police reserves were

ANNOUNCEMENT

Los Angeles, Calif., July 3, 1937.

Editor The Herald and Examiner, Chicago, Ill.

Searchers' Hopes Revived by Signals; 57 Planes on Way

Speeded to Aid by Carrier; Destroyers Join Hunt

HONOLULU July 4—(A.P.)—Mysterious radio signals

Richard Gillespie's article "Why the Navy Didn't Find Amelia," (Naval Institute Proceedings, February 1993), describing the 1937 search for Amelia Earhart and Fred Noonan, prompted numerous responses. This brochure includes the views of three of our panelists on the controversy, some of the letters we received, and some background material on Gardner (Nikumaroro) Island.

"Finding Her and Noonan" -- Richard Gillespie's theory on what happened to Earhart and Noonan, published in the Naval Institute's Naval History, Summer 1993

"The Riddle" -- Tom Crouch's dissent, published in the same issue

"Above and Beyond" -- Rear Admiral Francis Foley describes his part in the search, published in the Smithsonian's Air & Space, February/March 1988 issue

"Why the Navy didn't Find Amelia" -- Rear Admiral Foley replies to Gillespie's February article in a letter published in Proceedings, April 1993

"History of Gardner (Nikumaroro) Island" -- Carol Osborne (Earhart biographer)

"Amelia Earhart and Radio" -- Unpublished letter to Proceedings from Captain Almon Gray, U.S. Naval Reserve (Retired), who in 1935-36 flew as Radio Officer in the same Pan American Clipper crew in which Fred Noonan was Navigator

"Report on a Visit to the Phoenix Islands" -- Official summary by Henry E. Maude of the British Colonial Service in the Pacific who visited Gardner Island in October 1937 with a team of surveyors preliminary to resettling the island

"Why the Navy Didn't Find Amelia" -- Unpublished letter to Proceedings from Carol Osborne, Earhart biographer, in which she replies to Gillespie's February Proceedings article

Finding Her & Noonan

By Richard E. Gillespie

The disappearance of Amelia Earhart, like the assassination of John F. Kennedy, has become something of a national obsession—and for many of the same reasons. In each case, widespread dissatisfaction with the official explanation for the demise of a public figure has encouraged a carnival of competing theories. With so many solutions to choose from, almost anyone can find an answer to the riddle that is sympathetic to his or her own world view. If not, there is always room for a new theory—and another book. Finally solving the mystery means separating the facts from a well-established body of folklore and overcoming entrenched resistance to the loss of the cherished legend. As Galileo Galilei, Charles Darwin, and Billy Mitchell could attest, the former task is far more easily accomplished than the latter.

In historical investigation, separating fact from folklore requires a recognition of the difference between anecdote and evidence. Eyewitness testimony related many years after the event is often intriguing and usually offered with genuine sincerity. It is, however, sadly true that the sharpest memory is duller than the bluntest pencil. Anecdote in the absence of documentation is folklore, and recollection is, therefore, useful only to the extent that it leads a researcher to genuine evidence. Only contemporaneous documents, datable photographs, and identifiable artifacts qualify for consideration.

In the Earhart case, fortunately, there is a wealth of evidence that meets these criteria and this, in turn, permits a logical assessment of the possibilities:

- ▶ Earhart and navigator Fred Noonan did not land at Howland Island, and so must have come down somewhere else.
 - ▶ They landed at sea or on land.
 - ▶ There is no credible evidence to indicate that the airplane landed at sea.
 - ▶ There is no evidence at all that the aircraft landed on land other than Gardner Island, now known as Nikumaroro.
 - ▶ There is evidence that the aircraft landed at Nikumaroro.
- The problem, therefore, is not one of choosing among competing bodies of evidence, but rather one of assessing the credibility of the only evidence available. In short, either Earhart landed at Nikumaroro or all the evidence that makes it appear that she did is actually coincidence and Earhart, in fact, vanished without a trace.

What is the evidence that Earhart and Noonan landed at Nikumaroro?

- ▶ The radio log of the Coast Guard cutter *Itasca* confirms

that, when last heard from, Earhart was on a navigational line that passes within visual range of Gardner Island.

- ▶ Two independent contemporaneous reports from officials in Lae, New Guinea, confirm that she left there with more than enough fuel to reach Gardner Island.
- ▶ Pan American Airways memoranda and U.S. Coast Guard messages confirm that radio bearings taken on signals believed to be distress calls from the missing aircraft cross in the vicinity of Gardner Island.
- ▶ U.S. Navy messages document Lockheed's opinion that for the signals to be transmitted the aircraft had to be on land.
- ▶ The official report of the U.S. Navy pilot who reconnoitered Gardner Island from the air one week after the disappearance states: "Here signs of recent habitation were clearly visible . . ." although the last habitation of the island had ended in 1892.



PURDUE UNIVERSITY COLLECTION

the island had ended in 1892. ▶ Three months later, the diary of the first person to visit the island following Earhart and Noonan's disappearance reports "signs of previous habitation."

▶ At least four separate pieces of aircraft wreckage found on the island in 1989 and 1991 have been dated to the mid-1930s, are not consistent with World War II debris, and are consistent with structures and materials used in Earhart's Lockheed Electra.

▶ Also found were the remains of an American-made woman's shoe with several distinctive features. The shoe has been matched to photographs of those worn by Earhart at the time of her disappearance.

After extensive studies of the historical record, no credible alternative explanations for the various points of evidence have been found. Continuing research may yet eliminate some individual pieces or add others, but the preponderance of evidence remains clear: the Earhart flight ended at Nikumaroro. Beyond that, much remains unknown. The aircraft wreckage found so far appears to be debris from a single violent event that blew out a section of the belly while the aircraft was on its landing gear on the beach. How did that happen? What became of the rest of the aircraft? How long did Earhart and Noonan survive on the island? What became of their remains?

Further work at Nikumaroro later this year may bring more answers.

Mr. Gillespie is a co-founder and executive director of The International Group for Historic Aircraft Recovery (TIGHAR). He wrote "Why the Navy Didn't Find Amelia," in the February 1993 *Proceedings*. He will serve on the afternoon panel on 28 April in the Naval Institute's Third Annapolis Seminar.

Where Is Amelia?

The Riddle

By Tom D. Crouch

More than half a century after she and her navigator, Fred Noonan, vanished in the central Pacific, Amelia Earhart remains our favorite missing person. Richard E. Gillespie, executive director of The International Group for Historic Aircraft Recovery (TIGHAR), spelled out the latest "solution" to the mystery of her disappearance in February's *Proceedings*, noting: "Expeditions to the Island of Nikumaroro in 1989 and 1991 have recovered aircraft wreckage consistent with Earhart's Lockheed, as well as personal effects, including the remains of an American shoe identical in style and size (9) to that worn by Earhart on her last flight."

TIGHAR has failed to persuade me that the objects discovered on the island have any connection with Earhart and Noonan. Consider the physical evidence mentioned by Gillespie. The largest bit of "aircraft wreckage" is an 18- by 25-inch piece of St ALCLAD aluminum. The vast majority of all airplanes built in the U.S. from the mid-1930s to the mid-1950s were skinned with virtually identical sheets of aluminum alloy.

After comparing the object to the skin of a Lockheed 10E like Earhart's, Frank Schelling, an authority on aircraft structures, concluded that "the TIGHAR fragment did not come from an Electra." Lockheed employees who repaired Earhart's machine following a crash are of the same opinion. The pattern and spacing of the rivets on the TIGHAR object do not match the structural members to which they would have to be attached on an Electra.

TIGHAR claims to have found "the remains of an American shoe identical in style and size (9) to that worn by Earhart on her last flight." Wrong again. If this episode has proved anything, it is that Amelia Earhart wore size 6 shoes. Her sister, Muriel Morrissey, comments that Amelia "... wore a hard to find, very narrow, size 6 shoe." A close family friend still has a pair of Amelia's size 6AA shoes. The Atchison [Kansas] Historical Society has another pair of her size 6AA shoes on display. I have no idea who wore the shoe found on Nikumaroro, but it was not Amelia Earhart.

The circumstantial case against Earhart's presence on Nikumaroro is very strong. This tiny atoll measures four miles long by a mile-and-one-half wide—and most of that is water. The thin strip of dry land encircling the shallow central lagoon varies in width from 200 yards to three-quarters of a mile.

On the morning of 9 July 1937, just one week after Earhart disappeared, Lieutenant John O. Lambrecht, U.S. Navy, led a flight of three O3U-3 float planes from the battleship USS *Colorado* (BB-45) on an aerial search of the island. Lambrecht reported that, "Signs of recent habitation were clearly visible but repeated circling and zoom-

ing failed to elicit any answering wave from possible inhabitants and it was finally taken for granted that none was there."

Those "signs of recent habitation" should be read in context. The *Colorado* had undertaken the considerable voyage from Hawaii on very short notice for the sole purpose of enabling the airmen to search a specific area. If any of the aviators had the slightest suspicion that the "signs of recent habitation" were in any way connected to Earhart, they could have landed and taken a closer look. If that seemed dangerous, they certainly would have said something to their superiors on the *Colorado*. After all, their only reason for being there was to look for Earhart.

British administrator H.E. Maude did not find any sign of Earhart or Noonan when he came ashore in October 1937. He was, however, impressed by "the most fertile island in the Colony." Maude counted 111 live coconut palms, and noted that the ground was "piled high with nuts." There were pools of potable surface water, edible plants, an abundance of fish in the lagoon, and "thousands of enormous coconut crabs, which formed a welcome addition to the diet." If Earhart and Noonan had reached this Island alive, they could have lived on coconuts alone for the seven days until the Navy arrived. They would surely have used that time to devise a means of signaling passing ships or aircraft.

The British established a native colony on the island in 1938, complete with a village, a government station for the officer-in-charge, a church, a wharf, gardens, and a system of paths. Nikumaroro was continuously inhabited from that time until the early 1960s.

From 1943 until the end of World War II, a contingent of U.S. Coast Guardsmen operated a Loran station on Nikumaroro. It was not a lively duty station. One officer has remarked that if he had stepped in whitewash, the entire island would have been white. Another recalls that the members of the group with whom he travelled to the island were told that the Navy had searched for Earhart and Noonan on Nikumaroro. They were curious about anything that might shed light on the mystery. In so far as we know, however, none of the island residents, military or civilian, ever reported finding anything remotely connected with the missing aviators.

Having failed to locate Howland Island, Earhart and Noonan may have flown toward the South Phoenix group, where they could expect to find a variety of targets, including Nikumaroro. If so, I do not think they made it. "When I go," Amelia once remarked, "I would like to go in my plane. Quickly." Wherever she is, we can only hope that she got her wish.

Dr. Crouch is Chairman of the Department of Aeronautics at the Smithsonian Institution's National Air and Space Museum. He will also participate in the Naval Institute seminar on 28 April in Annapolis, MD.

Looking for Earhart

I didn't decide to become an aviator until after graduation from the Naval Academy. At the time, I was serving aboard a cruiser and the skipper was very reluctant to see me go. Not that I was that good an officer—he just didn't care much for aviation. But when his daughter married an aviator he relented and approved my transfer to flight training.

When I finished, I was assigned to a Scouting Squadron aboard the aircraft carrier *Ranger*. I flew the Vought SBU Corsair, a rugged and reliable fixed-gear biplane the Navy used as a scout-bomber.

It was while I was stationed aboard the *Ranger* that I became involved in the search for Amelia Earhart, who was lost on her attempt to fly around the world. She was an experienced aviator with a number of risky flights and firsts to her credit, including the first flight from Hawaii to the U.S. mainland and another solo flight across the Atlantic. For her world trip, she and navigator Fred Noonan were flying west to east, roughly along the equator, in a twin-engine Lockheed Electra.

They set out June 1, 1937, from Miami. On June 29 they arrived at Lae, New Guinea, and were poised for the longest nonstop leg of the trip, 2,556 miles across the South Pacific to a refueling stop at tiny Howland Island.

This leg would demand the most of Noonan's navigational abilities. Once a navigator for Pan Am, he had helped that airline establish routes in the South Pacific, so he was as familiar with the area as anyone could be. To help guide them in, a Coast Guard cutter named the *Itasca* had been stationed near Howland and Baker Islands.

Earhart and Noonan never made it to Howland, though they apparently came heartbreakingly close. The radio operators on the *Itasca* could hear Earhart calling them, but apparently the two aboard the *Electra* could not hear the *Itasca*. The airplane, Earhart, and Noonan disappeared without a trace in the broad reaches of the Pacific.

The news of Earhart's disappearance hit the newsstands on the Fourth of July

weekend, but by then the Roosevelt administration had authorized the Navy to begin preparations for a search. The carrier *Lexington*, preparing for holiday festivities at Long Beach, California, was ordered down to San Diego. In the meantime an air group, including my squadron from the *Ranger*, was being organized at the Naval station at North

Illustrations by Richard Parisi/Bill Burrows and Associates



Island. Because fighters had limited fuel capability and were single-seaters with no room for observers, the air group consisted of scouts and bombers, supplemented by two amphibious airplanes from the carrier.

Fourteen airplanes from each of six squadrons flew aboard the *Lexington*, while maintenance and enlisted personnel for the squadrons arrived by small craft. Three destroyers—the *Cushing*, the *Drayton*, and the *Lamson*—were assigned to this hastily organized search mission.

Most of us came aboard the *Lexington* thinking that we would only go out a thousand miles or so before the whole thing was called off, so we brought along only an overnight bag with a pair of pajamas, a razor, and perhaps a change of underwear. As it turned out, we stayed aboard for a month and eventually had to buy clothes from the ship's store.

We left on July 5, making good speed for Hawaii. In fact, our trip was the fastest ever made to Hawaii at the time. As we approached the islands the destroyers peeled off to refuel at Pearl Harbor. The

Lexington refueled at Lahaina Roads, on the island of Maui. Normally the *Lex* and her sister carrier *Sara*—the *Saratoga*—would fuel only to 95 percent capacity because the weight of the eight-inch guns and the carrier's island on the starboard side would make a fully fueled ship heel over about three degrees. Nonetheless, we fueled 100 percent, then on the way to Howland we burned the fuel from tanks on the starboard side first until the ship was back on an even keel.

Other ships had done some preliminary searching in the area before the *Lexington* arrived. One was the *Itasca*; another, the battleship *Colorado*, had three Curtiss seaplanes onboard that were launched by catapult.

We started our search on July 13 with a plan that had been devised by the ship's senior officers on our trip out. One destroyer stayed with the carrier as the plane guard, meaning it would rescue anyone who went overboard on takeoffs or landings. The other two destroyers were deployed to port and starboard about 60 miles out. Each search entailed 48 aircraft. Smoke bombs were dropped off the ship's stern, and the first airplanes to take off dropped two smoke bombs off the bow. Twelve airplanes circled each smoke bomb, and at a given signal 24 airplanes formed a line on each side of the ship and began flying away from each other, 90 degrees from the ship's course. After flying 120 miles out, each line made a 90-degree turn and flew in one long column for 24 miles. Another 90-degree turn brought the two lines back toward the ship.

We kept the airplanes separated by a mile and flew at 500 feet, and the sight of 24 aircraft stretching across the horizon was impressive. The line was ragged the first couple of times out, but we eventually got pretty damned good at it.

During the flights, which lasted about three hours, the pilots all gazed toward the center of the line and the rear-seat men looked in the opposite direction with binoculars, ensuring that the ocean was covered thoroughly. Each of us was anxious to be the first to sight Earhart and Noonan

“Why the Navy Didn’t Find Amelia”

(See R. E. Gillespie, pp. 73-77, February 1993 Proceedings)

Rear Admiral Francis D. Foley, U.S. Navy (Retired)—I enjoyed Mr. Gillespie’s article on the search for Amelia Earhart and Fred Noonan, and wish him well in his search for the long-sought solution to this unsolved mystery.

However, as a junior participant in the Navy’s search for the lost pair, I take issue with his criticisms of the Navy’s preliminary arrangements regarding the flight and his failure to accord the Navy proper credit for the Herculean search effort it made once it was called upon.

The U.S. government had no obligation whatsoever to make contingency plans for the failure of the flight, but only to cooperate with the venture of a U.S. citizen that, if successful, would reflect well upon the nation. Mr. Gillespie notes the modest contribution of the Navy—stationing a fleet tug, the USS *Ontario* (AT-13), halfway along the island chain from Lae to Howland and a small seaplane tender, the USS *Swan* (AVP-7), at sea between Howland and Hawaii—and the U.S. Coast Guard—the USCGC *Itasca* (WPG-321) had ferried aviation fuel to Howland and, from there, would broadcast homing signals as a radio navigational aid. At the time, these measures seemed both appropriate and adequate, and, to my knowledge, were quite acceptable to Earhart.

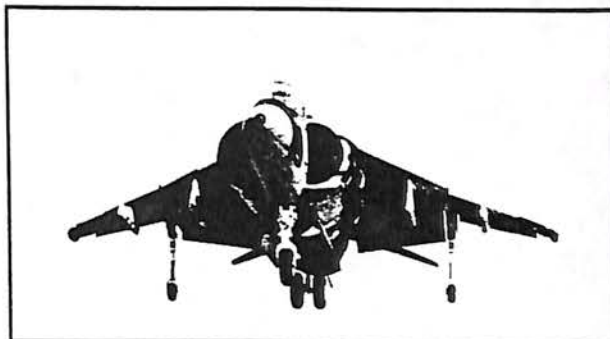
It is true that the *Swan* was capable of carrying a small seaplane, but she had no catapult and was incapable of making a suitable slick for an open-sea landing and recovery. Therefore, even if the *Swan* had carried a plane, she could have operated it safely only in protected waters.

Had a fast cruiser—with a cruiser’s usual four-to-six plane aviation detachment—been available in Pearl Harbor on 2 July 1937—I am certain she would have been called upon to search for Earhart and Noonan. However, the response of the USS *Colorado* (BB-45)—loading fuel and supplies, recalling her ship’s company, recovering her aircraft, and getting under way in less than 17 hours—is an impressive achievement for a battlewagon that deserves Mr. Gillespie’s praise, not his scorn.

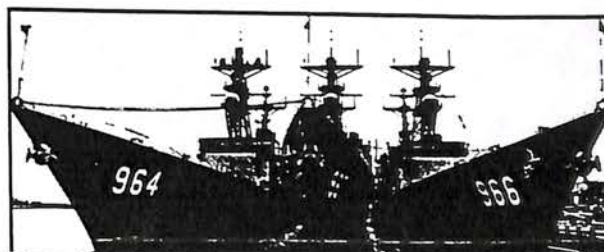
In retrospect, it may seem incongruous for the *Colorado* to be indulging in the crossing-the-line rituals while her aircraft were out searching Gardner’s Island for Earhart and Noonan. But there was little else the ship could have done except to have her Marine detachment and landing party alerted for a foray ashore

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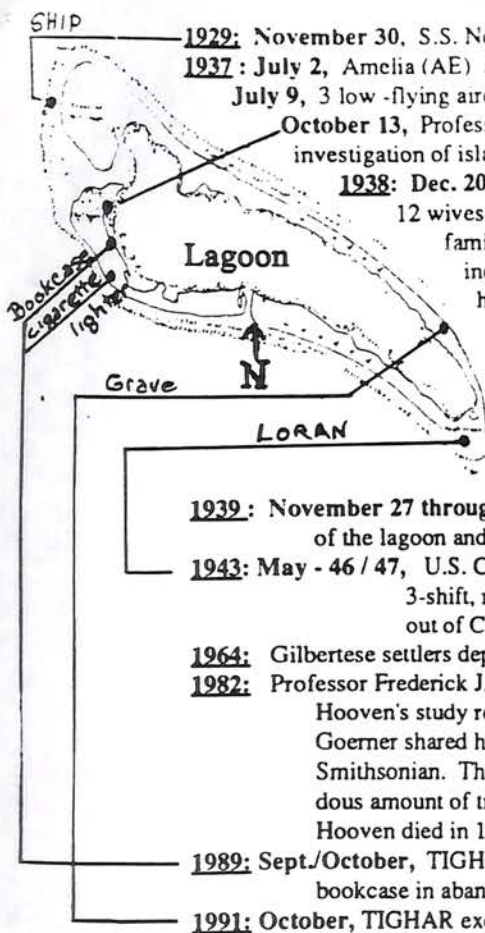
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HISTORY OF GARDNER (NIKUMARORO) ISLAND*



- 1929:** November 30, S.S. Norwich City steamer ran aground on the reef. 11 British/Arab crew members died/buried.
- 1937:** July 2, Amelia (AE) and Fred (FN) disappeared in vicinity of Howland Island, about 400 miles north of Gardner.
- July 9, 3 low-flying aircraft, off the U.S.S. Colorado, searched Gardner Island. No evidence on Amelia / Fred found.
- October 13, Professor Henry E. Maude and a team of British surveyors spent 3 days on Gardner, conducted a full investigation of island and lagoon. Island christened Nikumaroro. No evidence on Amelia / Fred found.
- 1938:** Dec. 20, Professor Maude, Gerald Gallagher and 10 Gilbertese landed on Gardner Island. On April 27, 1939 12 wives and children landed; and in June 1939 additional families, totaling an island population of 58 (16 families). Maude recently said, "Gardner is such a small atoll and was inhabited for so long that every inch of the place must have been walked over many times; anything out of the ordinary would have been reported and be on record. Not so much happens on a small atoll from day to day and unusual events and findings are subjects for endless gossip..."
- Nothing about AE and FN was ever found on Gardner Island.
- 1938:** November 28 through January 30, 1939, New Zealand Pacific Air Survey team remained on Gardner Island the entire time. They surveyed the island, outlined an airfield and cleared the lagoon of obstructions so sea planes could land. This was conducted in secret, for defense purposes, in preparation for WW II.
- 1939:** November 27 through December 1, U.S.S. Bushnell conducted a survey of the island, including remapping / sounding of the lagoon and surrounding reefs / they also took aerial photographs.
- 1943:** May - 46 / 47, U.S. Coast Guard constructed a Loran Navigation and Communications Station, occupied during WW II; a 3-shift, round-the-clock operation. Both British / American planes landed at Gardner Island in PBY aircraft, out of Canton Island, on their monthly resupply trip.
- 1964:** Gilbertese settlers departed: project abandoned and settlers moved to the Solomon Islands.
- 1982:** Professor Frederick J. Hooven, of Dartmouth, did a computer study of AE/FN flight, based on all known data available. Hooven's study resulted in the theory that AE and FN landed at Gardner or McKean Island. AE researcher Fred Goerner shared his research with Hooven and encouraged Hooven to document his theory and place in the Smithsonian. This was done in 1982. Between 1982 - 1984, Hooven and Goerner studied and analyzed the tremendous amount of traffic / occupation Gardner and McKean have had and determined the theory most improbable. Hooven died in 1985.
- 1989:** Sept./October, TIGHAR finds old cigarette lighter on beach, and a Consolidated PBY Catalina flying boat, navigator's bookcase in abandoned Gilbertese village.
- 1991:** October, TIGHAR excavates grave of native child. They also found an "Amazing amount of junk" elsewhere on the island.

TO DATE NOTHING RELATING TO AMELIA EARHART, FRED NOONAN OR THE PLANE HAS BEEN FOUND!

On June 25, 1982 a San Mateo AE researcher/pilot said, "To solve this would also be a great ego trip for me." We feel it is not only important to learn/share the fate of AE and FN for education and history, but also to inspire our younger generations. Today our young people are worshipping the wrong kinds of heroes. We feel that until an independent, solid organization (i.e., a joint Smithsonian, Dr. Robert Ballard, NOVA and/or National Geographic) has the money and staff to study ALL materials and research/available about this mystery, and prepare their own independent / collective analysis, the mystery will remain just that, a mystery. This opinion is also shared by various members of OX-5, Early Birds and other AE researchers like Fred Goerner. We would be willing to open our files and materials to this type of study. Of course, this purpose must be: "IN THE NAME OF EDUCATION, AVIATION HISTORY AND IN THE MEMORY OF TWO BRAVE PEOPLE: AMELIA AND FRED." What do you think?

Gardner Island is 3.5 miles wide.

* Much historical research courtesy of Professor Harry Maude, Fred Goerner, Jim Donahue and Mary DeWitt.

1-14-93

AMELIA EARHART AND RADIO

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INTRODUCTION

Most of that written about the disappearance of Amelia Earhart while on an around-the-world flight in 1937 attributes her failure to reach Howland Island to unstated deficiencies related to radio. It appears however that very little has been written about the nature of those deficiencies, or how they came about. What follows will attempt to fill that gap and show what errors in planning and execution were made in respect to radio; what failure or malfunctioning of radio equipment occurred and the probable reason for it; and will point out the single item or event deemed most directly responsible for the failure of the plane to reach Howland Island.

Since 1937 the unit of measurement for radio frequencies has been changed from "Cycles" (cs) to "Hertz" (Hz.), consequently Kilocycles (Kcs.) and KiloHertz (KHz.) will be used interchangeably, as will Megacycles (Mcs.) and MegaHertz (MHz.).

It is assumed that the reader already is familiar with the general history of the flight.

BACKGROUND

In early 1937, several weeks before her Oakland-Honolulu flight, and while she still intended to circumnavigate the world in a westerly direction, Miss Earhart met at Alameda CA, with George Angus, the Superintendent of Communications for the Pacific Division of Pan American Airways. Angus was responsible for the radio communication and radio direction finding networks which supported the PAA clippers on their transPacific crossings and Miss Earhart wished to arrange for help from those facilities during her planned flight. She was particularly interested in obtaining radio bearings to augment her celestial navigation. At that time PAA had specially designed versions of the Adcock radio direction finding system in service at Alameda, CA; Mokapu Point, T.H.; Midway Island; Wake Island; Guam; and Manila, P.I. to support Clipper operations. These systems were capable of taking radio bearings on frequencies much higher than could be utilized successfully by conventional loop type direction finders, hence were effective over much greater distances. They were commonly referred to as "High frequency DFs", and were the only ones of that type in the United States and it's territories. Angus agreed to help her while she was within radio range of PAA stations, and details for so doing were worked out. This was somewhat complicated inasmuch as PAA was not equipped to transmit on either of Earhart's communication frequencies (3105 and 6210 KHz.) and could not transmit voice on any frequency. The solution agreed upon was that the plane would request a bearing by voice on the frequency in use, (usually 3105 KHz. at night, 6210 KHz. during the day) and follow the request with a series of long dashes lasting in the aggregate a couple of minutes. The PAA DF station would take a

in the transmitter before going through the antenna switch to the receiver input. It also should be noted that on this model receiver any radio signal within its overall frequency range could be received on the loop antenna. Because of this, some people had the impression that radio bearings could be obtained on any frequency within the receivers's frequency range, and the unit was sometimes spoken of as a "high frequency direction finder". The unit of course had no such high frequency direction finding capability and in later models circuitry was introduced to limit reception on the loop antenna to only frequencies in that part of the overall range deemed suitable for radio direction finding with a loop antenna, i.e. below about 1.80 MHz.

THE RADIO SYSTEM

When the plane left the Lockheed plant after being repaired the radio system was comprised of the following elements:

- 1 Bendix Type RA-1B Aircraft Radio Receiver. Mounted in the cabin but having remote controls in the cockpit.
- 1 Western Electric Model 13-C fifty watt Aircraft Transmitter. It had three crystal-controlled channels, 500, 3105 and 6210 KHz. and could be used for voice or "CW" (radiotelegraph) transmissions. It was mounted in the cabin but there were remote controls in the cockpit.
- 1 Bendix Type MN-20 rotatable shielded loop antenna. It was mounted on the top of the fuselage over the cockpit, with the knob which rotated it located on the overhead of the cockpit, between the pilots. It was used primarily for taking radio bearings but was useful as a receiving antenna under conditions of heavy precipitation static noise.

Provision for plugging in a microphone, headphones, and a telegraph key at each side of the cockpit.

A telegraph key and provision for plugging in headphones at the navigator's table.

A 250 foot flexible wire trailing antenna on an electrically operated, remote controlled reel, located at the rear of the plane. The wire passed to the outside through an insulated bushing and had a lead weight, or "fish", at the end to keep it from whipping when deployed. There was a variable loading coil used in conjunction with this antenna to permit its use on 500 KHz. This antenna was long enough to give excellent radiation efficiency on all three of the transmitting frequencies.

A fixed antenna which was a wire "Vee" with its apex at a stub mast mounted on the top of the fuselage, about over the center section of the wing, and the two legs extending back to the two vertical fins. This antenna was so short that

at Howland Island, the ONTARIO about half way between New Guinea and Howland, and the SWAN between Howland and Hawaii. One function of these vessels was to transmit radio signals upon which Earhart could take bearings with her radio direction finder and thus be helped with her navigation. Suitable homing signals from ITASCA were extremely important, in fact vital. Should Noonan's celestial navigation not hit Howland right on the nose, homing in on ITASCA's signals with her DF was the only way Earhart could be sure of finding Howland before her fuel was exhausted.

In a message dated 23 June, 1937 addressed to Earhart at Darwin or Bandung, Mr. Black, aboard the ITASCA, advised her of the radio frequencies available aboard the ONTARIO, SWAN and ITASCA, and asked her to designate the frequency she wished each ship to use to provide homing signals for her. The same day the Commanding Officer of the ITASCA requested that he be advised twelve hours prior to her departure from New Guinea of her desires in matters of radio, and warned her of the slowness of communications via Port Darwin.

Miss Earhart received these messages while she was at Bandung, Java, having work done on the plane. On June 27, the day before she took off from Bandung for Koepang and Darwin, she sent the following response:

From: Earhart via RCA Manila & NPM Navy Radio Honolulu
To: ITASCA (Black) June 27, 1937 (Java date: June 26,
Howland)

SUGGEST ONTARIO STANDBY ON 400 KILOCYCLES TO TRANSMIT LETTER N FIVE MINUTES ON REQUEST WITH STATION CALL REPEATED TWICE END OF EVERY MINUTE STOP SWAN TRANSMIT VOICE NINE MEGACYCLES OR IF I UNABLE RECEIVE READY ON 900 KILOCYCLES STOP ITASCA TRANSMIT LETTER A POSITION OWN CALL LETTERS AS ABOVE ON HALF HOUR 7.5 MEGACYCLES STOP POSITION SHIPS AND OUR LEAVING WILL DETERMINE BROADCASTING SPECIFICALLY STOP IF FREQUENCIES MENTIONED UNSUITABLE NIGHT WORK INFORM ME LAE STOP I WILL GIVE LONG CALL BY VOICE THREE ONE NAUGHT FIVE KCS QUARTER AFTER HOUR POSSIBLY QUARTER TO (signed) EARHART

A person experienced in radio direction finding would find that message very strange. Why would SWAN be asked to transmit homing signals on 900 Kcs., a frequency in the broadcast band, when a lower frequency in the aeronautical radionavigation band would be much better? And why would ITASCA be asked to send homing signals on 7.5 Mcs. when that frequency was so high that the possibility of getting useful bearings on it with the plane's direction finder was nil? Perhaps some of the personnel in ITASCA had those questions but took the attitude "She is in the Flying Laboratory. Who knows what hush-hush gear she has aboard? If she wants 7.5 Mcs., that is what she is going to get". No one questioned the message and ITASCA tuned up its transmitter to send homing signals on 7.5 Mcs. What happened after that has been well covered in the media and in numerous books. When the plane arrived at what Earhart believed to be the vicinity of Howland, no land could be found despite considerable visual searching, whereupon Earhart asked ITASCA to send homing signals on 7.5 Mcs. ITASCA complied. Earhart heard the signals but reported to ITASCA that she was "unable to get a mimimum" on them. This meant she could

uncertainty as to which ship's signals were being received ONTARIO would transmit the Morse code character for the letter "A" rather than the customary Morse "M O" as its homing signal. ITASCA would transmit the Morse character for the letter "N" as its homing signal. These same characters (A and N) were used to identify the quadrants of the four-course radio ranges in the United States and Earhart could readily recognize them. Apparently it was envisaged that there would be an overlap of signal coverage over a good part of the leg, and that Earhart would be able to take bearings alternately on the two stations and thus keep on course. The frequency chosen for ONTARIO and ITASCA was 400 kilocycles which is equivalent to a wavelength of 750 meters. It was a frequency assigned world-wide for aeronautical radionavigation and was an excellent choice. It probably was chosen over equally good frequencies in the same band because it was easy to remember and easy to find on the receiver tuning dial.

- (b) SWAN use the frequency of 333 kilocycles which is equivalent to a wavelength of 900 meters. Use it for voice communication with the plane if possible, but in any event be prepared to send homing signals on it. 333 Kcs. was in the band allocated world-wide for aeronautical radionavigation and air-ground communications. It was widely used in Europe, the Commonwealth nations and other countries having close ties with Europe, as a calling frequency and for ground-air communications. Earhart had probably received on it during earlier legs of her flight but called it "nine hundred meters". It was an excellent direction finding frequency.

3. Noonan left the meeting satisfied that the radio navigational plans were adequate, or at least as good as could be developed.

4. Earhart went back to the hotel and drafted and dispatched her message of June 27th to ITASCA (Black). She did not show the message to Noonan.

5. It had been difficult for Earhart to understand the adviser's English and she had experienced great difficulty in following the discussion as it shifted rapidly back and forth among "frequency", "wavelength", "megacycle", "meter", "kilocycle", etc. Perhaps too she was suffering from dysentery and was actually ill. Whatever the reason, the message she drafted suggested frequencies for the SWAN and ITASCA vastly different from those settled on in the meeting. Specifically:

- (a) The frequency for SWAN was changed from an intended 333 kilocycles (900 meters) to 900 kilocycles. One can readily deduce that the wavelength in meters was used but was labeled as frequency in kilocycles.

were, for the most part, common to all bands and it was rare that a single band would fail. It usually was none or all.

5. The radio equipment aboard the plane was checked at Lae by Mr. Balfour, the Guinea Airways wireless operator, and was found satisfactory. The only unusual thing noted was a roughness of the transmitted signal on 6210 KHz. which made Earhart's speech difficult to understand. Two-way communication was maintained during a 30 minute test hop at Lae.

6. After take-off from Lae for Howland it appears that two-way communication with Lae was maintained until about 0720 GCT July 2, at which time Earhart shifted to her "night" frequency (3105 KHz.). Several times after that, throughout the night, she was heard by Nauru and ITASCA broadcasting at the pre-arranged times, but little of what she said was intelligible. Nauru, and later ITASCA, called her numerous times but there is no indication that she heard any of the calls. At 1744 GCT she asked ITASCA for a bearing on 3105 KHz. and made a signal upon which the bearing was to be taken. ITASCA made a response but Earhart did not acknowledge receiving it. The same thing happened at 1815 GCT. At 1912 GCT, Earhart said the following to ITASCA:

"WE MUST BE ON YOU NOW BUT CANNOT SEE YOU. RUNNING OUT OF GAS. ONLY ONEHALF HOUR LEFT (there is controversy about that phrase). BEEN UNABLE TO REACH YOU BY RADIO. WE ARE FLYING AT ONE THOUSAND FEET."

At this time the signals from the plane were very strong. It is known that the ITASCA was putting out strong signals and was on the correct frequency. (They were heard in San Francisco.) Therefore the statement "BEEN UNABLE TO REACH YOU BY RADIO" clearly indicated that a failure had occurred in her radio receiving system, and that it probably had occurred early in the flight. Inasmuch as she could still transmit it was obvious that the fixed antenna was intact; beyond that there was no clue as to the nature of the failure. That clue was given very shortly however. At 1925 GCT Earhart asked ITASCA to transmit signals "on 7500", meaning 7.50 MHz. This indicated that she intended to take radio bearings on ITASCA with the plane's direction finder. ITASCA complied immediately and sent the desired homing signals. The transmitter had no radiotelephone capability so it was impossible to also talk with the plane by voice on that frequency. Earhart responded immediately saying "WE RECEIVED YOUR SIGNALS ON SEVENTYFIVE HUNDRED BUT UNABLE TO GET A MINIMUM. PLEASE TAKE BEARING ON US AND ANSWER THREE FIVE NAUGHT FIVE (3105 intended) WITH VOICE". This was followed by a series of long dashes on 3105 KHz. on which bearings were expected to be taken by ITASCA/Howland. This was the first (and only) time Earhart acknowledged hearing signals from ITASCA. From the fact that Earhart asked for the homing signals it is clear that she intended to take a bearing, which could be done only with the loop antenna. From her report of hearing the homing signal but being unable to

went hundreds of hours between routine replacement with no trouble, but occasionally one would fail. This appears to have been one of those times. In the writers judgment the odds are about 95 to 5 that Earhart was unable to hear the ITASCA on 3105 KHz. because she was switched to the fixed antenna and the "send/receive" relay was defective on the "receive" side. Had she shifted to the loop antenna she no doubt would have heard the ITASCA very well on 3105 KHz. or whatever frequency the ship might be using and she was tuned to. It probably never occurred to her to do that however. Earhart knew very little about the technical aspects of radio and consequently operated the gear by rote. Obviously she had been taught to turn the antenna selector switch to "FA" if she wanted to talk, and to "DF" if she wanted to take a bearing --- and that is precisely what she did.

THE HOWLAND ISLAND RADIO DIRECTION FINDER

Obviously Earhart had a misconception of the radio direction finder installed on Howland Island. She apparently envisaged it as being a PAA type Adcock high frequency system, or it's functional equivalent, which would take bearings on her 3105 KHz. signals and send them to her just as the PAA station at Mokapu Point had done during her flight from Oakland to Honolulu. Because of that she repeatedly asked ITASCA to take bearings on 3105 KHz. and transmitted signals upon which bearings were expected to be taken. It appears that there may have been some justification for her having that concept. When the decision was made to fly easterly around the world, and the long Lae-Howland leg was being studied, Earhart and Noonan suggested to the Coast Guard that a radio direction finder be set up on Howland, ("PLANE SUGGESTS DIRECTION FINDER BE SET UP ON ISLAND, IF PRACTICABLE."). According to the research of Capt. Laurance F. Safford, USN, it was at about this time that Mr. Richard Black, the Department of the Interior representative, who was to go to Howland in the ITASCA, conceived the idea of "borrowing" a so-called high frequency radio direction finder from the Navy to use on Howland Island. Black advised C.P. Putnam, Earhart's husband and business manager, of his plans and advised him when the gear had been obtained and put aboard ITASCA. No doubt Putnam passed this information along to Earhart.

In a message sent June 27th to Commander, San Francisco Division, USCG, the C.O. ITASCA reported on his readiness for supporting the upcoming flight. One item was: "DIRECTION FINDER INSTALLED ON HOWLAND". This fact was reported to Mr. Putnam, then in San Francisco, and he in turn passed the news to Earhart who was then at Darwin, Australia. While the ITASCA message did not specifically say "High Frequency Direction Finder", there apparently had been sufficient other information, probably via telephone from Putnam, to cause Earhart to believe that it was such a device. She likely assumed that the DF had been installed at Howland in response to the suggestion made earlier by Noonan and herself, and fully expected it to be a functional equivalent of a PAA-Adcock system.

- (c) The probability of there being more than one transmitter in the area exhibiting the same symptoms of over-modulation on the same frequencies at essentially the same time is very small.

It is the writers opinion that the signals intercepted by Nauru were in fact from the Earhart plane then no longer in flight.

Pan American Airways

Shortly after the Earhart plane became overdue at Howland the Coast Guard requested PAA to use its communication and radio direction finding facilities in the Pacific areas to assist in the search for the plane and survivors. Instructions were immediately issued for the stations at Mokapu Point, Midway and Wake to monitor the plane's frequencies as much as limited personnel would permit and be prepared to take radio bearings on any signals heard which might reasonably be believed to be coming from the plane. A special radio circuit was set up to permit intercommunication among the three stations. Numerous weak signals were heard but nothing of interest until 0948 July 5, GCT time and date. The following is extracted from a report made by R.M.Hansen, the Radio Operator in Charge at the Wake Island station:

At 0948 a phone signal of good intensity and well modulated by a voice but wavering badly suddenly came on 3105. While the carrier frequency of this signal did not appear to vary appreciably, its strength did vary in an unusually erratic manner and at 0950, the carrier strength fell off to QSA 2 (2 on a scale of 0 to 5) with the wavering more noticeable than ever. At 0952, it went off completely. - - - - At 1212 (GCT July 5) I opened the DF guard on 3105 KC. At 1223 a very unsteady voice modulated carrier was observed on 3105 KC appx. This transmission lasted until 1236 GCT. I was able to get an approximate bearing of 144 degrees. In spite of the extreme eccentricity of this signal during the entire length of the transmission, the splits were definite and pretty fair. - - - - After I obtained the observed bearing, I advised Midway to listen for the signal (Couldn't raise Honolulu). He apparently did not hear it. This signal started in at a carrier strength of QSA5 (5 on a scale of 0 to 5) and at 1236, when the transmission stopped it had gradually petered out to QSA2 during the intervals when it was audible. The characteristics of this signal were identical with those of the signal heard the previous night (0948 GCT) except that at DF the complete periods of no signal occurred during shorter intervals. - - - - While no identification call letters were distinguished in either case, I was positive at that time that this was KHAQQ. At this date I am still of this opinion.

Midway heard a signal having the same characteristics, and almost certainly the same station, at 0638 GCT July 5. A quick bearing of 201 degrees True was obtained, however the signal was

Those writing about the Earhart disappearance have, in general, been very rough on Noonan because of his admitted problem with alcohol. In some cases much rougher than was justified by the facts. For example in one book it is related that the night before the departure from Lae for Howland Noonan went on a binge and did not get to the airfield until just before the plane was due to take off, and even then was so intoxicated that he had to be helped aboard the plane. The implication being that he was largely responsible for the failure of the flight. The official report of Guinea Airways Ltd. at Lae, made in response to a request from the U.S. Government, paints quite a different picture. According to it the Lae wireless operator made attempts all throughout the day of June 30 to get time signals, requested by Earhart and Noonan, to permit Noonan to check his chronometer, but owing to local interference was unsuccessful that day. That indicates that Noonan spent most of June 30 at the radio station.

At about this point Earhart decided to take off for Howland Island at 9:30 a.m. on July 1st, subject to obtaining the time signal.

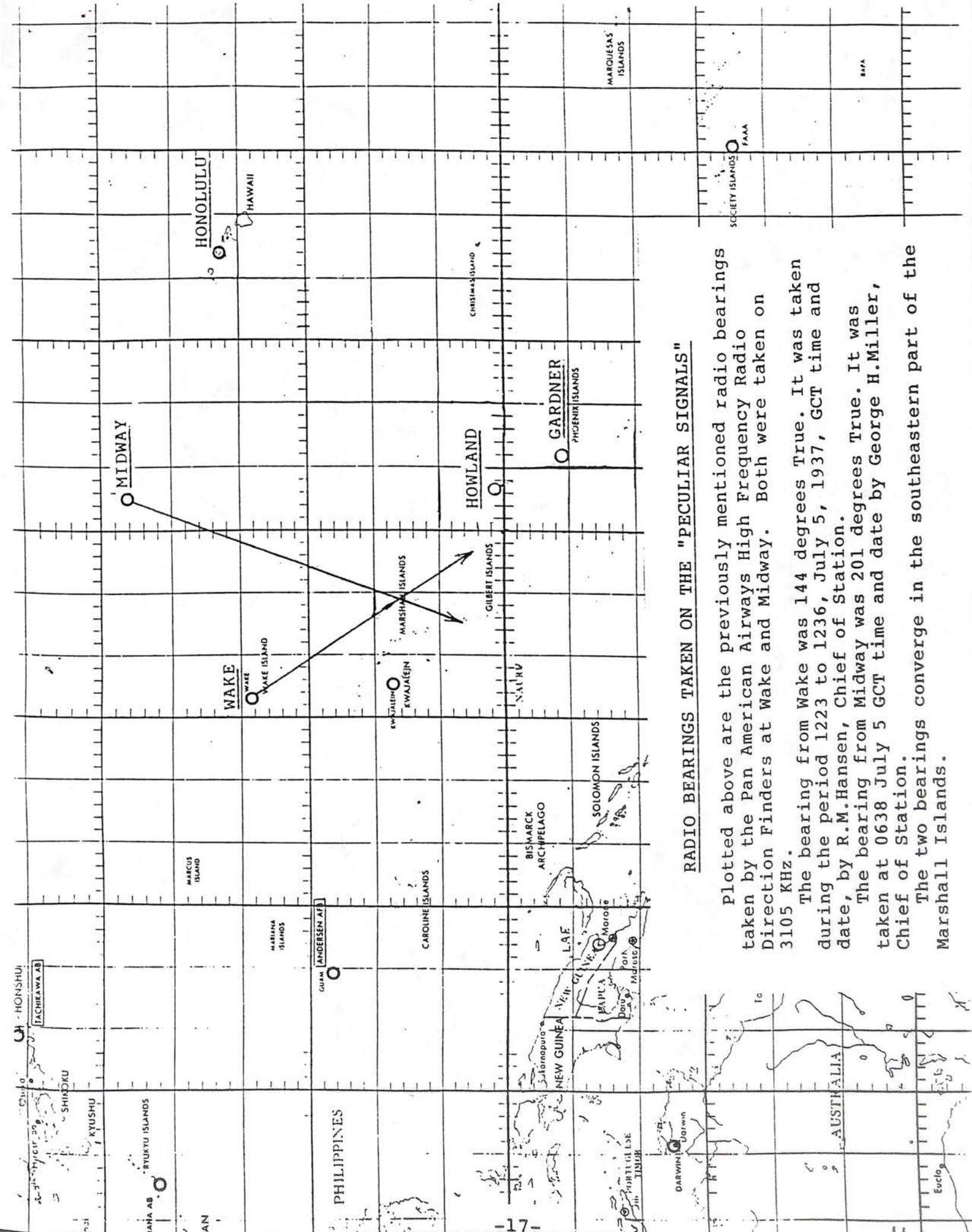
At 6:35 a.m. July 1st Earhart took the plane up on a 30 minute test hop after which the tanks were topped off and she was ready to go, except that a time signal had not yet been obtained. This day the difficulty was at the radio station which transmitted the signals. Extraordinary steps were taken to get a time signal but when one had not been obtained by 10:50 a.m. Earhart decided to postpone her departure until the next day, July 2nd. During the rest of the day constant watch was kept for the reception of time signals and finally at around 10:20 p.m. an excellent signal was received by Noonan which showed his chronometer to be three seconds slow. Noonan obviously had spent most of that day at the radio station.

On July 2nd at 8:00 a.m. another time signal was received, this one from Saigon, and the chronometer checked the same as the previous night. Both Noonan and Earhart expressed their complete satisfaction and decided to leave at 10:00 a.m., which they did.

Only Noonan would have checked the chronometer, so the report seems to indicate clearly that Noonan was sober and in good shape at 8:00 a.m. and probably was that way when the plane took off.

CONCLUSIONS

From the standpoint of radio, Earhart's decision to rely completely on radiotelephony, and her removal of the trailing antenna, showed poor judgment and introduced unnecessary and unjustifiable risks. However it cannot be denied that she got as far as Lae without trouble with what she had. It was her mistake in designating 7500 Khz. as the homing frequency for ITASCA that got her into deep trouble. Even that difficulty probably could have been overcome had she been able to communicate with ITASCA and agree on a suitable homing frequency. Fate intervened however and something occurred in her receiving system which made it impossible for Earhart to hear any signals with her gear set up in



RADIO BEARINGS TAKEN ON THE "PECULIAR SIGNALS"

Plotted above are the previously mentioned radio bearings taken by the Pan American Airways High Frequency Radio Direction Finders at Wake and Midway. Both were taken on 3105 KHZ.

The bearing from Wake was 144 degrees True. It was taken during the period 1223 to 1236, July 5, 1937, GCT time and date, by R.M.Hansen, Chief of Station.

The bearing from Midway was 201 degrees True. It was taken at 0638 July 5 GCT time and date by George H.Miller, Chief of Station.

The two bearings converge in the southeastern part of the Marshall Islands.

REPORT ON A VISIT TO THE PHOENIX

ISLANDS, by H. E. Maude, Esquire.

(Visit made during October, 1937.)

2. My orders were to call first at those islands in the Gilbert and Ellice Groups where the existence of land hunger had been reported, inquire into the extent and causes of any over-population found to exist, and embark delegates who would investigate the suitability of the various islands visited for permanent colonization. My report on the question of over-population has already been submitted and the present letter deals only with the actual work of the expedition in the Phoenix Group. A further report, on the various problems connected with the scheme for voluntary migration, is to follow.

3. Leaving Ocean Island on the 18th September, we visited the islands of Tabiteuea, Beru, Onotoa, and Arorae in the Gilberts, and Nanumea, Nanumanga, Niutao, Vaitupu, and Funafuti in the Ellice. Tabiteuea, Vaitupu, and Funafuti were visited for reasons unconnected with the main object of the expedition and no investigations were held on them, although it is probable that several families exist on Tabiteuea who are sufficiently impoverished to desire to emigrate. There was no evidence of any land hunger on Nanumanga and none of the inhabitants were willing to consider migrating to the Phoenix Group. On each of the other islands a varying degree of land hunger was found to exist, and from two to five delegates were taken on board H.M.C.S. "Nimanoa," the actual number depending on the population of the island and the estimated extent of the local land shortage. Seventeen delegates in all were taken, distributed between the islands as follows:—

Beru	..	..	5	Nanumea	..	..	2
Onotoa	..	..	3	Niutao	..	..	4
Arorae	..	..	3				

The delegates were all chosen by the people of the islands concerned, with the exception of Koata, the well-known Magistrate of Onotoa Island, who was selected by myself and whose skilled assistance was invaluable.

Apart from the native delegates, I was accompanied by Mr. E. R. Bevington, Cadet Officer, as assistant, Mautake, the Permanent Head of Delegates to the Lands Commission, as native adviser, and Tutu, Native Medical Practitioner, who investigated conditions in the Phoenix Group from a medical standpoint.

4. The enthusiasm evinced at every island in the Gilbert Group for the scheme was amazing. In view of the chronic land hunger on many of the Gilbert Islands it would probably be impossible for the Government to advance a more popular scheme than one by which the Gilbertese are allowed to settle the uninhabited atolls of the Pacific. At my suggestion, however, the island delegates were chosen from among the more cautious element in the population and at the outset none of them were particularly prepossessed in favour of the project. They were the pick of the agriculturists and cultivators on each island and I was very impressed by the business like manner in which they conducted their investigations in the Phoenix Group and by their concise and accurate summing up of the merits and disadvantages of each island.

5. At Niutao, the last island visited in the Ellice Group, two sturdily built canoes were taken on board for surf work. Four delegates instead of two were taken from Niutao in order to manage them. These canoes were undoubtedly a great success and handled, as they were, by experts no difficulty was experienced in landing the delegates at any of the Phoenix Islands.

6. The expedition left Niutao Island early on the 9th October, and sailed due east for McKean Island, which it was proposed to visit *en route* to Canton. The following day the International Date Line was crossed, which gave us two Sundays, much to the astonishment of the native delegates. Owing to the easterly wind and a strong adverse current our progress was very slow and on the 12th October, it was decided to change course and make for Gardner Island, which was reached at 8 a.m. the following morning.

GARDNER ISLAND.

7. The profuse vegetation on Gardner Island gave it the appearance, from the sea, of possessing several low hills. Approaching from the north-west, after an unsuccessful attempt to find an anchorage the "Nimanoa" was tied to the wreck of the "Norwich City," about 200 yards to the north of the main entrance into the lagoon. The delegates were immediately landed in the two canoes and the majority, in charge of Mr. E. R. Bevington, commenced to walk round the island. Camp was pitched under the shade of a clump of "buka" trees to the north of the lagoon passage. It was nightfall before the delegates returned, the chart having proved to be quite inaccurate and the island far larger than had been anticipated.

The canoes were brought through the passage and the following day I examined the lagoon and the various points of interest on the island, while the delegates dug a series of wells along the western side of the atoll. The inspections and well-digging were completed on the third day, the 15th October, and the expedition left for Canton Island at 4.45 p.m.

8. The results of the expedition's work on Gardner are summarised under the following heads:—

Topographical.—The map of the island contained in Admiralty Chart No. 184 was found to be quite unreliable. The island is of atoll formation, approximately 4 miles long by 1-1/4 miles wide, enclosing a lagoon approximately 3 1/2 miles long by 1/2 mile wide. The width of land varies from under 100 yards on part of the east and north-east coast to 1/2 mile on the west. The land was generally flat but on parts of the north coast there was a gradual rise amounting to several feet, culminating in a ridge along the centre.

Lagoon.—From the point of view of possible settlers the lagoon, which trends E. and W., is an excellent one. There are two passages into it from the sea, on the middle of the west and south coast respectively. The western passage is at present just navigable for canoes at high tide and, by means of blasting, it should be possible to make a passage which could be used at half tide or over. Owing to there being only the two comparative passages...

Unpublished Ellice Islands Report. (Ottomani)
 Printed in Suva, Fiji Islands in 1938

Fertility and Flora.—Without hesitation I should judge Gardner to be the most fertile island in the Colony, with the possible exception of Washington Island. The typical soil was a rich dark brown mould, resembling peat, and quite unlike the coral sand of the Gilbert Group. Most of the island was covered with groves of enormous "buka" trees (*Pisonia grandis*), an excellent wood for house building and box making. These, with their large grey trunks several feet in diameter and anything up to 60 feet in height, and their soft green foliage, are more reminiscent of European than tropical trees. To the south of the main passage there were also some fine groves of "kanawa" trees (*Cordia subcordata*), which are invaluable for canoe and boat building. In the Gilbert Group both the "buka" and "kanawa" trees are very rare indeed and can only be grown on the most fertile islands and then with the greatest difficulty.

A striking illustration of the fertility of the soil was seen in the growth of the "kaura" plant (*Sida fallax*, Walp.), for whereas in the remainder of the Colony it forms a small shrub, often procumbent and never more than a foot or two high, on Gardner, it had grown into small trees seven or more feet in height. Unlike, I believe, all other low islands in the Central Pacific, there is very little undergrowth on Gardner Island, and particularly on the western and northern sides there were few of the plants and grasses typical of the Gilberts. This, however, is almost certainly due to the dense groves of trees, for on the south-east of the island where there was extensive open country, the flora, while growing more luxuriantly, was identical with that of any other coral atoll.

Soil profiles obtained when well digging showed the dark brown mould, which contained a large admixture of guano, extending down to four feet, gradually becoming lighter and being finally replaced by white coral fragments. On the south-east corner of the island the soil was of a light brown sandy nature, more like that of the Gilbert Islands.

There were five small groves of coconut trees on the west side of the island, two to the north of the lagoon passage and three to the south. Unfortunately many of the trees had grown up in hopeless positions subject to inundation during spring tides, but the two groves planted in tolerably good positions were doing extraordinarily well, the trees bearing heavily with the ground round piled high with nuts. A feature that struck the delegates forcibly was the fact that the trunks of the coconut trees were in no instance "waisted," demonstrating that during the last fifteen or twenty years at any rate the island has been free from drought. There were altogether 111 coconut trees on the island in full bearing and no indication could be found of others having been planted and subsequently dying.

Water supply.—Eight wells were dug during our three days on the island—four to the north of the main lagoon passage and two to the south. The water in five of the wells was of indifferent quality, particularly those to the south of the channel. Two of the wells in the north, however, contained water of fair quality, while one well contained drinking water nearly equal, in the opinion of the natives, to that on Sydney Islands and fresher than many wells in the Gilbert Islands. The expedition was fortunate in visiting the Phoenix Group just before the commencement of the wet season and I think that it can be taken as an axiom that if an atoll well contains drinkable water in October or November, there is no likelihood of the water proving undrinkable at any time. Low island wells are, of course, partly tidal and contain a mixture of rain water seepage and sea water filtered by the coral sand. As a consequence most Gilbertese wells run very saltish towards the end of the dry season. The water in freshly dug wells is, furthermore, usually exceptionally brackish for the first week or so and the expedition was unfortunately unable to stay long enough to see whether the water in the southern wells improved. The delegates appeared to be satisfied with the water on the island and were of the opinion that even better water could be found if further wells were dug. Samples of the water were bottled and taken to Beru, where the people stated that it was better than they obtained from some of their own wells.

Fishing.—Fish were everywhere plentiful, both off the reef and in the lagoon, and most of the varieties common to the Gilbert and Ellice Groups were recognised by the delegates. If settlers lived on Gardner Island permanently the fish naturally would gradually become scarcer, as in the Gilbert Group. There were large numbers of sharks, but those seen in the lagoon were quite small.

On the south-west corner of the lagoon a natural lake had formed which teemed with "bancawa" fish, a species of pond mullet much esteemed by the natives. This natural supply would prove of value during the early stages of any settlement.

Anchorage and landing facilities.—For convenience in landing passengers and gear, the "Nimanoa" was tied to the wreck of the "Norwich City" during the whole of our visit to Gardner Island. A fairly good 9 fathoms anchorage was, however, discovered by the officers of the vessel about $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile south of the wreck.

There is quite good landing during easterly weather, to the south of the wreck by the lagoon entrance, and a small amount of blasting could make the landing better than at some of the reef islands in the Ellice Group.

Suitability for immigration.—The delegates were quite certain that Gardner Island is suitable for settlement by Gilbertese or Ellice Islanders. They were overcome with astonishment at the fertility of the island and the Onotoa and Arorae natives, in particular, have made earnest representations that they should be permitted to colonise it jointly.

The delegates considered that practically the whole of Gardner Island was good coconut and pandanus land, with the exception of about $\frac{1}{2}$ mile on the east and north-east coasts. This would largely depend, however, on whether soil well suited for the growth of "buka" trees is also suitable for coconut and pandanus cultivation. It is doubtful if the native "bahai" would grow in such rich soil but limes, tomatoes, yams, kumaras, taro, and other plants that will not readily grow elsewhere in the Colony, should do quite well.

It is estimated that, when fully planted, Gardner Island should support a population of approximately 1,100 Gilbertese in comparative affluence.

111 Coconut trees on Gardner Island in October 1937.

The February 1993 *Proceedings* article, "Why the Navy Didn't Find Amelia," was an interesting theory into the disappearance of Amelia Earhart and Fred Noonan. As an aviation historian and coauthor of "*Amelia, My Courageous Sister*," I wish to tell your readership some personal facts about Amelia and about Gardner Island:

The *Proceedings* article states, "...(TIGHAR) have recovered aircraft wreckage consistent with Earhart's Lockheed, as well as personal effects, including the remains of an American shoe identical in style and size (nine) to that worn by Earhart..." It concludes with, "...many questions remain unanswered. The pieces of wreckage found suggest either an explosion or catastrophic wave damage. Where is the rest of the airplane? How long did Earhart and Noonan survive on the waterless atoll? It is to answer these questions that TIGHAR will return once more..." May I present a chronology of the evidence that conflict with the conclusions reached by TIGHAR:

The Aluminum Fragments Found at Gardner Island "Mystery"

- March 5, 1992 -- National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) Metallurgist's Factual Report No. 92-40 -- resulted from the eleven (11) pieces of aluminum and wire that were given to the NTSB by TIGHAR. A senior NTSB metallurgist, in writing a report on the fragments, did not describe them as coming from any specific aircraft or other vehicle. (See Table A attached).

Question: How can TIGHAR claim these fragments of metal came off Amelia's Electra, when the NTSB metallurgist (in his examination) could not verify that they came from a Lockheed airplane or any of the thousands of other airplanes constructed during that era?

Aviation Pioneer Bobbi Trout, and friends, of the 1920's and 1930's



Just Plane Crazy

Amelia, My Courageous Sister



True facts about her disappearance

Book Set: \$29.95 soft covers
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- **October 1937** - Professor Harry Maude named Gardner Island "Nikumaroro" in October 1937 (see attached photograph of Professor Maude). Professor Maude, Pacific administrator and historian, was a member of the British Colonial Service in the Pacific from 1929 to 1955. He claimed possession of the Phoenix Group (destined to be the last new territory of the British Empire-1937) and undertook a plan for the resettlement of the Gilbert islanders on the three southern Phoenix Islands of Gardner, Hull and Sydney (1937-1938). The Gilbertese people lived on Gardner Island between 1938-1964 (26 YEARS).

- **19 November 1937** [report dated], Professor Maude's report was written a few months after Amelia's disappearance stated, "...There were altogether 111 coconut trees on the island in full bearing...Fish were everywhere plentiful, both off the reef and in the lagoon...The island was found to contain thousands of enormous coconut crabs, which formed a welcome addition to the diet of the delegates." Maude also wrote, "...Without hesitation I should judge Gardner to be the most fertile island in the Colony...Eight wells were dug during our three days on the island...there is no likelihood of the water proving undrinkable at any time...The delegates appeared to be satisfied with the water on the island and were of the opinion that even better water could be found if further wells were dug. Samples of the water were bottled and taken to Beru, where the people stated that it was better than they obtained from some of their own wells."

- **In 1991** Professor Maude wrote, "Gardner is such a small atoll [3.5 miles wide] and was inhabited for so long that every inch of the place must have been walked over many times; anything out of the ordinary would have been reported and be on record. Not so much happens on a small atoll from day to day and unusual events and findings are subjects for endless gossip..."

- **July 24, 1944 through March 1946**, The U.S. Coast Guard built a series of Long Range Navigation (LORAN) Communication Stations in the Pacific during WWII. *The U.S. Coast Guard in World War II*, a book written by Lt. Malcolm F. Willoughby (a well respected USCG District Historical Officer) reported, "...Construction Detachment D (Unit 211) consisting of 8 officers and 130 men was formally commissioned on 7 April 1944, to build the chain...A landing party [30 men from USCG Unit # 211] arrived in *Balsam* at Gardner Island on 24 July 1944, to begin work at the site..." Also at Gardner Island was the USCG Unit # 92, consisting of more than 20 men, who operated the LORAN Station around the clock. The Gardner Island LORAN Station remained on the air until the end of the war. It was not dismantled until March of 1946.

- The Gardner Island LORAN Station also received supplies, on a monthly basis, from PBY aircraft flown out of Canton Island (USCG Unit #94). It is understandable that the island had a fair amount of American-manufactured debris left on the island when the LORAN Station was dismantled and the U.S. Coast Guard personnel departed.

Question: What else was left behind by the occupants of Gardner, i.e., other cigarette lighters, scraps of metal, old shoes, etc...what will the next expedition find?



Muriel Earhart Morrissey, in Atchison, Kansas, holding artifacts that once belonged to her sister, Amelia.

Photo taken 17 July 1986. The shoes are size 6 AA. The jacket and Hawaiian leis were once worn by Amelia.

Photo by Carol Osborne
© 1989

2464 El Camino Real, # 99, Santa Clara, California 95051

March 23, 1993

Paul Stillwell, Director
U.S. Naval Institute
118 Maryland Avenue
Annapolis, MD 21402-5035

Subject: Addendum to Amelia Earhart *Proceedings* article dated February 1993

Dear Paul:

I have been in communication with Eve Secunda about the upcoming Annapolis Seminar this April 28, 1993, and on the above Subject. I hope you will be able to print this letter in your May 1993 *Proceedings*:

The February 1993 *Proceedings* article, "Why the Navy Didn't Find Amelia," was an interesting theory into the disappearance of Amelia Earhart and Fred Noonan. As an aviation historian and coauthor of "*Amelia, My Courageous Sister*," I wish to tell your readership some personal facts about Amelia and about Gardner Island:

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Question: How then can TIGHAR suggest these artifacts resulted from an explosion or catastrophic wave damage? The NTSB makes no such indication.

The Shoe Heel "Mystery"

- Oct. 29, 1982 -- The News Tribune, Woodbridge, New Jersey, reported: "Miss Earhart wore a hard-to-fit, very narrow size 6 shoe. 'I remember she always had difficulty getting dress shoes,' said her sister, Muriel Morrissey."
- July 17, 1986 -- Father Angelus Lingenfelter, of the Atchison County Historical Society, viewed museum artifacts that once belonged to Amelia, many given by Muriel herself. Father Angelus and Muriel took most of the artifacts out of the showcases. Muriel posed with some, in case the photos would be useful in the production of her book, *Amelia, My Courageous Sister*, (see enclosed photo).
- March, 1992 -- Father Angelus had Amelia's museum shoes analyzed. They were size 6 AA. This was also printed inside both shoes. Shoe sizes haven't varied much since the 1920's, and certainly not 3 whole sizes.
- March 23, 1992 -- Celia Lang, a long time family friend of Muriel's wrote: "...The size 9 shoe bit really hit me, because I knew AE didn't have such big feet! While I never met Muriel's sister, I "inherited" some of her shoes because Muriel couldn't wear them...mother and I were then in the 6-6 1/2 range, so we shared them..."
- July 9, 1992 -- Aviation Pioneer Bobbi Trout, friend of Amelia's, visited the museum and took a closer look at Amelia's shoes. They were indeed size 6 AA. Bobbi Trout wears size 6 1/2.

Question: It is difficult to reconcile a size nine (9) shoe size artifact with a verified fact that Amelia Earhart wore size six (6) shoes. How does TIGHAR know Amelia wore size 9 shoes on her final flight?

The Gardner Island Landing Site "Mystery"

- July 9, 1937 (only 7 days after Amelia disappeared) - According to, *Get Underway!*, compiled from data taken on board the *U.S.S. Colorado*, and edited for crew members by Gust Nichandros and Lyle F. Richards during the summer of 1937, "...Gardner Island was seen very clearly from the ship during the day...On the west end, a four thousand ton tramp steamer had piled onto one of the reefs and could still be seen there with its back broken. The aviators reported the area to be dense with tropical vegetation. The soil is very fertile and the entire western end is covered with groves of coconut palms. Myriads of birds populate not only Gardner but McKean Island as well..." [According to the *Colorado Ship's Log* dated Friday, 9 July 1937, "...0945 Sighted Gardner Island bearing 179.5° (True), distance about fifteen (15) miles."]
- October 13, 1937 - Professor Henry E. Maude and a team of British surveyors spent 3 days on Gardner and conducted a full survey of the island and lagoon.

- October 1937 - Professor Harry Maude named Gardner Island "Nikumaroro" in October 1937 (see attached photograph of Professor Maude)* Professor Maude, Pacific administrator and historian, was a member of the British Colonial Service in the Pacific from 1929 to 1955. He claimed possession of the Phoenix Group (destined to be the last new territory of the British Empire-1937) and undertook a plan for the resettlement of the Gilbert islanders on the three southern Phoenix Islands of Gardner, Hull and Sydney (1937-1938). The Gilbertese people lived on Gardner Island between 1938-1964 (26 YEARS).
- 19 November 1937 [report dated], Professor Maude's report was written a few months after Amelia's disappearance stated, "...There were altogether 111 coconut trees on the island in full bearing...Fish were everywhere plentiful, both off the reef and in the lagoon...The island was found to contain thousands of enormous coconut crabs, which formed a welcome addition to the diet of the delegates." Maude also wrote, "...Without hesitation I should judge Gardner to be the most fertile island in the Colony...Eight wells were dug during our three days on the island...there is no likelihood of the water proving undrinkable at any time...The delegates appeared to be satisfied with the water on the island and were of the opinion that even better water could be found if further wells were dug. Samples of the water were bottled and taken to Beru, where the people stated that it was better than they obtained from some of their own wells."
- In 1991 Professor Maude wrote, "Gardner is such a small atoll [3.5 miles wide] and was inhabited for so long that every inch of the place must have been walked over many times; anything out of the ordinary would have been reported and be on record. Not so much happens on a small atoll from day to day and unusual events and findings are subjects for endless gossip..."
- July 24, 1944 through March 1946, The U.S. Coast Guard built a series of Long Range Navigation (LORAN) Communication Stations in the Pacific during WWII. *The U.S. Coast Guard in World War II*, a book written by Lt. Malcolm F. Willoughby (a well respected USCG District Historical Officer) reported, "...Construction Detachment D (Unit 211) consisting of 8 officers and 130 men was formally commissioned on 7 April 1944, to build the chain...A landing party [30 men from USCG Unit # 211] arrived in *Balsam* at Gardner Island on 24 July 1944, to begin work at the site..." Also at Gardner Island was the USCG Unit # 92, consisting of more than 20 men, who operated the LORAN Station around the clock. The Gardner Island LORAN Station remained on the air until the end of the war. It was not dismantled until March of 1946.
- The Gardner Island LORAN Station also received supplies, on a monthly basis, from PBY aircraft flown out of Canton Island (USCG Unit #94). It is understandable that the island had a fair amount of American-manufactured debris left on the island when the LORAN Station was dismantled and the U.S. Coast Guard personnel departed.

Question: What else was left behind by the occupants of Gardner, i.e., other cigarette lighters, scraps of metal, old shoes, etc...what will the next expedition find?

Comparing the above facts with TIGHAR's reported findings (i.e., a cigarette lighter, a Consolidated PBY navigator's bookcase, pieces of aluminum and wire, and of course the size 9 shoe heel), I turn to the explanation offered by Muriel Earhart Morrissey in our 1987 book, *Amelia, My Courageous Sister*, "...It seems to me most likely that [the Coast Guard Cutter *Itasca's*] Commander Thompson's conjecture is correct, and that Amelia's plane was submerged within minutes after her last radio message and probably within one hundred miles of Howland Island."



Carol L. Osborne
Aviation Historian

P.S. THESE QUESTIONS HAVE NEVER BEEN SATISFACTORILY ANSWERED:
Perhaps there is a reader who would like to investigate and write about:

1. "Radio signals were heard for three days" after the disappearance. Why do reporters and writers accept this as gospel?
2. What did these signals say (i.e., how do we know they came from Earhart's plane and not from a radio ham operator in Iowa)? What did they say about the location, and physical condition of Earhart and Noonan?
3. Who heard these signal? Were they voice, Morse code or what?
4. When the signals were heard, what did the people hearing them do next? Did they notify the Coast Guard / Navy, which was busy searching for Earhart? If not, why not?
5. What aircraft authority, if any, believes that an Electra that crash-landed in shallow salt water (because it was low on fuel) remained in good enough condition, and with enough fuel, to run one of its engines during a three-day period after the landing?

Attachments:

1. (2) each - 8 x 10 photos of Muriel Earhart Morrissey, in Atchison, Kansas, holding artifacts that once belonged to her sister, Amelia. Photos taken July 17, 1986. The shoes are the size 6 AA shoes. The jacket and hawaiian laes were once worn by Amelia. After copying please return.
2. (1) copy of National Transportation Safety Board Report (7-pages).
3. (1) each - 4 x 6 print (MY ONLY COPY) of Prof. Henry Maude and wife Honor-on 62nd anniversary. PLEASE PLEASE RETURN. — I hope I get it back.
4. Copy of pages 37-39 of a mimeographed book: *Get Underway!* copyrighted in August 1937. We also referenced this document on page 254 of *Amelia, My Courageous Sister*.

letter of thanks etc - 4.6.94

4YI - Bill Hillier, Ex. Producer
& Tom Jones, Senior Producer

Spent 1 Saturday (almost 8 hrs)
and I presented the story, with
video - and see many of those
clips in this 2 h. piece - but
we received no credit for our
work - not even a good
copy - so I had to copy this

Union Hill
PAPERWORKS

off the air -

If anyone you know has rare
footage of Amelia & Fred Noonan
in Australia & Lae - perhaps I can
buy copies - hopefully I will be
able to put my own documentary
together - Hallmark
That is what I'm preparing for - some
of the classes
I'm taking
are video



150UHP 512-5
HALLMARK CARDS, INC.
MADE IN U.S.A.

© 1991 Muriel Earhart Morrissey by Curtis
Management Group, Indpls, IN

Classes & I'm
Trying to learn how to edit my
own video documentary -



9/11/93

Dear Honor & Harry—

What a delightful surprise
to hear your voice. I had
received your package only
2 hours earlier — and still had
not opened it. I even had
thought about calling you to say
Hi — and then there you were!!

Congratulations to you on
your many hours of research
and writing another wonderful
book. I certainly understand
the feeling — most authors
continue to edit and edit — and
it is hard to know when to
stop. I'm glad to hear it is
into your editors' hands.
Thank you for sending
me photos of you two.



Harriet Quimby, the "Dresden China Aviatix,"
receives a triumphant welcome on the French
beach after becoming the first woman to fly
the English Channel, on April 16, 1912.



"Flying is more thrilling than love
for a man and far less dangerous."

-Thea Rasche



I forgot to ask:

- 1) Where on Gardner was the photo taken? Can you mark the spot on the enclosed map "History of..." (IN RED PEN).
- 2) Any other photos of the area marked where Gillespie found Book case or cigarette lighter?
- 3) Any photos of the coconut palm tree?

4) It would be wonderful to be prepared for Gillespie's 3rd trip next March 1994 - Yes, he is talking about a third trip.

If ok with you, I'm mailing a copy (not to let this print out of my hands) of the Gardner Island photo to the Naval Institute to go with my 4-page letter - They may publish part in the Nov/Dec Naval History magazine. They should also be publishing Capt.



Almon Gray's revised paper that I

I'm sure I sent you my 4 page letter last March with your photo, Oct '37 report, photo of mural and GAA shoes, etc.

"When a great adventure's offered you,
you don't refuse it—that's all."

—Amelia Earhart

sent to you before.

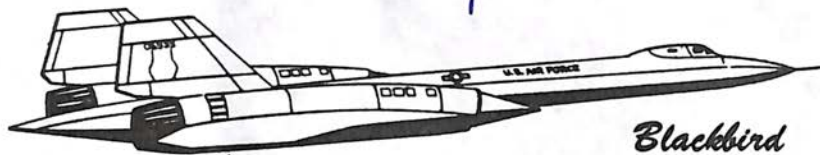
I'm enclosing a copy of my report of August 28, 1993 attendance at a gathering of AE researchers—just follow the story marked "Carol's Report" and the other boxes are just added information.

Page 5-8 are my notes ~~for~~ from one man, Joe Klass, a good "story teller" who claims AE came back to USA after war & lived in New Jersey as Irene Bolam. Bolam died in 1982. This theory is a Real JOKE on anyone who believes it.

I'm OK - I am able to collect unemployment (but not proud to have to file for it - but my employer - Lockheed - pays part of it) and my payments on my condo of



-4-



Blackbird

LOCKHEED SR-71

18 years are low - so I'll be OK for 1 year. If you hear about a ~~com~~ retraining NOVA grant program in Sunnyvale, Calif, where our Pres. Clinton visited Friday - That is the program I want to be in.

Under NOVA I can go back to school, retrain in high tech computers and then get a job in a new field. All publishing is now in desktop publishing so living in Silicon Valley is an advantage. Thank you for your concern but I will be fine - You are so kind to be concerned but I'm OK -

Please stay in touch. I will one day update Amelia, my courageous sister, and all these photos and materials are a great aid -
Much love -

PM	RED	CRUS	MAX	RGE	FCE	STR	COST
+2	1	1200	2200	3000	14	170	18.0m

Carol

Carol L. Osborne

Aviation Historian Consultant

2464 El Camino Real, # 99, Santa Clara, California 95051

*Phoned & Answered -
May 1994*

Home Phone 408-244-6114

Fax Phone 408-244-6114

Professor Harry and Honor Maude
42/11 Namatjira Drive
Weston, A.C.T. 2611 (Canberra)
Australia

Jan. 22, 1994

Dear Honor and Professor Maude,

How delightful to hear your voice tonight. I had been out looking at CD ROM technology and checking on pricing vs my budget...and what a wide range there is!

I was glad you received the U.S. Naval History magazine. There will be several other things happening in 1994...they just cannot leave Amelia alone. Last Thursday night one of the news shows, hosted by Connie Chung, a CBS anchor woman, presented a new piece on Amelia. We have so many tabloid TV shows (i.e. *Hard Copy*, *EYE TO EYE*, *20/20*, *Entertainment Tonight*, *Inside Edition*) and I am ashamed to say that Thursday's show was most representative of tabloid TV. The program, *EYE TO EYE*, presented a 10-minute piece about a new book authored by Randall Brink (I will enclose a publicity announcement that was made last September).

Brink has come out with U.S. Treasury Secretary Morgenthau's telephone transcription as new evidence that AE was a spy. I wrote a note to the producer of the show (who was courteous enough to fax me an advanced transcript of the upcoming program so I could share with Muriel). Along with thanking him I said, "By the way, seven years ago Muriel and I wrote a complete account of Treasury Secretary Henry Morgenthau's telephone call transcript that was reported as a new revelation by Randall Brink's new book. You might share the attached pages (pages 267-281) from *Amelia, My Courageous Sister*, with your researchers." I really don't expect any comment but at least I made my voice known to him.

See next column

Brink took the CBS crew to the Marshall Islands and states he is 95-100% certain AE was a spy. THERE WAS ABSOLUTELY NOTHING NEW OR REVEALING THAT IS WORTH TALKING ABOUT. Brink make statements that NO one can disprove, so there we are. Brink said, "holes were cut, brackets were mounted on the inside of the fuselage skin and the cameras were then mounted in that area between the cabin floor and the lower fuselage skin." I certainly do not know where he picked this up.

Brink also stated, "for at least part of her trip, President Roosevelt ordered her to take aerial photographs of the Japanese military build-up in the Pacific--a build-up taking place in secret, in violation of all international treaties." Brink continued, "...this was an opportunity to get some intelligence information by a person who was traveling in that area anyway and who was probably of the stature that would be safe from all of the perils that would confront an average American or a military individual going into those areas."

See page 2, Col. 1

Aviation Pioneer Bobbi Trout, and friends, of the 1920's and 1930's



Just Plane Crazy

Amelia, My Courageous Sister



True facts about her disappearance

Book Set: \$29.95 soft covers

Order: 1-800-423-2708

Then the reporter interviewed John Heine, who lives on the island of Mili (I think). Heine said, "our teachers told us we were to go the end of the island and wave a small flag...Japanese flag made from paper. Tiny flags, welcoming a ship that was coming through the pass. It was towing a barge behind it and on the barge was a plane. I saw a plane on the back...It did not look like a Japanese plane at all. It had two props and kind of shiny. It was shiny..."

Heine remembered, "looking at this picture, this is the first time I've seen a clear photograph of the plane. I think this is the plane I saw. Right now, I have formed my own thoughts and I think it was Amelia Earhart's plane." Do you know the Marshall Islanders or have any comment about Bilamon Amaron? About John Heine? I would value your opinion because you KNOW the people and are just another American looking for a sensational story! Let me know what you think?

Because EYE TO EYE was such a sensational story, CBS did their best to promote Brink's book by showing it several times, ON SCREEN, so I am sure it will be a best seller...

New subject...Monday I begin classes in desktop publishing, with my ultimate goal to be able to produce presentations on multimedia.

Multimedia is the integration of computer graphics, text, animation, sound, video and interactivity into a presentation. Multimedia allows the user or viewer to have control of the presentation in an easy way and can be used for education and entertainment. Some parts of graphics and multimedia require hours and hours of computer time to

See next column

draw or "render" the end illustration or demonstration. It takes many hours to do this.

When you called I was out trying to learn which computer software programs I need to purchase to create multimedia on my own computer. Little by little I am acquiring the software. I recently upgraded my Macintosh IICI computer, to 20 Megabyte RAM (random access memory) but need more.

I will be anxious to know if you located any more photos of Gardner Island in 1937, photos or history of Nikoromoro or the Gilbertese people you settled on the island. If you find other photos and documents that will help me keep "Groups" on the straight and level, please let me know.

When I heard about the terrible fires in Australia I thought of you and remembered that you called me for the first time as we were witnessing the burning of Oakland on TV. How sorry I am to learn of the fires and the sad fate of the dear animals. It wasn't too long ago that Los Angeles had a couple of arsonists and I think I heard you did too. I send my love to both of you and your friends.

Before I forget, I will try and get a good copy of the Connie Chung's report as well as a copy of the TNT movie when it airs in June. TNT is a Ted Turner owned broadcast station out of Atlanta, Georgia and they are making the movie tentatively titled, "Amelia's Last Flight." I went to Half Moon Bay, California on November 15th when I learned they were turning the local airport into a Hawaiian setting and were going to ground loop a plane. That is when I met the TNT producer, director, publicist etc. I also met Diane Keaton that evening after all the shooting was completed. The publicist did not want to introduce me until the plane crash

See page 3

From page 2

scene was completed cause they could only shoot the scene once and did not want to distract her.

I had better start working on some of my preparation for school. We have a NOVA (North Valley) Private Industry Council who was awarded a \$4 million grant for use by laid off aerospace workers. Since I fell into this unfortunate group, I have decided to go back to school under the grant and try to get a certificate in the new field of multimedia. I believe this is the thing of the future and now is the time for me to train in the new field. By Christmas I hope to have most of my education behind me and in a job producing multimedia.

Thank you again for the phone calls and delightful conversation. When you have a chance, tell me if you can use a VHS video tape if I were to transfer the Connie Chung video program, and eventually the TNT program for you? I will send a copy of Brink's book...when it is available. I will be purchasing a couple of copies for history,

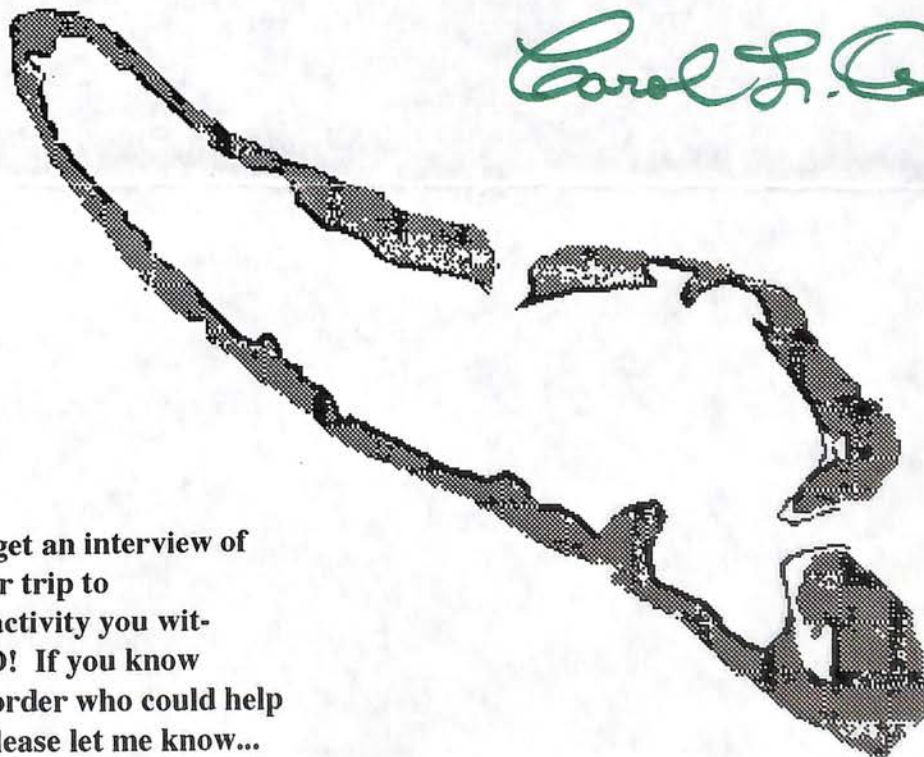
NOT THAT IT IS WORTH ANY HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE. In one way I want to encourage people NOT to buy...he was so lucky to get prime time coverage of his book. You know that would be worth millions if one had to buy the coverage. Not to worry though, we can live with ourselves and know we have left something of value to future generations...money isn't everything!!!

Thank you again and within the next 2 months I will try to put the video and book in a package and mail. Oh, I almost forgot, there will be three more expeditions within the next year or so...so I understand. Supposedly Gillespie (TIGHAR) is returning to Nikumaroro and Prymak is going to get an expedition together for the Marshall's. There are two other groups who are talking about the Pacific, but I do not know where...and so it goes, they just cannot let Amelia rest in peace.

Thank you and stay well.

Much love to you both,

Carol L. Abond



How I wish we could get an interview of you talking about your trip to Nikoromoro and the activity you witnessed--FIRST HAND! If you know anybody with a camcorder who could help me accomplish this, please let me know...

5-28-92

Dear Honor + Prof. Maude -

How I thank you for sharing our materials with Bruce Hoy. I'm delighted that you now know one another and any future writings Bruce does about Amelia - he will know about you and your contributions to history! (sorry, my pen just ran out of ink).

I contacted my distributor and asked him to ship another set of books to Bruce Hoy. I wanted my distributor to tell Bruce and any potential magazine how one could obtain copies of the books. Thank you from the bottom of my heart for helping me!

Last night I received a call from Guam - doing a follow up piece on AE. It was for Garnett News Service - and I spoke with the reporter for at least 1 hour. Tonight I'm going to fax this 2 page letter where TIGAR is now asking for more money - to buy a house! What will they do next? I just caution the reporter to quote me as I speak as a researcher and historian - time will tell. He said he would fax his story to me when he's written - we will see.

I just bought a fax machine, a real necessity these days, especially to keep up with these reporters and be sure they follow through.

I know I'll enjoy the fax. This way I can send info instantly, if needed.

Can you believe this, I got my paper reversed - It's 2 AM and I'm so tired I'm making mistakes, please forgive me,

I will be sure to keep you informed when anything new raises its head.

I'll write a real short note to Bruce by then I must retire. I get up by 6³⁰ AM to go to work by 7³⁰ AM. I'm 45 yrs old and cannot believe it will be too much longer before I require more sleep.

Honor, I thank you so much for sending me a copy of your letter you sent from the Gilberts - How wonderful that you dated your letters and that you so carefully documented your journeys. I imagine that helped a great deal with your writings - and detailing the memories you had so these data could live on in history.

I'll put this in the mail when I go to work later this a.m.

Be sure to keep in good health and I think of you both - often - How grateful I am that we met via letter and phone -

With warmest wishes and love -

Carol

Wouldn't it
be nice to have
people donate money
to you - To purchase
a new home?

What will do
they do
next?

envelop
↓



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TIGHAR
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Wilmington, DE 19808

Dear Mr. Sawyer,

Enclosed is my contribution to the

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in the amount indicated below:

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\$50

\$100

\$250

\$1,000 or more

(Check should be made payable to TIGHAR Home Fund)

Please DOUBLE MY MONEY with a matching contribution.

Thank You,

Name

TIGHAR #

JOHN SAWYER
CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD



1121 ARUNDEL DRIVE • WILMINGTON, DELAWARE 19808 • USA
(302) 994-4410 • FAX (302) 994-7945

April 24, 1992

Dear Fellow TIGHAR Member,

These are exciting days for all of us who are TIGHAR members. We've seen our organization win international acclaim for our success on the Earhart Project, and the rock-solid results of our research have withstood the best efforts of the few (but vocal) detractors. Now, as Chairman of TIGHAR's Board of Directors, I'd like to ask you to join me in helping TIGHAR with another very important project.

As you may or may not know, the foundation now operates out of a home/office in a suburban neighborhood in Wilmington, Delaware. The present rented facility is in very poor repair and may soon be sold by the owner. It is vital to the organization's continued growth that TIGHAR move into more stable and suitable quarters as soon as possible, and that means raising \$50,000 by July 1st. Enclosed with this letter you'll find a card and a return envelope which I hope you'll send in with your contribution to the TIGHAR Home Fund. And here's my offer to you. **I'll match every dollar you and every other TIGHAR member contributes to this fund, dollar for dollar, until the goal is met.**

At present, our full-time husband and wife management team of Richard Gillespie (Executive Director) and Patricia Thrasher (President), live in three rooms of the house at 1121 Arundel Drive in Wilmington and run TIGHAR out of the other five and the basement. Both are salaried employees of the foundation. TIGHAR is deeply in debt due to the loans that were necessary to complete the funding for the Earhart Project. These are no-interest loans with no due date so they are not a drain on the foundation's day to day operating expenses. However, because they must be shown as liabilities on the foundation's financial statements, they preclude the possibility of TIGHAR itself getting a mortgage in the immediate future. At the same time, TIGHAR owes Ric and Pat a considerable amount in back wages from years when the foundation could only afford to pay a fraction of their approved salaries. (Example: In 1988 they should

have received \$25,000 each; Ric actually received only \$14,879.61 and Pat \$13,603.77.) As a solution to both problems, the Board has unanimously approved a funding plan whereby money raised will be used to pay Ric and Pat their back salaries. Ric and Pat will then buy a suitable house in which TIGHAR can establish its headquarters and Ric and Pat can live. That will give TIGHAR the secure office base it needs at a very low rent while enabling Ric and Pat to receive the compensation they have earned. But we need to act soon to take advantage of the current low interest rates and low house prices, hence the July 1 deadline.

The TIGHAR Home Fund is the first step in a major expansion plan which will greatly increase the foundation's membership base, research capability, educational activities and member services. But the first step is up to you. Fill out your card and send it in with your check. Then I'll double your contribution. It's the best way I can think of to thank you for your support and say, "Go get 'em, TIGHAR!"

Very truly yours,



John Sawyer
Chairman of the Board

JS/am
encl.



Amelia Earhart's plane found on atoll

AVIATION historians claim to have solved one of flying's great mysteries: the disappearance of Amelia Earhart, the American pilot, over the South Pacific 55 years ago.

A team of researchers using sonar technology has found part of the wreckage of her plane and one of her shoes on the remote island of Nikumaroro.

They believe the aviator and Captain Fred Noonan, her navigator, may have survived a crash-landing and lived on the 3½-mile-long atoll for a year before dying during a severe drought.

The International Group for Historic Aircraft Recovery (Tigar) plans to reveal details of its discoveries in Washington tomorrow.

The shoe, found in jungle undergrowth on the island, has been identified as Earhart's by the US National Transportation Safety Board. "We will present proof that the Earhart mystery has been solved," Robert Gillespie, Tigar's executive director, said last night. "It's been a long, difficult, expensive project."

Earhart and Noonan vanished on July 2, 1937, after taking off from Lae, New Guinea, during their attempt

by Maurice Chittenden

to be the first to fly around the world.

The mystery of their fate has since become as much an aviation legend as the Bermuda Triangle and the death of bandleader Glenn Miller. Among the wilder theories advanced were that the pair were on a spying mission, that they were captured by the Japanese, and that Earhart faked



her disappearance because she wanted to opt out of public life and assumed a false identity in America.

Gillespie's theory, however, is that the pair got lost, ran out of fuel and crash-landed on the coral shelf surrounding Nikumaroro.

When their plane disappeared, Franklin Roosevelt, the American president, ordered a search and navy

ships reported hearing distress signals for three days.

Records of those signals were used in 1986 to plot the possible location of the wreck. Four years ago Gillespie's team found an aluminium box used by navigators to store maps that appeared similar to one in a photograph of the ill-fated plane. Since then Tigar has brought in underwater sonar devices to scan the ocean bed for remains.

However, the lack of human remains on Nikumaroro leaves another part of the Earhart mystery unanswered: was she pregnant when she started her last flight? She had noted that she was feeling sick several times in her log during earlier parts of the flight.

The Kansas-born aviator had already become the first woman to fly the Atlantic, first as a passenger and then in a solo flight with nothing but a soup Thermos and a map of the stars. In 1935 she made a solo flight from Hawaii to California.

Shortly before her last flight she wrote home to her husband, the publisher George P Putnam: "Women must try to do things as men have tried. When they fail their failure must be but a challenge to others."



Air ace: Earhart with pilot Bill Stultz after becoming the first woman to cross the Atlantic by plane

Shoe unlocks Earhart riddle

Times 16.3.92

FROM CHARLES BREMNER IN NEW YORK

AMELIA EARHART, the dashing pre-war flyer and celebrity, apparently survived for some time on an uninhabited Pacific island after disappearing on her final flight, provoking one of the greatest flying mysteries, according to a team of American investigators.

Richard Gillespie and his Houston-based team are to present evidence in Washington today which they say confirms that Earhart and Fred Noonan, her navigator and lover, crash-landed on Nikumaroro, formerly the British possession of Gardner Island, after losing their way and running out of fuel on their attempt to fly the Pacific on July 2, 1937.

Tests have confirmed that a piece of aluminium found on the island last October

came from Earhart's twin-engined Lockheed 10-E Electra, Mr Gillespie said. An American size-nine shoe had been proved to have belonged to her, he added.

Earhart's disappearance at the age of 39 prompted



Roosevelt: launched a naval and air search

Franklin Roosevelt to launch a naval and air search of the central Pacific. Weak radio distress signals were picked up for three days after the Lockheed's fuel would have run out. A navy plane flew over the island days after the disappearance and saw signs of habitation but no people.

Fuel exhaustion and faulty navigation provided the most plausible explanation for Earhart's failure to complete her flight. In the years that followed, however, mystery-mongers suggested that the free-spirited, but married, Earhart had staged her disappearance to start a new life with Noonan. There were also wartime legends that she had been spying for America on Japanese operations.

B.A. 20.3.92.

Aust-Wide reconsiders listing flagship

By GRAHAM LLOYD

AUST-WIDE Property Trust was reconsidering plans to list the group's flagship vehicle as a redeemable trust on the Australian stock exchange, the joint chairmen said in Perth yesterday.

The joint chairmen, Mr Ron Kerr and Mr Graham Jones, were at the start of a national roadshow designed to restore confidence in the group as unitholder opposition to management escalates.

Mr Jones conceded there were problems with the redeemable listed trust arrangement which, in its purest form, was a slow winding down of the trust.

Under the arrangement, a total of 10 per cent of units can be redeemed each year after unitholders have given 12 months' notice.

Mr Jones said the trustee had received redemption requests representing 13 per cent of the units or \$13 million. The problem was that property assets may have to be sold to meet the requests.

He said the Australian Securities Commission timetable made it impossible for the trustee to withdraw from listing as planned at the end of March.

But he said it was possible a meeting of unitholders could be held at a later date and possibly vote to overturn the redemption provisions.

Aust-Wide unitholders have previously voted by an overwhelming margin to approve the listing as a redeemable trust.

A group of 300 angry unitholders were at the Perth meeting during which a public straw-poll of 20 investment advisers was held with the blessing of Mr Jones. The poll



Mr Kerr in Perth yesterday . . . kicking off national roadshow to rally Aust-Wide troops as opposition to management mounts — Picture: KEN MATTS

could not come up with one willing to express confidence in the long-standing directors.

A public straw-poll of all 300 present immediately afterwards received exactly the same result.

After four days in the job, Mr Jones was roundly criticised by unitholders for not giving enough notice of yesterday's meeting.

They said they had received notice less than 24 hours before the meeting started. Mr

Jones said he was responsible and was sorry.

Mr Jones, who has been installed at Aust-Wide as a financial troubleshooter and corporate planner, had to defend his record as financial controller at the Capita Group and most recently the UK-based Harrods Group.

At Harrods, Mr Jones had to face Mr Rowland (Tiny) Rowland who felt he had been cheated of the Harrods empire.

In Perth, he faced a thicket

of "Tiny Rowlands", hostile towards Aust-Wide directors, not happy with the answers they had been given and not much liking elements of the recovery plan that had been put in place.

The most obvious "Tiny Rowland" was Dr Robert Russell who said he intended to petition the trust managers to call a meeting of unitholders to vote on the removal of directors.

Dr Russell said he had been frustrated in efforts to obtain a complete list of Aust-Wide

unitholders to issue a circular explaining why directors should be removed.

He expects to receive a copy of the circular today. Then, armed with the support of the necessary 50 unitholders, he will petition that a meeting be called.

Dr Russell is unhappy with decisions of management and is opposed to the trusts decision to list as a redeemable listed trust.

Most unitholders also wanted answers on why the trust had done so badly out of its

investment in the No 1 O'Connell St building in central Sydney.

They were promised a speedy circular explaining in detail the financial arrangements for the building.

But one unitholder put it bluntly when he said: "You got into bed with IEL.

"You had to put up all the money and they did the borrowing and . . . we are down the drain. You know it and you haven't got the courage to say so."

Thomas F. King, PhD, SOPA
Historic Preservation, Archaeology, Anthropology
410 Windsor Street
Silver Spring, MD 20910-4242, U.S.A.
(301) 585-9572

January 10, 1990

Mr. H.E. Maude
c/o The Journal of Pacific History
Research School of Pacific Studies
Australian National University
GPO Box 4
Canberra, A.C.T.
AUSTRALIA 2601

Dear Mr. Maude:

I hope you will forgive this doubtless quite unexpected communication and request for your assistance. I'm an archeologist in private practice in the United States, who recently fled government service after some 15 years work in the historic preservation programs of the U.S. and the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands. One of the first things I did upon leaving the government was to serve as volunteer archeologist on an expedition to Nikumaroro in the Phoenix Islands in search of the famous aviatrix Amelia Earhart, who vanished in the area in 1937. We didn't find her, but we did, as you would expect, find the remains of the colony that you and the late Gerald Gallagher got started there in 1938.

I'm now beginning work on a monograph describing the non-Earhart-related archeological aspects of the project, which of course will include a considerable discussion of the Phoenix Islands Resettlement Scheme and its physical remains on the island. I also have become fascinated by the poignant story of Gallagher, the remarkable village that bore his name, and the reasons behind the decision in 1949 to prevail upon its occupants to relocate to lands farther southeast in Ritiati. Quite above and beyond the needs of the archeological monograph, I'm interested in learning more about Gallagher and the colony, with the as-yet rather vaguely formulated notion of doing some kind of book on the subject.

I have of course read your article in *Of Islands and Men*, as well as P.B. Laxton's 1951 JPS article. I'm hoping that you will be willing to help me get beyond the published literature by sharing with me your recollections of, and insights into, the colony and its history as well as Gallagher's background, character, and aspirations.

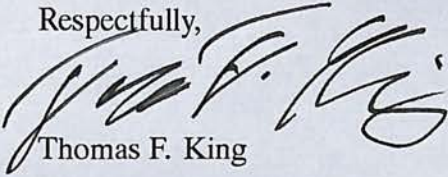
If you would be willing to correspond with me about these subjects, I hope you'll let me know, and I'll begin burdening you with more questions than you probably want to receive. I'd also appreciate it if you could tell me if you know what ever has become of Laxton and of Aram Tamia, Gallagher's erstwhile houseboy and acting magistrate on Nikumaroro in 1949.

Incidentally, we found Nikumaroro to be quite a lovely place, still exuding much of the sense of promise and fascination that one can read between the lines in your published recollection of your first night ashore there. The coco plantations, gone wild, are overwhelming the buka trees in many areas, but substantial stands of buka survive on Nuziran and down the northeast side. The colony's cistern is still full of perfectly good fresh water, and its roads and building sites can still

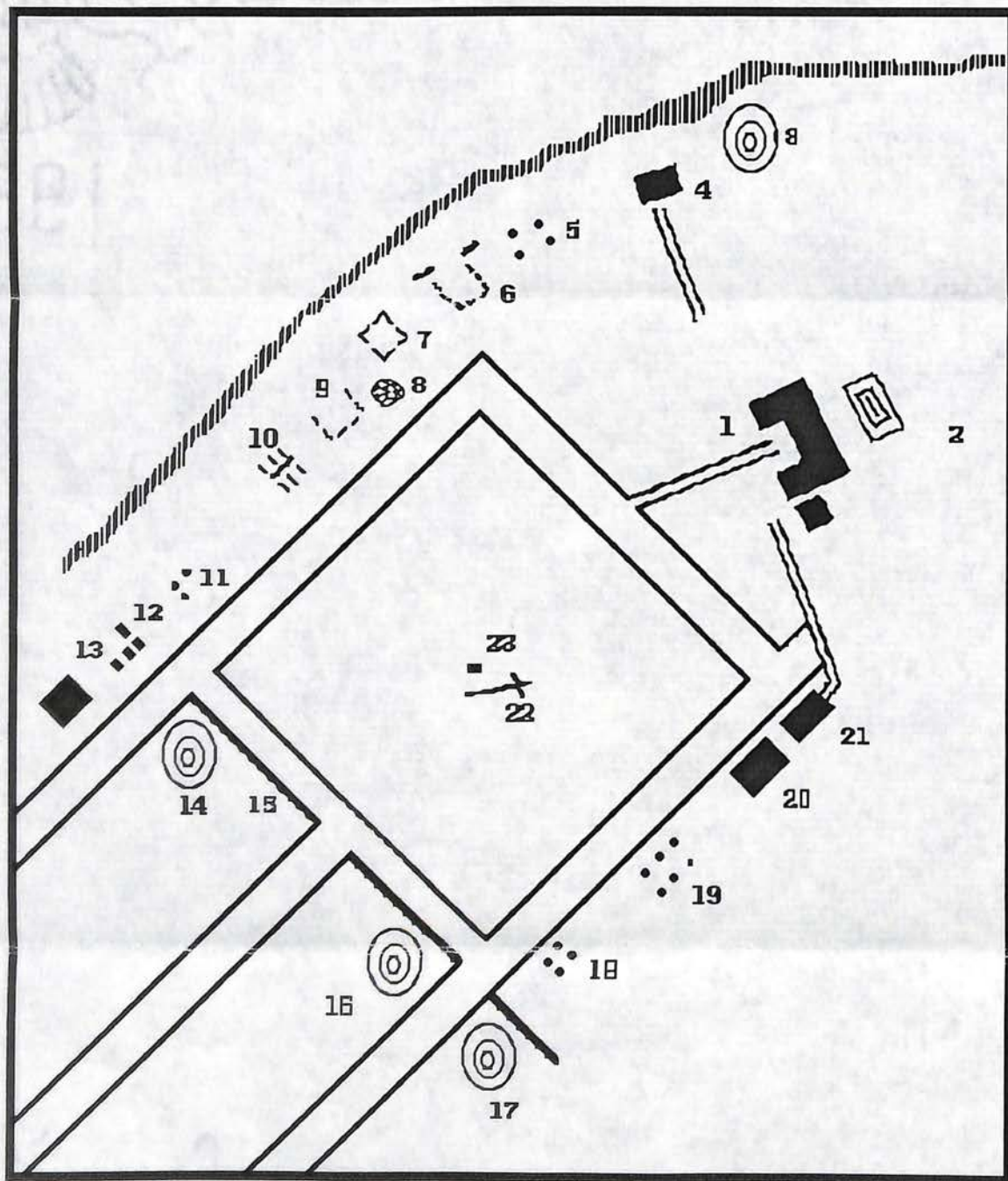
be found, with varying degrees of difficulty. I'm enclosing a couple of draft sketch maps that you may find of interest. Coconut crabs and land crabs are still plentiful and fearless, and there is still a large bird population, though nothing like that of McKean Island, which we also inspected. It is easy to understand why you and your colleagues were so hopeful for the success of the colony there, and to appreciate the disappointment you must have felt in its demise.

In any event, it is still a fascinating place, and I hope to be able to tell something of its story. Hoping that you will be willing to help me, I look forward to hearing from you.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tom F. King', written in a cursive style.

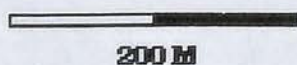
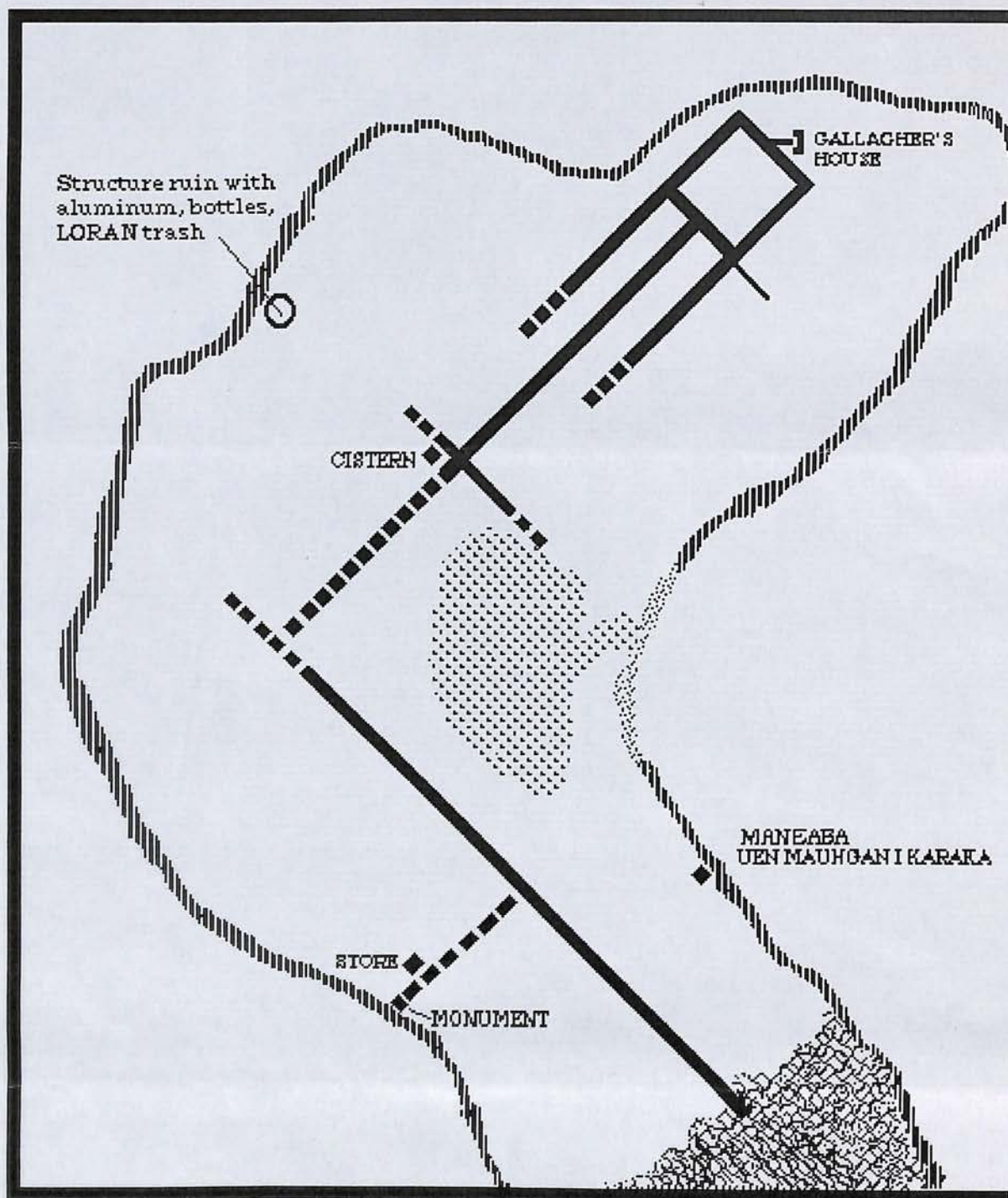
Thomas F. King



Nikumaroro:
KARAKA VILLAGE

KEY: SKETCH-PLAN OF KARAKA VILLAGE

- 1 – Gallagher's house and cookhouse
- 2 – Rectangular sunken area (babae pit?)
- 3 – Babae pit
- 4 – Wireless station
- 5 – Remains of structure: 4 standing posts
- 6 – Possible house site: cleared area, fallen posts
- 7 – Carpenter shop? House remains, collapsed shelves with engine parts, tools, etc.; generator parts, wood, etc.
- 8 – Pile of cement bags.
- 9 – Boathouse site? Cleared area, fallen posts, good access to beach; approximate location indicated by Laxton.
- 10 – Collapsed house.
- 11 – House site: 3 standing posts.
- 12 – Structure site: 4 standing, 2 fallen coral slabs. Hospital?
- 13 – Large 2-level concrete foundation. Dispensary?
- 14 – Babae pit.
- 15 – Stone wall
- 16 – Babae pit
- 17 – Babae pit
- 18 – House site? Contains pieces of crosoted post from LORAN station.
- 19 – House site: 6 standing posts.
- 20 – Concrete structure platform.
- 21 – Concrete structure platform with steel safe, collapsed green-painted walls.
- 22 – Flagpole (fallen)
- 23 – Gallagher's grave and monument.



Nikumaroro:
RITIATI/NORITI

42/11 Namatjira Drive,
Weston, A.C.T. 2611,
Australia,
19 February, 1990.

Dr Thomas F. King,
410 Windsor Street,
Silver Spring, MD 20910-4242,
U. S. A.

Dear Dr King,

Your letter of 10 January has been forwarded to me by the ANU but things have been hectic of recent weeks and my correspondence as a consequence got into arrears.

I retired from the ANU some years ago to finish my own writing and have only two more books and a few articles left to complete out of a fairly lengthy list.

This should have enabled me to finish my life's work on the ethnohistory of the central Pacific stolls by my 85th birthday, i.e. in a couple of years, but alas I can no longer see to read or write which is delaying my schedule somewhat; at least until the Blind Society has been able to fix me up with enough gadgetry to overcome this handicap.

I agree with you that Nikumaroro is a lovely atoll - it is so petite and self-contained, and one can sit on the edge of the lagoon and really feel at one with all the teeming life which it mothers.

I agree too that the Phoenix Islands would make a superb book - and one which would sell if you could bring alive the marvel of the lovely islands and the dreams of those who knew and loved them: John Arundel, Albert Ellis, Gallagher and myself, to name four.

Arundel was the owner and manager of his guano empire stretching from Raine Island on the Barrier Reef to Clipperton off the US coast. He exported the guano and planted the coconut trees. 'Bertie' and the other members of the Ellis family supervised the work.

For a time Arundel set up his headquarters on Sydney Island (Manra) and his daughter, Sydney Aris, left me all his extensive papers and his 47 diaries to write a biography of him. They are

now in the Rare Book Room of the National Library here and are available on microfilm through the Pacific Manuscripts Bureau. Both Sydney Aris and her son John, who died last year, were close friends of ours, as was Bertie Ellis, later Sir Albert Ellis, all being lovers of the equatorial islands (Mrs Aris was born on Manra, hence her name). I have also Aimee Bright's MS biography of John Arundel.

I doubt if I can help you much over Gallagher. We were good friends but both essentially loners, or we would not have taken jobs in the remotest islands in the Empire. Being loners we kept our personal and private lives to ourselves, our conversations being concerned with the islands, the people, the work done and to be done.

I met his mother in England, but she would be long dead now, I guess.

Again, I could tell you little about the progress of Nikumaroro or the Phoenix Islands Settlement Scheme after I handed over to Gallagher as I moved to other work. The war intervened and we went to live on Pitcairn Island for a year or so and then to the Kingdom of Tonga and after the war ended I took over as Administrator of the Gilbert and Ellice Islands Colony. Later on I was Secretary-General of the South Pacific Commission and finally became Professorial Fellow in Pacific Islands History at the ANU. So I had little opportunity to keep in touch with the progress of the Settlement Scheme.

Where I could help you is on source material, for after sixty years of documentary research on the central Pacific I should know all the published material and anything worthwhile in the manuscript line.

Dr Angela Kay Kepler, an environmental consultant (ornithology and botany), of Athens, Georgia, is particularly ^{interested} in Nikumaroro and 16 other central Pacific islands, and is leaving for them this month or next in a chartered vessel.

In addition to the two documentary items which you have seen, the following would seem to be of relevance to your proposed

To understand all this you would need to study Cartland's Report and correspondence as Chief Lands Commissioner in the Tarawa Archives, and his personal correspondence and other material in the Colonial Service Archives at Oxford; and Bedford's 1961 Auckland University MA thesis on 'Resettlement: solutions to economic and social problems in the Gilbert and Ellice Islands Colony'.

For the Solomons resettlement you will need to read Knudson, Brett Hilder and Stuart; while for the more recent period since the independence of the Solomons in publications by the USP (I would need to make a detailed list).

Thanks for the maps - knowing the areas enables me to form a mental image of what they are like today.

This rambling discourse may hopefully give you an overview of what source material is available to prepare the monograph and the book. For the latter, however, it would save you a heck of a time if you paid a visit to Australia where everything bar the Cartland Oxford Papers is readily available and you can ask me questions and record the answers on tape. But you would need to come fairly soon for in the nature of things I am not getting any younger.

With best wishes for the success of your fascinating projects,

Yours sincerely,

H/arry M. Aude .

PS. Please forgive the excrable typing, ~~but~~ I cannot see what I have typed. Re Laxton, when I last saw him we were on the island of Guernsey, where he used to live - and quite possibly still doew, in which case you could look him up in the local Telephone Directory.

1990

Thomas F. King
Consultant in Historic Preservation,
Archeology, Anthropology, and Preservation Education
410 Windsor Street
Silver Spring, MD 20910-4242
(301) 585-9572
FAX (301) 589-5049

Mr. H.E. Maude, O.B.E.
42/11 Namatjira Drive
Weston, A.C.T. 2611
AUSTRALIA

Dear Mr. Maude:

Thank you very much for your letter of 19 February. I'm delighted to hear from you, and very much appreciate your encouragement regarding my efforts to write something about Nikumaroro.

I'd certainly love to take you up on your suggestion that I come to Australia to interview you and go through the files; I wish I could, but finances don't look like they'll allow this in the very foreseeable future. So for the moment, I fear, all I can do is contact the sources you've given me and pester you with letters, which I'll try to keep to a minimum in view of your more pressing commitments. Your ethnohistory of the central Pacific atolls is certainly something for us all to look forward to with anticipation.

Just a couple of quick questions at this point. First, do you know where in the Solomons the Nikumaroro settlers were settled? Knudson tells us about those from Manra, but I haven't been able to find anything about those from Nikumaroro. I'm developing some contacts in the Solomons who may be able to do some follow-up research, and it would naturally help to point them toward a specific island or area.

Second, do you know where Gallagher lived before coming to the Gilberts and Ellices, and where his mother lived? My sister, who lives much of the time in England, has volunteered to try to track down information on his background, and I'm trying to get her something to start with.

Thanks for your help, and good luck with your own project; I'll look forward to the results.

Sincerely,



42/11 Namatjira Drive,
Weston, A.C.T.2611,
Australia,
9 May, 1990.

Dr Thomas F. King,
410 Windsor Street,
Silver Spring, MD 20910-4242,
U. S. A.

Dear Dr King,

Sorry for the delay in replying to your letter. It is difficult to keep up with the correspondence as well as my publishing schedult, when blind.

I quite understand your difficulty in financing a trip to Australia. I suppose that even in the States research grants get harder to find as one gets older.

Re your queries. I have no idea where the Nikumaroro people have settled in the Solomons. Presemably I knew once but after I passed the 80 mark my memory for details that I have no particular use for has declined. But your contacts in the Solomons should be able to find out without any trouble simply by asking a Gilbertese in Honiara.

I have also no idea where Gallagher or his mother lived. I met his mother not far from London (in Surrey I think) and traveled to see her in a Green bus from London.. But I fancy she was then staying with Gallagher's brother who was a clergyman in the Church of England..

The information which you want would be in Gallagher's personal file in the Colonial Office archives. But whether they would give your sister access I don't know. Maybe they would under the 30 years rule.

She could also check through Crockford for Church of England clergy called Gallagher, and ring each of them up. There should not be many for surely the tribe as a whole would be Roman Catholic.

My latest monograph on The History of the Karongoa clan should be out later this year but I do not think that it would interest you, or any other European. I specialize in publications on the islanders, for the islanders, and whenever I have a good manuscript by the islanders.. But they are only on sale in the islands, the distribution (and often the publishers) being the Institute of Pacific Studies, University of the South Pacific, PO Box 1168, Suva, Fiji.

If you are really interested in island history, as opposed to Pacific history (which is mainly interested in the doings of Europeans in the Pacific) write to the Institute for their catalogue. It would be best to start with The Evolution of the Gilbertese Boti and The Gilbertese Maneaba, which are obtainable at about \$5 each (being subsidized).

The University gave me an Hon. Doctorate recently for pioneering the study of island history, and now I have a friend Kambati here at the ANU doing a post-graduate thesis on Oral History.

Wishing you all the best with your proposed Saga of Nikumaroro. It takes me back to the early days when the Old Men and I were lying under the trees and smoking our pipes, after a heavy day's work exploring the atoll. I said, 'Well, what should we call this island?'; and the reply was 'Why, it is surely Nikumaroro, for when Nei Manganibuka lived there it was said to be under the lee of Samoa and covered with Buka trees'.

Sincerely,

Harry Byrnie

Thomas F. King, PhD, SOPA
410 Windsor Street, Silver Spring, MD 20910-4242 U.S.A.
Telephone (301) 585-9572 Facsimile (301) 589-5049

Historic Preservation, Preservation Education, Archaeology, Anthropology

July 6, 1990

Mr. Henry E. Maude
42/11 Namatjira Drive
Weston, A.C.T. 26111
AUSTRALIA

Dear Mr. Maude:

Thank you for your letter of 9 May. I appreciate the difficulties that you must experience in correspondence, and will try not to burden you. I do have a few questions that I need to put to you, however, if you don't mind.

Susan Woodburn has been kind enough to provide me with copies of material from your archival deposits relating to Nikumaroro, and my colleagues at TIGHAR were able to get some additional material at Kew Gardens. As I've organized and read through this material, and our own notes, several questions have come to mind.

1. In your letter of 19 February you mentioned a "detailed monograph on Nikumaroro in 1949 by P.B. Laxton." Ms. Woodburn advises that the only document she's aware of that would fit this description is the paper that Laxton published in the *Journal of the Polynesian Society* in 1951. Was this the paper you had in mind, or is there another that I should be searching for?
2. In Gallagher's quarterly reports, he refers to clearing land for, and constructing, the "Government Station." Would he mean by this the entire area of residences, administrative structures, parade ground, wireless station, infirmiry, etc., or would he mean a specific structure? I tend to assume the latter, since he refers separately to the "Rest House," which seems to be the house in which he resided and which was subsequently occupied by Laxton.
3. In his JPS article, Laxton mentions a couple of times that the colonists were preparing to construct a new maneaba, to be called "flower to the memory of Gallagher." We located what we take to be the site of this structure, at the point indicated in Laxton's article, some distance southeast of the Gallagher-era village. The maneaba is represented today by standing corner posts painted red, white and blue and some rather intriguing collapsed roof members. These latter, also painted the colors of the Union Jack, are made of milled lumber, not of local origin, and seem to have been steam-bent to form shallow arches. Mr. K. Kaitara, the representative of the Kiribati government on the expedition, suggested that they resembled architectural elements typical of a Samoan fale. I'm wondering, speculatively, if it's possible that Laxton brought these with him as part of his effort to prevail upon the colonists to move out of the village they had built under Gallagher's supervision. Do you suppose this is possible?

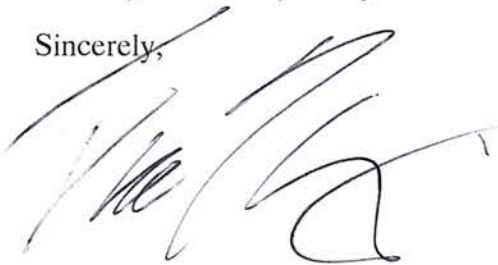
4. The above question relates to a larger one: why did Laxton insist that the people move out of the old village? He doesn't say in his JPS article (which is really rather rife with unanswered questions); he just takes it as a necessary part of their agreement to remain on the island and work the land. Again speculating, my tendency is to think that he insisted on the move for two reasons. One of these might be simply to get the people living on and feeling that they had investments in *kainga* land that could be worked to produce copra. At the same time, though, reading between the lines, one gets the impression that he felt the people were involved in maintaining the village, in the memory of Gallagher, to the detriment of their copra production activities. One has to wonder if he didn't want them to abandon the old village in order to diminish the power of Gallagher's memory. Does this seem possible to you, or am I barking up the wrong tree?

5. Finally, speaking of trees, two questions. First, I notice in both your notes and Gallagher's that it was expected that the island would eventually be cleared entirely of buka trees in favor of coconuts. Considering the association of the buka with Nei Manganibuka, did Teng Koata and the others have any negative feelings about doing this? Second, can you shed any light on why no breadfruit are present on the island? Mr. Kaitara and I were both surprised that the colonists don't seem to have planted any; not only are there none there now, but I don't see anything in the notes to suggest that they were ever tried.

Again, please accept my apologies for troubling you. I will look forward to the publication of your *History of the Karongoa Clan*. Although I'm perforce currently involved in studying the European history of the Phoenix Islands, my basic interests are in island history per se, and the archeological and ethnographic work that my wife and I have done in Truk and elsewhere has been oriented in this direction.

Thank you as always for your kind assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'M. A.', written in a cursive style.

42/11 Namatjira Drive,
Weston, A.C.T. 2611,
12 August, 1990.

Dr Thomas F. King,
410 Windsor Street,
Silver Spring, Md 20910-4242,
U. S. A.

Dear Dr King,

The Karongoa MS has left our hands so I have a break before starting work on the 'Golden Treasury of Gilbertese Oral Traditions', arranged by subject in Gilbertese with an English translation.

(1) The Laxton Memorandum that I referred to is dated April 6, 1949, and after a day and a half of hunting for it Honor discovered it. I knew where it should have been but not where it was, as it had been borrowed and not replaced in its proper file.

Anyway, we have photocopied it and send the copy, which is a good deal clearer than the original. There are also 12 photographs (9 of the Noriti and 3 of the Nutiran areas): these I could also send if they are of any use, so that you could have them copied and the originals sent back in due course.

(2) 'The Government Station' is the term used in the Gilberts to designate the area leased by the central government to house all the homes, offices, etc., required for the island government i.e. on a typical island for the houses of the Magistrate, Chief of Kaubure, Chief of Police, Scribe, also for the male and female gaols, the Scribe's office (which usually includes the post office), the court house, homes for the warder and wardress and usually a government maneaba.

The hospital (or infirmary) is usually some way off on other leased land; and the Rest House for visiting VIPs, which may or may not be on the Government Station: more usually it is on the weather side of the atoll or island to get the benefit of the cool trade winds.

You will appreciate that as all land in the Gilberts is owned by some Gilbertese, if the government requires to use any for administrative purposes it must lease it from the owner or owners. The small population of Nikumaroro would not require all the resident officials I have mentioned (probably only a Magistrate, Chief of Police and a Scribe, who could also run the co-operative store and work the wireless). I imagine that part of the area you have shown on your map of Karaka village would constitute the Government Station on Nikumaroro and that it would include Gallagher's house (later the Rest House).

(3) I have no idea who produced the painted corner posts which you mention but doubt if Laxton brought them as an inducement to the islanders to move to their kainga lands because I cannot conceive why any inducement would be necessary.

(4) Perhaps I have not quite understood about the reason for the move to the kainga lands. The islanders had always looked forward to the day when they could move from their labour camp location to their own kainga which, with its associated buakonikai land, would belong to them and their children in perpetuity.

But they could not move until the lands had been allocated to them: and this Laxton did, with everybody being present and helping. They were no longer paid labour but independent landowners, and the next day they started work on their kainga before dawn,

women and children helping, and kept at it until they were comfortably installed - when they had a celebration picnic. It was the people who wanted to move and Laxton who co-operated.

(5) I think that buka area would have been the last to be cleared for allocation as Kainga or buakonikai lands or for babai pits; and probably the Island Lands Court (all local islanders) would have left a stand of buka trees, with a plaque stating that it was a memorial to honor Nei Manganibuka. The islanders certainly believed that the atoll was her former home; but formerly secret oral tradition makes it certain, in my opinion, that Nikumaroro was actual one of the Samoan Group (most probably Upolu).

(6) The breadfruit is very hard to grow in the drier southern Gilberts, whence the settlers came, requiring careful cultivation for several years. Had the Nikumaroro colony survived I expect that the settlers would have planted some on the atoll: certainly they would have tried to grow a few jackfruit, which requires less tender loving care., but it was natural that in the early days of settlement they concentrated on easy to grow plants and trees. Your friend Kaitara probably came from one of the northern islands where breadfruit can be easily grown - especially on Butarita and Makin.

For a discussion of kainga, utu, boti, etc., see The Evolution of the Gilbertese Boti, where there is also a map of a typical kainga group facing p.28. There are other maps in John Hoeking's Tradition Architecture in the Gilbert Islands (Brisbane, University of Queensland Press, 1989). The best account of the Gilbertese way of life is in Arthur Grimble's Tungaru Traditions (Honolulu, University of Hawaii Press, 1989), which is readily obtainable and should be in most university libraries in the U.S.

Laxton was one of the best administrative service cadets sent to us by the Colonial Office in England after World War II, in which he served in the Army and rose to be a Major. If it were not for an alcohol problem he would have risen rapidly; I remember him best for his translation of Shakespear's Julius Caesar into Gilbertese - none of us old-timers could have done that.

Hoping I have answered everything,

Yours sincerely,

Harry Myrland

42/11 Namatjira Drive,
Weston, A.C.T. 2611,
Australia,
1 March, 1992.

Dr Thomas F. King,
410 Windsor Street,
Silver Spring,
MD 20910-4242, U.S.A.

Dear Dr King,

Yes, Eric Bevington was with me on the first Phoenix Islands Settlement Scheme expedition in 1937 as my assistant but then went on to other administrative work in the Gilberts and Colony headquarters on Banaba, and Gallagher took his place and eventually succeeded me in charge of what was known as PISS, the Officer in Charge being known as OIC, Piss, much to everyone's amusement.

'Erb', as he was called, wrote the book you mentioned some years ago and had it published privately in 1990. One can buy a copy by writing to him at Holmans Cottage, Burley, Hants BH24,4AZ, the published price being £5.10.0, which is very reasonable I think. But unless you send him enough to cover the airmail postage he may send it by seamail which could result in it not reaching you for weeks. The book will give you in detail an accurate account of what Erb did on Nikumaroro.

Gillespie, in one of his TIGHAR reports, mentions that he is in possession of Erb's Diary but that I know nothing of. Maybe you could ask Erb whether he has given it to him. In any case I doubt it containing much more information than is in the book.

I was glad to hear that Mrs Groves has settled down happily in Virginia. I should like to publish her excellent long poem on the traditional history of the I-Kiribati in the series of works on the Gilbertese of which I enclose a copy. The trouble was that I did not know her address and the fact that she has not written it in the official orthography; and I have not got the skill, time or permission to transcribe it.

Books on the I-Kiribati, published for the I-Kiribati

General Editor: H.E. Maude

- (1) *The Evolution of the Gilbertese Boti*, by H.E. Maude. Suva, University of the South Pacific, 1977.
- (2) *The Gilbertese Maneaba*, by H.E. Maude. Suva, University of the South Pacific, 1980.
- (3) *Tungaru Traditions*, by A.F. Grimble. Honolulu, University of Hawaii Press; Melbourne, Melbourne University Press, 1989.
- (4) *Traditional Stories from the Northern Gilberts*, by Ten Tiroba. Translated by Reid Cowell. Suva, University of the South Pacific, 1990.
- (5) *The Story of Karongoa*, told to Tione Baraka by an Unimane of Karongoa n Uea. Translated by G.H. Eastman. Suva, University of the South Pacific, 1991.
- (6) *The Atoll of Nui: its Settlement and People*, by Anetipa of Nui. Translated by Reid Cowell. (In preparation for 1991).
- (7) *Gilbertese Oral Traditions: arranged by subject*. Gilbertese texts, with English translations. (In preparation for 1992).
- (8) *The People of Kiribati: an ethnohistory*, by H. E. Maude. (Due in 1993).

I'm working on Item 6 on my list right now but alas my great friend and colleague died of cancer a fortnight ago, having finished the translation of the traditional material on which it is based. But I expect that the next publication will actually be a new entry, Kambati Uriam's superb thesis on 'The Nature, Function, and History of Oral Tradition in Gilbertese Society', which he finished last week in the post-graduate school of the Australian National University. As I rather feared, I am his external examiner, for I am too old by at least 15 years for such drudgery - normally they never ask anyone over 70.

I'm glad that your novel goes ahead and wish you all success: we have far too few novels on the central equatorial atolls, though I fancy that Melville's Mardi was based on the Gilberts (several old timers in the islands consider it to be his best book).

Like you I have absolutely no interest in where Amelia Earhart was buried or not buried. I just answer as factually as I can all the queries which Gillespie, Goerner, and others, put to me. Its all a frantic waste of time for at 85 it takes ages to draft answers when one's memory is inevitably fickle about details of one's life half a century ago which were quite unimportant even at the time and which one has never given a thought to since

I often wish that Gillespie could find Amelia and her colleague on Nikumaroro because I believe that it would make him happy, and as far as I am concerned I would merely hope that she died a quick and not a lingering death; where it happened does not seem to me of the slightest importance.

With all good wishes, and may your novel be a best-seller,

Yours,

Harry Myer

Dr Harry Maude
42/11 Namatjira Drive
WESTON ACT 2611

6 November 1996

Dr Thomas F. King
410 Windsor Street
Silver Spring MD 20910-4242 USA

Dear Dr King

Your letter of 20 October has duly arrived, and I am glad to find you still interested in the Central Pacific Coral Atolls.

In reply to the first of your two queries: Yes, curiously enough I do seem to remember the low pile of rubble that you mention. As far as my fickle memory of small events 60 years ago, it was in an open space at the other end of the lagoon to the village. I would describe it as a little pile of debris, not much higher than the surrounding earth, and after scratching around and on it I came to the conclusion that it was a rubbish dump used by Arundel's labourers when they spent some years on Nikumaroro planting coconuts for him.

On your second question, Gallagher spoke simple Gilbertese but he certainly had not had either the time nor opportunity to become fluent in the language. As regards using an interpreter he certainly did but so did all Europeans in the Government Service with the single exception of Arthur Grimble; we were advised to use interpreters by the Government, as saving the Gilbertese from going away with a number of misconceptions owing to our using the wrong terminology. I was the Chairman of the Gilbertese Language Examination Committee, but I still used an interpreter for formal occasions.

I took my Honours Degree in Anthropology and Archaeology at Cambridge University so I can appreciate your desire to preserve what is left of interesting sites. Which reminds me that I had a detailed plan to scale of the village on Nikumaroro, including the sites of the various houses and what they were used for. But it has gone to my archive for deposits with the Archival Section of the University of Adelaide owing to my blindness and being past 90 years of age.

I have been spending my retirement in publishing a series of monographs on Gilbertese ethno-history, partly to return to the islanders what my predecessors and I had learned from their grandfathers and which in the hurry to Europeanise themselves they have forgotten and are now most anxious to regain. They have also been found useful by the very few anthropologists and historians who are interested in the traditional past of the islands peoples.

If you should want any yourself you can obtain them from me, or if I am then dead, from the Publications Fellow, Institute of Pacific Studies, University of the South Pacific, PO Box 1168, Suva, Republic of Fiji.

Wishing you all the best in your valuable work.

Sincerely yours,

H. Maude ..

Dr H. Maude

Professor H E Maude
Unit 42
11 Namatjira Drive
WESTON ACT 2611
AUSTRALIA

15 January 1997

Thomas F King, PhD
410 Windsor Street
Silver Spring
MD
20910-4242

Dear Dr King

Sorry not to have answered your letter before but we have a bit of a jam-up here as we are trying to get a Festschrift article off and it is a bit hard when one is blind.

In answer to your questions -

1. We have written to Fiji to send you the monographs direct as it is easier than having to send them from here. The last number on the Atoll of Nui will not be ready for a month or two, but we will send it as soon as possible.
2. The contact name and address you require for Adelaide is -
Susan Woodburn
Special Collection Librarian
Barr Smith Library
University of Adelaide
ADELAIDE SA 5005

stating that the manuscript you want is in the Maude Library

3. As far as I remember the debris you speak of looked like a pile of coral sand. I concluded that it would be from Arundel's workers because they were the only people to live on the island prior to our arrival. If you want further information on the history of the occupation of Gardner Island you could also ask Susan from Adelaide to photocopy the section on Gardner Island in my monograph titled *Report on the Phoenix and Line Islands with Special Reference to the Question of British Sovereignty*. Suva 1940 .

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'H E Maude'.

H E Maude

Mr Harry Maude
42/11 Namatjira Dr
WESTON ACT 2611
AUSTRALIA

26 June 1997

Thomas F. King, PhD
410 Windsor Street
Silver Spring MD 20910-4242
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Dear Dr King

Thanks for your letter of 6 April, 1997. I should have replied long before this but, as you know, my blindness is a handicap and it was constantly being postponed by urgent work connected with our biographical project, which I am anxious to get completed before I depart this life.

To answer your questions -

Question 1

I know nothing about these New Zealanders supposedly on Nikumaroro at the same time as we were; and I cannot see how the two parties (ours and theirs) could have been on such a small atoll at the same time without coming across each other. I can only suggest that you get in touch with E.R. Bevington on the matter.

Question 2

No, I don't remember seeing the hut or the overturned whaleboat; although they would not have interested me very much had I done so as my mind was full of the reason for my visit, i.e. the potential of the island for settlement by Gilbertese, including details of the well-water supply and its capacity to grow coconut palms and other food bearing plants.

My interest in Arundel's workers was mainly due to my great friend Sir Albert Ellis, who as a young man was associated with them. He mentions his work on the three southern Phoenix Islands in one of his books; I think it was called

Adventuring In Coral Seas. I was also a friend of Arundel's daughter, Mrs Sydney Aris, so called because she was born on Sydney Island, later known as Manra to our settlers. I deposited all of the many volumes of Arundel's Diaries in the National Library of Australia here in Canberra.

Wishing you all the best.

Yours,

Harry Maude
Harry Maude

THOMAS F. KING, PHD
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E-MAIL TFKING106@AOL.COM

September 12, 1997

Mr. Harry Maude
42/11 Namatjira Drive
WESTON ACT 2611
AUSTRALIA

Dear Mr. Maude:

It is my turn to apologise for my long delay in replying to your letter of 26 June. Quite a lot has been happening here, but that's no excuse for failing to express my gratitude for the information you've shared with us.

I hope this letter finds you and your wife in good health. I've recently received all of your recent books and monographs, and am reading them with interest.

I would very much like to come visit you, both to pay my respects and to solicit some first-hand observations from you, but finances don't permit this. As it happens, though, one of our colleagues on the Earhart search will be in your vicinity in late November, and I wonder if it might be all right for her to visit with you awhile. Catherine Holloway is an Australian marine biologist and diver who works on the *Nai'a*, the vessel that transports us between Fiji and Nikumaroro on our occasional peregrinations. She'll be visiting her home and family toward the end of the year, and would very much like to stop in and chat with you awhile if you're willing. You'll find her a charming young woman with an extremely quick mind and a strong historical bent. I hope you will be able to meet with her.

Incidentally, one of the things that has generated some excitement lately has been the discovery, in the archives on Tarawa, of a file of wireless messages between Gallagher and various authorities on Ocean Island, Tarawa, and in Suva in 1940, in which Gallagher reports the discovery of human bones associated with women's shoes, remarkably confirming a story that was reported in rather garbled form by an ex U.S. Coast Guardsman to a California newspaper in the early '60s. Ms. Holloway will be able to bring along a copy of this file and read it to you; we'd be most interested in your reaction. Eric Bevington was quite astonished when we sent him a copy. We think that the file represents material that remained on Nikumaroro and hence survived the War, probably being recovered by Laxton or another post-war visitor and

taken to Tarawa. The correspondence indicates that Gallagher at the direction of the Secretary of the High Commissioner (Henry Harrison Vaskess according to Eric Bevington), and under orders to keep the matter confidential, dispatched the bones and associated material for Suva aboard the Nimanoa. They were empounded on Tarawa by the medical officer, Isaac. There follows some peculiar correspondence between Gallagher and Isaac, who pronounced the bones to be those of an elderly Polynesian and then dispatched them on to Fiji. Eric Bevington recalls Isaac well and has evinced no confidence in his opinion, so we are very interested in tracking down the bones -- which Gallagher himself thought might be those of Amelia Earhart. Thus far, however, we have been unable to find them in a search of the Fiji Museum's skeletal collections. In any event, I think you'll find the wireless messages interesting, if only as reminders of departed colleagues. We will be returning to Nikumaroro next fall, incidentally, and this time plan to replace the memorial plaque on Gallagher's grave marker.

Please accept my best wishes, and thanks for your continuing patience with my inquiries.

Sincerely,

Subj: Da knee bone's connected to da...thighbone
Date: 98-02-26 17:45:26 EST
From: naia@is.com.fj (Cat Holloway)
To: TFKing106@aol.com
CC: TIGHAR1@aol.com

Hi again Tom/Ric,

I'm about to go to sea just thought I'd send this message again incase you didn't get it the other day. We've been having a few email hiccups so I thought I should play it safe - so sorry if you did get it already. Let me know if it arrived OK. Thanks

Luv Cat

Bula, G'day and warm greetings to you deflected but not defeated souls searching for some cute dumb wacky broad who flew around the world without knowing how to use a radio...

Maybe, just maybe, I have some heartening news. Then again, maybe all I have is enough to inspire more international wild goose chasing. I'll leave that decision up to you.

Well, to set the scene a bit, Harry and Honor Maude are living in a very new, very nice apartment in a large retirement complex in Canberra. Nurses and doctors are mere seconds away if they need anything but they have almost all the privacy of a regular residential apartment block. Despite being hampered by fatigue, severe eyesight and hearing problems, both are in fine health considering they are both in their 90s, very lucid in conversation for the most part and still openly showing enormous enthusiasm and fondness for their time in the Gilbertese Islands and throughout the Pacific. You will notice a few inconsistencies between your historic details and Harry and Honor's version of things. Books, handicrafts and memorabilia from this era is neatly in place on the walls and display cases of what will quite likely be their final home.

The conversation was pretty casual in tone but revolved almost entirely around the questions you, Tom, prepared, and with the political insight that you, Ric, provided. Thanks! I recorded most of our interview as well as taking notes, however Harry's weak voice is especially difficult (almost impossible) to decipher from tape so I have not sent the (very poor) recording. Every so often Harry would fade a little from fatigue and Honor would rouse the poor old bloke again and remind him what part of the story he was up to. I have edited out the side tracking, pausing and repetition to include just what I figured might possibly be relevant to your search.

✓ Tom, they spoke highly of you and your correspondence with them. They appeared honored that you paid such keen attention to the detail of the islands and the people and were pleased to be of assistance to you again. I explained that I was sent as your proxy and asked to be excused for lacking the historical perspective you have but that didn't seem to bother them at all. - it only gave them more opportunities to talk about times and places they obviously regard as remarkable by anyone's standards.

The thought, however, that Amelia Earhart could have crashed on Nikumaroro seemed rather ridiculous at the beginning of our morning together. They are followers of the Majuro theory which, Harry said, was obviously valid as "several hundred people had seen her there" during the war. On the other hand, after the intriguing telegrams were read to them, they both conceded that "it could be Amelia". Anyhow, Harry and Honor Maude's private Amelia Earhart theories aren't going to get you TIGHARITES very far so lets get on with summarizing the relevant bits of our meeting...

(Incidentally, they also asked if you are able to put them back in touch with a Carol Osborne, a Lockheed Historian from Santa Barbara who they say is a friend of Amelia's sister. What's her connection here - and with Harry Maude? I wasn't able to get an unambiguous answer to this. He said Carol was a rival of yours? Regardless, I said I would ask you for her contact details and pass them on if you had them.)

So, the world according to Harry Maude. I have put direct quotes with quote marks and either paraphrased the rest in the first person or summarized in the second person.

What were your feelings about the PISS? Confident or worried? Did the scheme have detractors? How did you counter them?

"I knew the islands very well and was completely confident of the scheme"

I had ten years in the Gilberts. Most people but not everyone was enthusiastic about the scheme.

"I don't know that there were detractors but there were many who were indifferent." No real detractors. Political rivalry within the colonial hierarchy was the only real distraction from a good solution to the terrible problem of overpopulation and "grievous impoverishment of the islanders". The islanders were especially keen to make it work. "They badly needed elbow room to develop." It was considered that their talent for fine Gilbertese handicraft production would be an effective way for the settlers to earn an income.

Why was the settlement scheme approved by the higher authorities?

Apart from the issue of overpopulation and impoverishment, there was enormous rivalry between the American and British for control of the Phoenix islands. "As far as the government was concerned, the main thing was to keep the Americans out."

"But there was a snag."

Both nations were seeking a stopover point in the Pacific for refueling en route from LA, San Francisco or Vancouver to Australia/New Zealand. For the British representatives in power the primary goal was to beat the Americans to Canton. In fact the Americans (unwittingly) helped the Brits beat their countrymen to Canton. The Brits, without any means of transport of their own, called up the private shipping company, the Matson Line, already working the region, and simply asked them as a favor to deviate from their route slightly in order to give a few men and some supplies a ride to Canton Island. Matson happily and innocently agreed (not knowing what a political faux pas they were making) and so with the help of Americans, a team of four Brits "beat the Americans to the game" on Canton. But they were later "on Canton at the same time as the Americans."

How was the government organized? What were the key jobs in the 30s and 40s?

Maude had been transferred from Fiji to Zanzibar "on health grounds" by the Colonial Secretary of Fiji, Justin Barton, who Maude believed "saw a rival in me".

In Honor's words: " Health grounds was a meaningless excuse - so they sent us to Zanzibar where there was very bad malaria! Hah..."

However, in the Census Report of 1931, Maude had suggested the settlement of several islands. It attracted the positive attention of the Colonial Office in London (in charge of 37 colonies) - and in particular Professor Haddon (of Anthropology at Cambridge University) and the Resident Commissioner of the Gilbert Islands, Jack Barley, who wanted Maude back. So, after just six months work in Zanzibar, Maude was brought back to the Pacific for the position of Chief Lands Commissioner and sent on the first expedition to Nikumaroro/Gardner Island. His assignment was to supervise the settlement of several islands - Gardner, Hull and Sydney. Apparently, the High Commissioner for the Pacific (in Fiji but cannot remember name) was also a "great supporter" of Maude. Justin Barton

sought the High Commissioner's aid in vetoing Maude's return but he refused to help Barton and told Maude (of Barton), "My word, he was wild!"

What was your first impression of Nikumaroro? How did it compare with the other islands?

"Niku was the best of the three in my opinion - and in the opinion of Gallagher, who was my assistant."

"Nikumaroro was green and beautiful, a lovely Buka forest, beautiful lagoon..."

"There was good water too. We dug at all the islands and Nikumaroro was the best. For three days the water would run salty and then real water would come."

"There were a lot of birds - boobys, noddys - and a lot of coconut crabs all over the place. They would climb the trees, the buka trees, coconut trees and the pandanus and they would drop down on top of you - at night particularly. And these crabs are strong enough to break a man's arm, very strong."

What did the islanders in your party think of Gardner Island?

"Oh, they thought it was a wonderful place, they thought it would be a good home."

"We built our first encampment in a forest of Buka trees."

"Sitting around the fire at night they discussed the island and decided it was definitely the home of Nei Manganibuka." Nei Mang. was a Gilbertese goddess with special navigational powers and the responsibility for teaching the islanders to navigate. Her mythical homeland was a coral atoll covered in Buka trees called Nikumaroro. Hence Gardner became Nikumaroro.

"I knew these old men well and loved these men - we talked long into the night."

You tied to the stern of the Norwich City and then made your way to shore. What do you recall of this wreck? Was there a lot of contact? Were there materials or items the settlers could have salvaged and used?

"No, there was nothing they could have used."

Maude goes on to talk about how the ship was wrecked but maintains that there were no useful parts or materials for salvaging by the settlers.

You and Bevington saw signs of previous settlement. You told Dr King you recalled piles of sand. What else do you recall? What did the piles look like?

"Oh Yes, Albert Ellice and his crowd had been there for months in 1860 planting coconuts."

(Wasn't it later, like the 1890s and wasn't it John T Arundel? Cat)

*The piles of sand were about "the size of this room"
(approx 25sq metres)*

"They could have been anything I suppose. I assumed they were from the planters digging rubbish deposits."

Harry and Honor discussed the previous guano digging projects on Nikumaroro and agree that none was found.

In correspondence with Dr King, you do not recall the NZ survey party on the island when you and Gallagher arrived in 1938. According to their report...camped on Nutiran. Could you have missed seeing them and not known they were there?

"NO, it's impossible! It's only a small island, there's no way we could have missed them. The only missed us by a few days."

Honor raises the fact that Bevington walked around the island. They agree again that they would certainly have seen the NZ survey party if they were there.

What was Gerald Gallagher like? Was this somewhat of a culture shock for him?

"Gallagher was a great enthusiast, a wonderful man.

"He jumped straight in the sea and ran ashore over the coral and stones."

Gallagher was apparently sick for a very long time before the request

came for emergency medical help. Maude recalls a Dr Macpherson attending to Gallagher in his last days but being unable to save him.

"He was too far gone with pneumonia and a bad appendix."

And Bevington?

"Bevington was not a great enthusiast. He was a civil servant and unsuitable for this assignment as he lacked tolerance."

Do you remember a medical officer in Tarawa named Isaac who changed his name in 1941 to Verrier? He Died in Suva in the 60s.

"Yes, I remember him well. I believe he later lived on Taveuni (Fiji) and worked there as a doctor."

"He built his house there over a stream, so a stream ran right through his house."

Isaac kept some kind of listing of Fijians. I am unsure exactly what Maude meant by a listing but it seemed to me he meant some kind of genetic listing of the various types or tribes of Fijians and their descent.

During the Japanese occupation of Tarawa, Isaac was a doctor there. After the Japanese departed, they left behind a stamping machine. Isaac made a lot of money as a philatelist by addressing envelopes to himself by courtesy of the Japanese Emperor. *(I'm sorry Tom, I didn't fully understand this and was unable to get a clear explanation from Harry. Please excuse my ignorance on the workings of philatelists - I hope it makes more sense to you.)*

The reading of the Tarawa Telegram files...

Showed Bevington and he was amazed. What are your thoughts?

"Well, the benedictine bottle was probably mine!"
(Laughter)

Harry and Honor were both intrigued by the telegrams and seemed genuinely surprised to hear of them. They had not known any such bones or artefacts were found. They showed recognition of the various characters and of the *Sulimanoa*. They both chuckled loudly when I read the telegram from Isaac about assuming the package was meant for him. However, they had no real insight into why Gallagher might have crossed out the section of the following message. Although Maude did concede that Isaac was a "difficult

man". Maude did not know if Gallagher and Isaac knew each other well or how they got along.

They believe that with the Earhart disappearance being "in the air", Gallagher would have badly wanted the bones to be Amelia's. Maude said he would not have had any more authority or knowledge "than you or I" about physiology to be able to discern the sex of the skeleton or the age or nature of the bones found.

It did not seem strange to Maude that such a find was not mentioned to any foreign power, especially America, at the time. They would want to keep it top secret until they really knew for sure the truth and could claim the significant discovery as their own. They would not have wanted the Americans stepping in to take over a potentially important investigation. Maude could not remember who the US representative in Fiji would have been at the time. He said though that there probably would have been one.

Harry said that he had "not the faintest idea" who had the fateful camping trip at Nikumaroro. The bones could be "anyone's" but most likely a laborer from the coconut planting party of late in the previous century. He also said that several yachts passed by or stopped at Nikumaroro and left behind various items that could account for the sextant box, bottle and shoe - maybe even the bones too. Harry and Honor also discussed the Loran station but decided the timing was wrong. Then they both admit with a smile, "well, it could be Amelia!"

What do you think might have happened to these bones and artifacts after they reached Fiji?

The Secretary for the Western Pacific High Commission, the person who sent the second last telegram which confirms that the bones etc did arrive in Fiji, was a man named Vascus (TOM, I am unsure of this spelling!). Maude was Vascus' assistant for seven years and believed he knew Vascus and his style of work very well. Vascus would have decided the issue would go nowhere useful and would have stamped "NFA" on the box of bones and bits - meaning No Further Action. He, or his assistant in Fiji, would have then filed them away somewhere with the rest of the colonial records. When the colony closed down, these items would have been transported in High Commission containers for government property to the High Commission headquarters in England.

"Probably to the Public Record Office repository in London."

"I bet your bottom dollar they are preserved - if they made it to England."

"It should be an easy thing to find out!"

Vascus, meanwhile, went to Hawaii to work for the American Intelligence service at Pearl Harbor. He was liaison with the US forces (4th amphibious corps USS Maryland, Maude thinks). He wrote a brochure on the Gilbertese people to help the troops understand local conditions in preparation for the Battle of Tarawa. Vascus then went on to Pitcairn Island (???Maude is not sure about what happened there.)

Also, Maude believes that Isaac/Verrier, would almost certainly have souvenired some of the pieces from bones and artifacts shipment. Maude believes he would not have been able to resist the possibility that the bones could be valuable and he would have kept any items he took for a long time. Maude suggests we investigate Isaac/Verrier's belongings/remains in either Suva or Taveuni.

So, could Amelia Earhart and Fred Noonan have landed on Nikumaroro?

Well, I wouldn't have thought the extensive aerial search following their disappearance could have missed them if they did?

What would you like the PISS to be remembered for?

"It was a great success for both the British government and the Gilbertese people at a time when those distances were so great."

And there you have it. I do hope I have been clear enough. Please contact me with any questions you have. In two days I leave for a 10 day trip. But any queries that come in while I'm at sea, I will be sure to answer during our three day turn around period then.

Luv & Fishes to all - and to your mothers

Cat

Headers

Return-Path: <naia@is.com.fj>

Received: from rly-za01.mx.aol.com (rly-za01.mail.aol.com [172.31.36.97]) by air-za03.mail.aol.com (v39.9) with SMTP: Thu, 26 Feb 1998 17:45:26 1900

Received: from homer.is.com.fj (homer.is.com.fj [202.62.124.238])

by rly-za01.mx.aol.com (8.8.5/8.8.5/AOL-4.0.0)

with ESMTP id RAA18420;

Thu, 26 Feb 1998 17:45:18 -0500 (EST)

Received: from naia.is.com.fj (dialup12.is.com.fj [202.62.124.12]) by homer.is.com.fj (8.8.7/8.7.1) with SMTP id KAA22163; Fri, 27 Feb 1998 10:38:56 +1200 (FJT)

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Cultural Environmental Planning and Assessment, Education and Training

March 13, 1998

Harry E. Maude
Rooms 40-42
Mountain View Hostel
PO Box 61
Narrabundah ACT 2604
AUSTRALIA

Dear Mr. Maude,

Thank you so much for the kindness that you and Honor showed to my colleague Cat Holloway when she visited you recently. The information you gave her is invaluable, and we all very much appreciate your generosity and hospitality.

Our work goes on. We recently visited Kanton Island in search of an aircraft engine that was found elsewhere in the Phoenixes in the early 1970s and brought to the American base on Kanton; it might have been one of Earhart's, but unfortunately our Air Force did a pretty effective job of burying all its left-overs when it pulled out in '78. They didn't do a very good job of cleaning up the pollution, however, which worries us considerably given that there are now about 60 I Kiribati citizens living there. They invited us into their very fine *maneaba* and were as gracious as they always seem to be, but we fear that they're all being slowly poisoned by the stuff that's seeping out of old transformers and paint cans all around them.

I should mention that I passed on your new address to Dr. Ward Goodenough of the University of Pennsylvania, who you may recall from his work in Kiribati in the 1950s, and his long involvement in Pacific anthropology. Dr. Goodenough was my wife's dissertation advisor, and is a long-time friend. Teng Koata was one of his major informants when he

worked on Onotoa, so I shared Gallagher's 23 Sept. 1940 wireless message about Koata with him. He spoke highly of Koata, and asked to be remembered to you.

I have a few questions that I'd like to ask, if I may, in follow-up to Ms. Holloway's interview.

In the wireless messages found on Tarawa, the messages of 15 Oct. 40 and 26 Oct. 40, from the Secretary for the Western Pacific High Commission, are signed "Secretary." We understand this to have been a Mr. Vaskess. On 28 April 40 a message from the same source is signed "Secoma." Is this some kind of acronym, or is it an actual person's name? We're trying to track down everyone who may have had anything to do with the infamous bones. It would be terribly embarrassing to spend time chasing someone named Secoma, only to find that it means "Secretary of Medical Affairs" or some such thing.

We're still trying to understand the political currents that surrounded the PISS and Gallagher's time on the island. In this context, I'm puzzled by the fact that you weren't made aware of the bones discovery seems curious. In view of the competition for landing sites in the Phoenix group during the '30s, and (I surmise) concern about relations with the U.S. in 1940-41, during the Battle of Britain and the debate on the Lend-Lease Act in the Congress, I can appreciate the government's reluctance to share information about the discovery with the Americans, but why not with the father of the PISS himself?

Dr. Jock Macpherson accompanied Gallagher to Nikumaroro when he returned there from Fiji and died, despite Macpherson's best efforts. We understand that Macpherson specialized in forensic medicine, so we naturally wonder if his trip had anything to do with the bones discovery. Does this seem likely to you, or was it -- as we've assumed -- standard practice for him to travel around the colony? And do you have any idea where Macpherson's papers might have wound up? We'd dearly like to find out what he did on the island in the days after Gallagher's demise.

We're still deeply puzzled about the New Zealand survey party. According to their official report, they sailed from Suva on 24 November 1938 aboard *M.V. Yanawai*, and arrived at Nikumaroro on 30 November. They were joined the next day, apparently, by *H.M.S. Leander*, whose

crew helped them ashore. They completed unloading by 6 December and began survey work on 8 December. They accurately report the arrival of yourself, Gerald Gallagher, and the ten-man working party on 21 December. They remained on the island, according to their report, until 5 February when they departed aboard *Yanawai*. Yet you never encountered them, and you apparently had no forewarning of their presence on the island. Of course, you sailed out of Ocean Island on 8 December, so you wouldn't have had personal knowledge of the New Zealanders' departure from Suva two weeks earlier, but I'm left wondering about relations between your government and New Zealand. Would the New Zealanders -- or the Royal Navy -- not have kept you informed of the movement of their people through your jurisdiction?

The New Zealanders camped on Nutiran (hence the name), so they were not physically on the same site where you and your party set up camp, on the land subsequently called Ritiati, but it's hard to imagine that they would have been so inconspicuous that you wouldn't have noticed them. I realize that since you DIDN'T see them, there's no way for you to know WHY you didn't, if they were there, but I just wonder what kinds of speculations you might have about this. When you spoke to Ms. Holloway it appeared that you got the impression that the New Zealanders' visit overlapped with yours and Eric Bevington's inspection in October, 1937. This is not accurate; it was your arrival with Gallagher and the first working party in December 1938 that came in the midst of the New Zealanders' work.

It now looks like we will not get back to Nikumaroro until the fall of 1999. We hope to get to Tarawa before then to spend time in the archives. I wish I could make it to Australia to visit you, but funding, alas, doesn't permit it at the moment.

Thanks again for your kindness to and cooperation with Ms. Holloway. I hope this finds you and your wife well and as busy as always. I'm very much enjoying the literature that you've added to my library.

Best regards,

Harry Maude
Rooms 40-42
Mountain View Hostel
NARRABUNDAH ACT 2604

3 April 1998

Dear Dr King

Your letter of March 13 1998 has arrived at our new address, where we have settled in comfortably now and have got the correspondence more or less under control.

I am glad to hear that I was able to give Mr Holloway some information of use to you, but I do not now recollect much concerning what it was.

It is curious how the mind of an old man in his nineties is fairly good on past events, but has little recollection of the immediate present.

I am upset to hear of the pollution left on Canton Island, though it does not surprise me; people engaged on a war footing in foreign lands have notoriously little concern with the preservation of the environment.

Thank you for passing on information to Ward Goodenough; we are good correspondents when occasion demands it, but allow years to pass without a communication when it doesn't.

Here are my answers to your questions, in so far as I know them.

The New Zealand run activities in the Phoenix are an interesting sideline and I have some correspondence on the subject, though their activities came rather too late to have any affect. In the first place, the High Commissioner for the Western Pacific had already bought the freehold rights to the group from Burns Philp, leaving them little room to manoeuvre; then the war intervened and the preparations for it postponed all further activities for them. After the war, they became unnecessary, as planes could now fly across the Pacific without stopping.

I give my replies to your queries herewith, insofar as I know them:

(1) I do not remember the word 'Secoma' being used in the High Commission Office, but if it was it would almost certainly have been by Vaskess, as Secretary.

(2) When I took over as Officer-in-Charge of Phoenix Islands Settlement Scheme, it was agreed that I should not be worried by matters not immediately connected with my work; and the 'bones' would have come under that category.

(3) Macpherson was for several years my best friend and I do not think that he was interested in the question of the 'bones'. Macpherson's papers would be in the Medical Department files, in the Fiji Government Archives. So far as I know, Macpherson spent his time in reading and writing.

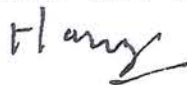
(4) I was fully engaged in the work of colonising the Phoenix Islands found to be suitable, and not concerned with the visits of New Zealand, American or any other shipping. The New Zealanders, however, were concerned with my work, which largely nullified their efforts, and certainly would have contacted me had they been on the same island. As I have already stated, this was not the case.

(5) I certainly saw the notices put up by the New Zealand party on Orona, reserving all the land planted with coconuts for an aerodrome and landing ground, and may have seen similar signs on Nikamaroro.

I paid no attention to them, but I proceeded to mark out and erect my village and partitioned the land among my settlers according to my instructions. I never heard any demur at my actions, nor in fact was there any as far as I am aware.

I hope that all goes well with you and send my sincere good wishes for the success of your work.

Yours very sincerely



Harry Maude

Thomas F. King, PhD

410 Windsor Street, Silver Spring, MD 20910-4242, U.S.A.

Telephone (301) 585-9572 Facsimile (301) 589-5049 E-mail tfking106@aol.com

Cultural Environmental Planning and Assessment, Education and Training

December 20, 1998

Dear Mr. Maude,

With best wishes for the holidays, I wanted to let you know that we've recently been pouring through the archives of the Western Pacific High Commission, and come upon your correspondence with Sir Harry Luke after the death of Gerald Gallagher. It was good to learn that you were responsible for the plaque honoring Gallagher, which we plan to restore to his grave on our next trip to Nikumaroro (now planned for fall of 2000).

The archives also provided a wealth of information on the Phoenix Islands Settlement Scheme in general, and on Gallagher's life and death -- plenty to serve as the basis for the book I still intend to write on the subjects. I appreciate the opportunity that you've given me to participate vicariously in a remarkable piece of history.

Best wishes to you and Mrs. Maude for a comfortable and productive new year.

Sincerely,

18.1.99

Harry Maude
C/- Mountain View Hostel
PO Box 61
Narrabundah ACT 2604
Australia

Thomas King PhD
410 Windsor St
Silver Spring MD 209010-4242
USA

Dear Dr King,

Thank you for your letter of 20.1.98 which has arrived at a propitious time since, for a wonder I am able to acknowledge it. My wife and I, both over 90, are now living in the Mountain View Hostel for the Aged and I doubt either of us lasting much longer, as we are both getting very frail.

It was a pleasure being able to help you with your queries, and I wish you the best of good fortune producing something of permanent value out of them.

Wishing you all the best,
Yours ever,

Harry Maude
Harry Maude.


Alaric Maude
26 Blyth Street
Parkside (Adelaide)
South Australia 5063
Australia

15 July 1999

Dear Dr King

I am replying, on behalf of my father, to your letter to him of 16 September last year, which I discovered on a visit to him last week. He is reasonably well physically, but unable to read or write, and is less and less able to cope with correspondence. I am unsure as to whether you have received a reply. I will send this letter to someone who can see if my father is able to answer your question, as his memory is still prodigious, but if nothing happens I am sure you will understand.

Yours sincerely



Alaric Maude

Dear Mr. Maude:

Thank you for your letter on behalf of your father. Your father did, indeed, respond by my September 16, 1999 letter, and I've been reluctant to tax him by writing back. I'm delighted to hear that he is still in reasonably good health, and hope your mother is as well. They are both treasured by all of us involved in Pacific studies, and I'm sure I speak for hundreds of others, at least, in wishing them both all the best in this life and whatever may come after.

Your father might like to know that I have just returned from Fiji, where I fell in with Foua Tofiga of Tuvalu, who worked in the Western Pacific High Commission offices when your father was organizing the Phoenix Islands Settlement Scheme, and who asked to be remembered to him. He may also like to know that I'm finally starting work on a history of the Phoenix Scheme, built around a biography of Gerald Gallagher.

I'm deeply grateful to your father and mother for all the help they've given us, as well as for their great contributions to Pacific studies. Thank you very much for keeping me apprised of their situation.

Sincerely
Thomas F. King

42/11 Namatjira Drive,
Weston, A.C.T.2611,
Australia,
4 May, 1990.

Dr Richard E. Gillespie,
Executive Director, Tighar,
1121 Arundel Drive,
WILMINGTON,
Delaware 19808,
U. S. A.

Dear Dr Gillespie,

Sorry about the delay in replying to your letter of 15 March. Blindness is not helping me to cope with the correspondence, as it means that I cannot see what I am typing; so I must ask you to excuse the numerous errors. Things will be, I hope, a lot better when my new gadgets arrive from the Royal Blind Society, who are truly marvellous people. At 83 one cannot afford to give up, or one dies very rapidly, so I have a book just published, one at the publishers and one on the eve of completion.

I must admit that the sensational reports in the press on your recent expedition to Nikumaroro were greeted with a good deal of incredulity and mirth: an Irish magistrate working for New Zealand embarking on a rowing boat from the Phoenix Islands for Fiji and clutching a sacking bag full of bones. 'Such stuff as dreams are made on'.

Our opinion was not changed by the arrival a bit later of an article called 'Tracing Amelia's footsteps' in a Journal entitled This World. To comment on some of the statements in this gem of journalese would take pages.

I am bound to say, however, that my strictures do not apply to your own article entitled 'Bones' for here you have detailed the earlier versions of the Nikumaroro story which appeared in the newspapers, but end with a critical appraisal which I find unexceptionable except for one or two minor points.

Dr D.C.M. Macpherson was our best friend (I speak for my wife, Honor, as well as myself). We came out from England together in 1929 and our close friendship continued until he died. I visited him frequently when we were both lonely in Suva during the war: his wife lived in Scotland and mine was evacuated to Rotorua when the Japanese were expected. I find it difficult to understand therefore, why he never once, in our interminable reminiscences, spoke of Gallagher's 'Bones'. Incidentally, Mac was the Assistant Director of Medical Services for the Colony of Fiji and not Chief Pathologist for the Western Pacific High Commission.

Gallagher was presumably an Irishman by descent, as you state, but he was English to his fingertips. I doubt if he had ever been to Ireland; his mother lived in England and his brother was a Clergyman in the Church of England..

I took a prospecting group of Gilbertese to Gardner Atoll, where we stayed from 13-16 October, 1937, our task being to explore the island thoroughly, dig wells and evaluate its potential for colonization. It seems curious that nobody saw anything worth reporting when going round the island so recently after Earhart's landing, or on my subsequent visits to land the first settlers, and later still to see how they were getting on and arrange with them to return to the Gilberts and bring back their wives and children..

You might think it advisable before embarking on your second expedition to send someone reliable to interview any ex-Nikumaroro settlers now resident in the Solomon Islands. With any luck he ought to obtain some information of value; and it is possible that he might even find someone who remembered where the bones were buried. For a reasonable recompense he might even be induced to accompany the expedition and point out where to dig.

What baffles me is why America Earhart or her companion should have died. There was plenty of food on the atoll, any amount of fish on the reef and in the lagoon, and coconuts to drink or eat on the ground or on the trees. The succulent leaves of the boi (Portulaca) makes a very nutritious vegetable salad and can be sucked for moisture.. The mtea, the ruku and the wao are also, I believe, growing wild on the atoll. The water is brackish, but drinkable for a period in an emergency.. The climate of Nikumaroro is excellent, despite Linda Puig,; not hot like Enderbury and indeed cooler than some of the Gilberts, where I lived for some 20 years and found the temperature delightful.

One wonders too why, as she apparently sent radio messages for three days, she did not say where she was. Presumably she had a chart. Taking all factors into account it would seem that if Earhart and her companion crash-landed on the Nikumaroro reef one was killed on landing and the other too injured to do more than send a few messages before dying.

I enclose a copy of some historical notes on Nikumaroro which I wrote in the late 1930s or early 1940s. You will see from these that ~~that~~ the skeleton found on the atoll is pre-1937 was almost certainly that of a Polynesian man, as Goerner states, for the islanders known to have resided there were Polynesian workers from Niue Island.. I also send a list of documentation on the early days of the Settlement Scheme, including a number of letters from Gallagher, in case you want to check everything for a mention of a skeleton (or bones). The only correspondence we sent to the Resident Commissioner on Ocean Island, for transmission

to the W.P.H.C. and eventually to London were formal Progress Reports, thus what you were looking for would not be among the material in the Colonial Office archives, but might quite possibly be contained in one of Gallagher's chatty letters - which were anything but formal.

This Phoenix Islands Settlement Scheme material is in the archives of the University of Adelaide, Adelaide, South Australia, 5001, and the archivist in charge is Susan Woodburn. Access is not restricted.

Yours sincerely,

Harry E. Maude
H.E. Maude.



March 15, 1990

Dr. Harry Maude
42/11 Namatjira Drive
Weston, A.C.T. 2611
Australia

Dear Dr. Maude:

Our colleague Dr. Thomas King was kind enough to send us a copy of your recent (19 February 1990) letter to him regarding Nikumaroro. While we share Tom's broad interest in the island and its past, our knitting is specifically aviation history, and our primary concern must be the evaluation of Nikumaroro as the possible landing site of the Amelia Earhart aircraft.

You may be able to help us in that evaluation through your extensive experience with the Gilbertese people. Included in the enclosed newsletter is a short article entitled "Bones" in which we have laid out a thorny bit of conflicting testimony concerning human remains allegedly found on Nikumaroro during the early days of the Settlement Scheme. Although you have said you have no direct knowledge of such a story, your opinion of our hypothesis concerning what may have actually happened would be of great interest to us. Thank you.

Sincerely yours,

Richard E. Gillespie
Executive Director

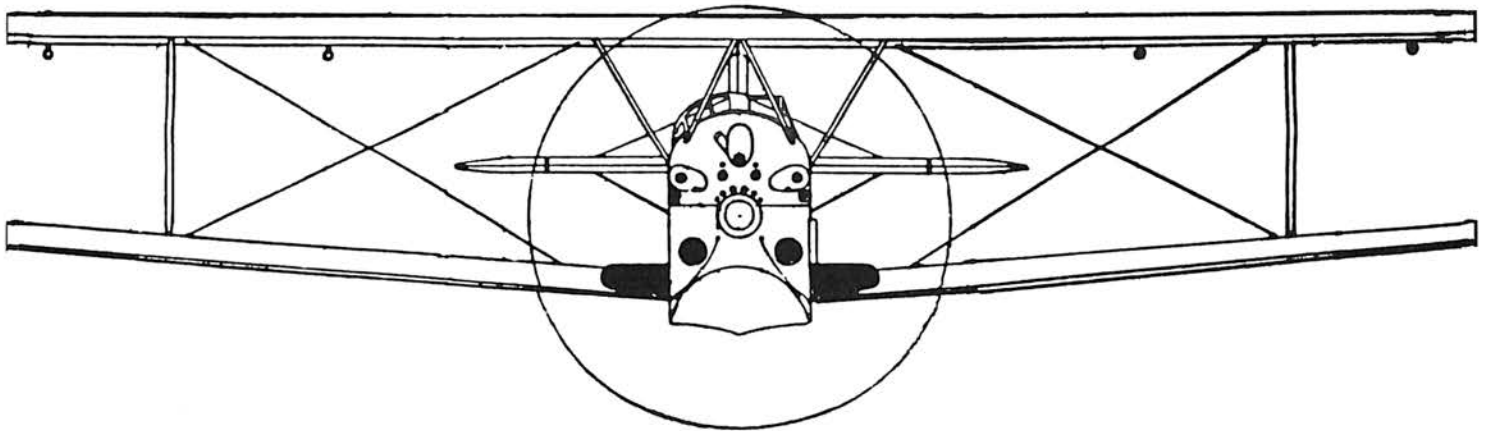
REG/am
encl.

cc: Dr. Thomas F. King

TIGHAR TRACKS

A PUBLICATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL GROUP FOR HISTORIC AIRCRAFT RECOVERY

XVIII



PROJECT MIDNIGHT GHOST

EXPEDITION XVIII: April 16 — May 16, 1990

Spring comes late to Washington County, Maine. When most of us are enjoying the blooming of dogwood and azaleas, Downeasters are watching the ice finally leave the lakes and the last of the winter snows shrink in the shadow of the wooded hills. In late April the loons return — not just the feathered variety but, for the past five years, another kind known locally as “those people from away looking for that French airplane.”

Seventeen TIGHAR expeditions have made the search for l’Oiseau Blanc so much a fixture of the local scene that the thrill of nearing the long sought resolution of the

mystery is tempered by a paradoxical sadness that soon it may all be over. But before Project Midnight Ghost becomes a matter of monuments and reunions, there must be more hard logic and hard work, more cold searchers swinging cold steel, and more cold, hard cash to fund the effort.

TIGHAR members are encouraged to participate in Expedition XVIII as volunteer searchers (see box on page three). This special double issue of TIGHAR Tracks will review the new developments and discoveries which make this spring’s expedition one we’re looking forward to with great excitement.



Reviewing the Evidence, Paris, Jan. 1990. L to R: Clément-Pascal Meunier, author of the French government report; Jean Taquet, Director, TIGHAR Europe; Richard Gillespie, Executive Director, TIGHAR. TIGHAR Photo by P. Thrasher

The Strange Case of the Strange Case

It was during Expedition XI (April-May 1987) that Thomas Lynch of Wakefield, Massachusetts read of TIGHAR's work in the Boston papers. He called to say that he had a cigarette case allegedly found in the late 1920's "in the woods near the lakes north of Machias, Maine." What prompted his call was the opinion of an antique dealer who had told him that the case was probably either French or German, manufactured during the early years of this century, and of a style popular with aviators during World War I. Mr. Lynch generously donated the case to TIGHAR's investigation.

Upon examination it was apparent that this was, indeed, a very strange item to come out of the Maine woods. Attempts to confirm its origins only added to the mystery. The birds on the cover are storks, commonly associated with World War I aviation in France through the famous Stork Squadrons (*Escadrilles Cigognes*); however, the motif is distinctly Oriental with tiny, crudely rendered markings on the inside of the case, corresponding to Japanese phonetic characters of *no discernible meaning*. As for the case's probable place of manufacture, the Smithsonian and a number of other art conservation laboratories came up dry. So we sent the case to France to see if any help could be had there.

Through the efforts of the Committee for the Memory of Nungesser and Coli of the prestigious Aéroclub de France, the cigarette case was recently identified by M. Maurice Gruson (whose credentials fill up half of his stationery) as being "*surement un article de fabrication français*" made between 1900 and 1920. Because the chain of possession of this artifact is not documented, it can never be diagnostic; that is, proof in itself that l'Oiseau Blanc crashed in Maine. Confirmation that it is, indeed, French and of the correct period was, however, enough to prompt the Committee for the Memory of Nungesser and Coli to commission a thorough review of TIGHAR's work to date.



Over the Coals

France takes her heroes seriously. Imagine, if you will, the United States government using federal funds to conduct a two year, in-depth study of the disappearance of, say, Amelia Earhart, more than fifty years after the fact. And yet that is precisely what the government of France did in 1981. Prompted by allegations that the flight of the White Bird ended in an ignominious crash in the English Channel soon after takeoff, the Bureau of Civil Aviation of the Ministry of Transportation (equivalent to the U.S. FAA or British CAA) launched a full investigation headed by General Engineer Clément-Pascal Meunier. In 1984 an exhaustive 96 page report concluded that the aircraft was last seen departing the west coast of Ireland, on course and in good weather, and that subsequent research into its fate should focus on North America.

It was M. Meunier, author of the French government report, who met with TIGHAR representatives in Paris, January 16, 1990, to evaluate the evidence Project Midnight Ghost has gathered over the last five years. On his recommendation the Committee for the Memory of Nungesser and Coli has now officially endorsed TIGHAR's work, pledged to conduct fund-raising in France on TIGHAR's behalf, and plans to send its two senior officers, Fernand Andreani (Legion of Honor holder, retired Concorde captain, holder of the Paris-New York speed record for scheduled commercial flights) and Roland Nungesser (nephew to Charles, prominent French politician), to Maine during Expedition XVIII.



TIGHAR Photo by P. Thrasher.



"Votre modèle est surement un article de fabrication Français"

The Significance of the Magoon Sightings

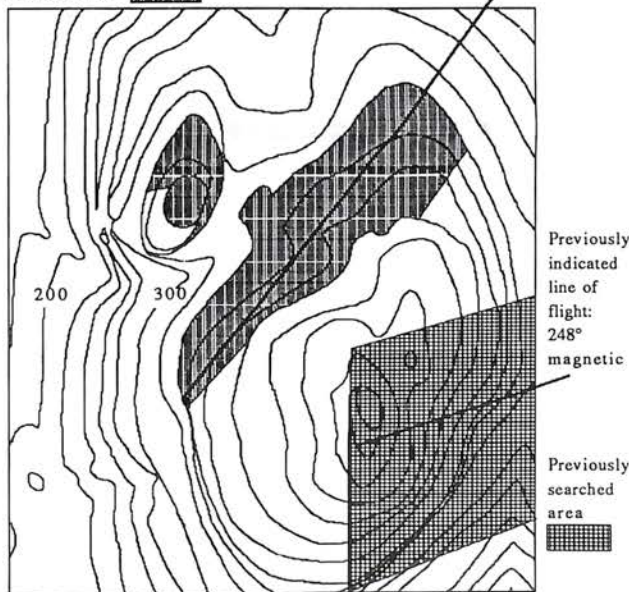
Sometimes all it takes is one piece of a jigsaw puzzle to make a confused and contradictory picture suddenly make sense. The sighting of a "strange looking white airplane" by Evelyn and Robert Magoon as it circled their parents' farm in 1927 (see TIGHAR Tracks Vol. 5 Nos. 3 & 5) has had that effect on TIGHAR's search for the crash site of l'Oiseau Blanc.

Prior to the Magoon's testimony, the line of witnesses seemed to correspond with Coli's planned route and indicated an impact on one of the eastern sides of the three Round Lake Hills. However, a thorough search of those areas revealed no airplane wreckage. Woodsman Anson Berry who heard the plane crash in 1927 is reported to have initially thought that the impact occurred "somewhere between the second and third hills." That area was searched with no result.

But the Magoon sightings revealed a course change dictated by terrain and weather which would bring the airplane into the fog shrouded hills on a significantly different line. This more northerly approach opens up large areas of the western or "back" side of the third and largest of the Round Lake Hills as forest likely to contain the impact point. Previously considered illogical as a search area, this region of dense spruce and hemlock growth is unexplored country to Project Midnight Ghost. Adding to the anticipation of this spring's search of the area is a 1984 recording of an interview with Anson Berry's youngest brother Clarence in which he says, "Anson always said that airplane come down up in back of Third Round Lake Hill somewhere." 🐾

Possible impact areas assuming collision with ground from level flight at 340 to 400 altitude msl

Line of flight indicated by Magoon sightings: 211° magnetic



HOW TO PARTICIPATE

APRIL 16 – MAY 16



EXPEDITION XVIII

Participation in Expedition XVIII is open to all TIGHAR members.

Completion of the Introductory Course in Aviation Archeology is recommended but not required.

This is a Category II TIGHAR Expedition: Moderate difficulty; participants should be in good physical condition with good stamina.

The expedition base is Machias, Maine. By car: about an hour and a half north of Bar Harbor on U.S. 1. By airline: major carriers serve Bangor; from there Machias is about 2 hours by rental car. By general aviation: Machias has an excellent 3,500' paved and lighted airstrip with avgas (no JetA) available.

Searchers stay at a modern, comfortable motel and eat breakfast and supper at a local restaurant. Lunch is a sandwich in the field.

TIGHAR will provide daily transportation to and from the search area.

Participants are responsible for their own transportation to and from Machias, Maine, and for their accomodation and meal expenses during their stays.

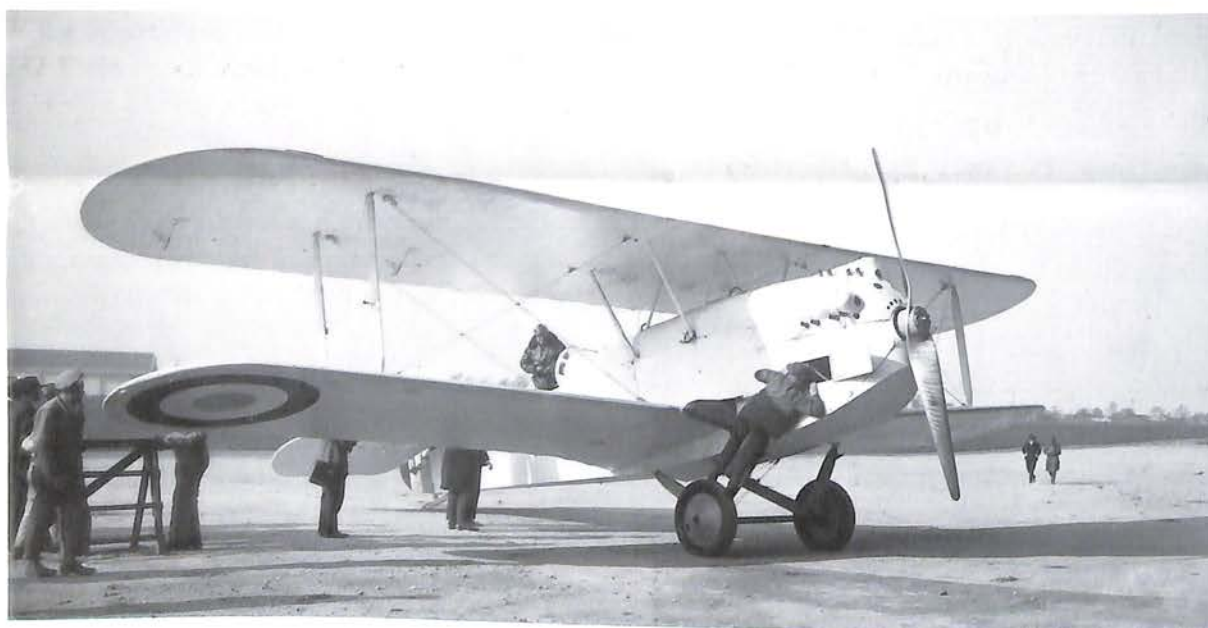
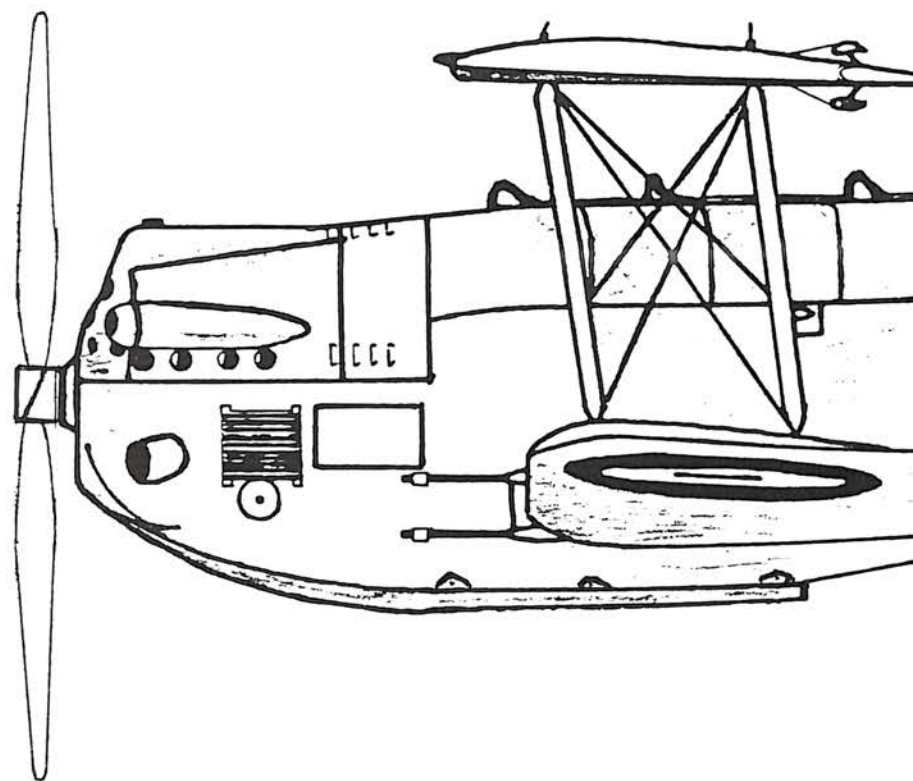
Each participant also makes a \$100 contribution toward the general cost of the expedition.

Experience has shown that four days is a practical minimum for participation, while one week is about as much as the average volunteer can take before his or her body (or mind) gives out.

The search effort can efficiently use only about six volunteers at any one time, so early coordination with TIGHAR headquarters is essential to schedule your participation.

TIGHAR members wishing to participate in Expedition XVIII should call Project Director Richard Gillespie during normal business hours at 302/994-4410.

L'Oiseau Blanc

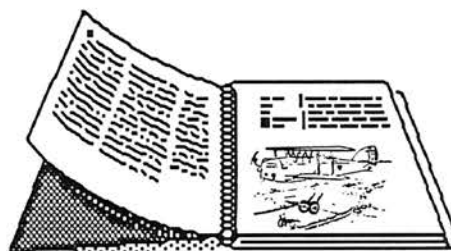


L'Oiseau Blanc during early tests (no nav lights yet). Coli stands in the cockpit. The hatch in the nose provides access to the manual primer for starting. Photo courtesy Musée de l'Air.

FOR THE FIRST TIME IN ENGLISH

THE 1984 FRENCH GOVERNMENT REPORT

**NUNGESSER AND COLI
DISAPPEAR ABOARD
L'OISEAU BLANC
MAY, 1927**



Without doubt the most thoroughly documented account ever assembled of one of the most courageous and tragic flights in aviation history. This 96 page report, first published in France in 1984, is the product of two years of research by the Ministry of Transportation's Bureau de l'Aviation Civile. General Engineer Clément-Pascal Meunier combed archives, interviewed witnesses, and reviewed hundreds of documents to sift fact from legend in the mysterious disappearance of the French flight that nearly beat Lindbergh across the Atlantic.

What went wrong? How was the airplane prepared and tested for the grueling 40 hour ordeal? How did Nungesser view his chances for success? Why did Coli elect to make the crossing east to west, against the prevailing wind? How reliable are the reported sightings of the airplane over England, Ireland, and Newfoundland?

The translation of this important historical work has taken TIGHAR two years to complete. An initial rough translation was done by the University of Delaware in 1988, after which TIGHAR's Patricia Thrasher undertook the daunting task of rendering the often highly technical report into readable English. Finally, in January of this year, meetings in Paris with the author confirmed the accuracy of the full translation.

Available only from TIGHAR, *Nungesser and Coli Disappear Aboard l'Oiseau Blanc* is not for sale. The foundation will donate copies to major aviation museum libraries. As a TIGHAR member you can receive your own copy FREE by becoming a sponsor of Project Midnight Ghost Expedition XVIII. Help write the final chapter in the story of the French flight and the American search that is solving the mystery of its fate.

Enclosed is my check (payable to TIGHAR) in support of Project Midnight Ghost Expedition XVIII. Please send my FREE copy of *Nungesser and Coli Disappear Aboard l'Oiseau Blanc* (contribution of \$50 or more).

Name _____

Address _____

GO GET 'EM TIGHARI!

send to:

TIGHAR • 1121 Arundel Drive • Wilmington • DE • 19808 • USA

1990
Gathering of TIGHARs
June 6,7,8
Dayton, Ohio

Last year's Gathering at the United States Air Force Museum was such a success that we're returning to Dayton with an expanded program of TIGHAR events you won't want to miss.

TIGHAR Night at the U.S. Air Force Museum

Once more the museum's senior curator (and long time TIGHAR) Jack Hilliard will preside for a behind-the-scenes tour of the restoration shops and a TIGHARs-only evening with one of the world's greatest aircraft collections.



Project Seminars

This year, by popular demand, we're allocating much more time to updates and open discussion about the progress of TIGHAR's many projects. There'll be slides, videotape, artifacts, maps with little arrows and labels, and, inevitably, expedition veterans debating about whether it's worse to freeze in Maine or fry on Nikumaroro. We'll also be doing some serious planning for upcoming expeditions, including initial applicant interviews for next year's Earhart Project return to the Phoenix Islands.

Register Now

Once more we'll be at the Holiday Inn Convention Center in Fairborn, Ohio (just 3 miles from the Air Force Museum). A special flat rate of \$69 Standard, \$79 King per night (1,2, or 3 people) is available, but you've got to call the hotel at (513) 426-7800 (NOT the toll-free Holiday Inn national reservations number) and tell them you're with the TIGHAR Gathering to get it. Send your registration to TIGHAR and make your hotel reservations early. Space is not unlimited and we really need to know how many TIGHARs to plan for. Any rooms not reserved in our block will be released on May 18. You must make your reservation prior to that date to get the special rate.

If you would be interested in staying on in Dayton for the Introductory Course in Aviation Archeology please indicate that on your registration slip below. If enough members are interested we'll hold the course Saturday and Sunday, June 9 & 10. Tuition for the course is \$249.00.

YES!! I will be at the 1990 Gathering of TIGHARs ! I enclose my \$50 registration fee.

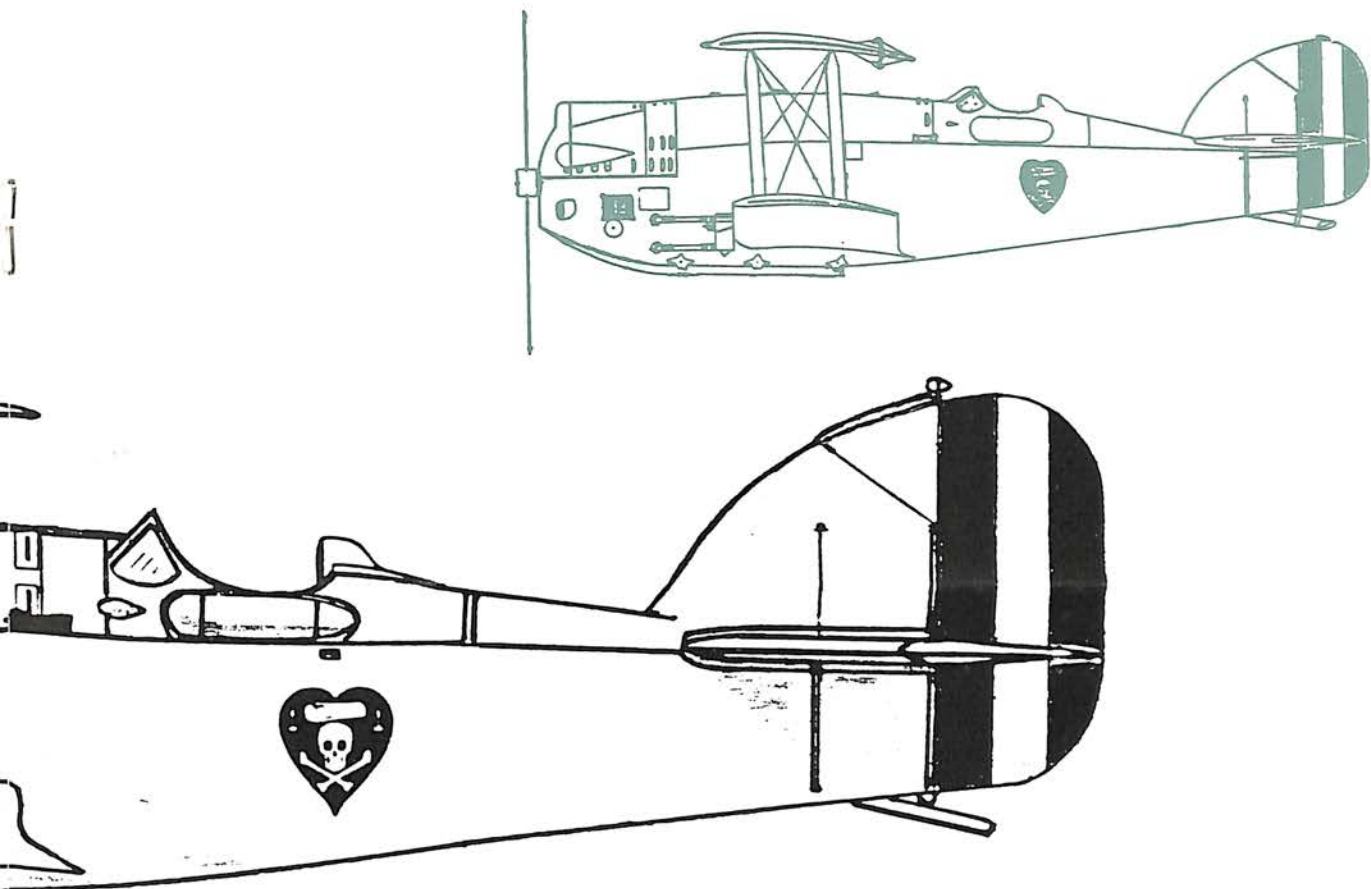
Name _____

Address _____



I would like to take the Introductory Course in Aviation Archeology in Dayton on June 9 and 10. Please send me more information.

send to:
TIGHAR • 1121 Arundel Drive • Wilmington • DE • 19808 • USA



One of the most fascinating aspects of the Nungesser/Coli transatlantic attempt and disappearance is the airplane itself. Like the Spirit of St. Louis, it was a special one-off modification of an existing design; and like Lindbergh's Ryan it was hand-built in a very short time (February 15 to April 15, 1927). But unlike the NYP, good information about its construction is very difficult to obtain. If detailed technical drawings ever existed they were apparently lost when the manufacturer, Levasseur, went out of business before WWII. The aircraft itself, of course, vanished in 1927.

For TIGHAR, the compiling of reliable technical data on the machine has been a process of constant research, verification and revision. For the past two and a half years we've used a profile (small drawing above) based on Herb Kelley's three view appearing in *Skyways* magazine (No. 3, July 1987). In January of this year access to the Musée de l'Air's archives at Le Bourget enabled us to refine shapes and features resulting in a new profile as shown above. Some details worth noting are:

- Nose and hull lines are sleeker. Once the gear was jettisoned after take-off, l'Oiseau Blanc had admirably clean lines for a biplane.
- There were navigation lights on the leading edge of the upper wing and on the vertical fin (not the rudder).
- The lumpy features on the fuselage top are not gas caps, but fuel hoses which come vertically out of the three tanks to run aft along the exterior to the cockpit. We don't know why.

Not shown in this drawing is the large Navy anchor which was painted on the tail along with the words P. Levasseur, Type 8. Although totally a civilian venture the aircraft wore the red, white and blue French military markings and, of course, Nungesser's black heart — *son fétiche*.



BONES

*"Good friend, for Jesus' sake forbear
To dig the dust enclosed here;
Blest be the man that spares these stones,
And cursed be he that moves my bones."
--- epitaph of William Shakespeare*

In the family of Man, strictures against the disturbing of human bones are nearly universal. The culture of Micronesia is no exception. Recent TIGHAR research in London has helped bring into focus events surrounding the discovery of bones by the early settlers of the Phoenix Islands — bones which may be those of Amelia Earhart and Fred Noonan — and increased the probability that Gilbertese observance of this age-old taboo means that those bones today repose somewhere in the sands of Nikumaroro.

The bones' discovery first became public on July 21, 1960 when retired Coast Guardsman Floyd Kilts told a reporter at the San Diego Tribune of a story he heard from a Gilbertese colonist on the island in March of 1946:

A native tried to tell me about it, but I couldn't understand all of it so I got an interpreter. It seems that in the latter part of 1938 there were 23 island people, all men, and an Irish magistrate planting coconut trees on Gardner for the government of New Zealand.

They were about through and the native was walking along one end of the island. There in the brush about five feet from the shoreline he saw a skeleton.

What attracted him to it was the shoes. Women's shoes, American kind. No native wears shoes. Couldn't if they wanted to — feet too spread out and flat. The shoes were size nine narrow. Beside the skeleton was a cognac bottle with fresh water in it for drinking.

The island doctor said the skeleton was that of a woman. And there were no native women on the island then. Farther down the beach he found a man's skull but nothing else.

The magistrate was a young Irishman who got excited when he saw the bones. He thought of Amelia Earhart right away. He put the bones in a gunnysack and with the native doctor, and three other natives in a 22-foot, four-oared boat started for Suva, Fiji, 887 nautical miles away.

The magistrate was anxious to get the news to the world. But on the way the Irishman came down with pneumonia. When only 24 hours out of Suva he died.

The natives are superstitious as the devil and the next night after the young fellow died they threw the gunnysack full of bones overboard, scared of the spirits. And that was that.

An abbreviated version of the story appeared as an Associated Press release in 1961. Noted by KCBS reporter Fred Goerner, he included a brief mention of it in his 1966 book *The Search for Amelia Earhart*. Goerner dismissed the story as "weird" because he felt the alleged journey to Fiji was incredible. Subsequent research into Earhart's fate caused Goerner to look further into the bone story. In a letter to TIGHAR member Rob Gerth, dated April 9, 1989, he wrote:

... I did considerable additional research on the Floyd Kilts story.

... The human remains on Gardner were of a man, not a woman. There were only the remains of one person, and that person was a Polynesian man. There was no attempt to take the remains to Suva. The "white planter" in the story was a New Zealander who died on the island of peritonitis. He is buried in a marked grave on Gardner. Floyd Kilts was a part of the U.S. Coast Guard personnel constructing the Loran station on Gardner during WWII. He had been taken to Gardner Island aboard the Coast Guard vessel U.S.S. PLANETREE.

Both Kilts' original telling of the story and Goerner's resolution of it are interesting for the mix of fact and fancy they contain. Both are under the mistaken impression that the island was under New Zealand administration. Nikumaroro was, in fact, part of the Gilbert & Ellice Islands Colony of the West Pacific High Commission headquartered in Suva, Fiji, answering directly to London. This error also appears in U.S. Office of Naval Intelligence reports about the island, leading us to speculate that Goerner's information may have come from such a source (he has not responded to our requests for him to cite his sources). Kilts' "young Irishman" and Goerner's "New Zealander" is Gerald B. Gallagher, the Irish-born, Cambridge-educated Officer-in-Charge of the Phoenix Island Settlement Scheme. The

Gerald B. Gallagher

most intriguing aspect of both versions is that each ends in such a way as to preclude the exhumation of bones on the island. The people of Micronesia believe that the ghosts of the dead roam abroad among the living so long as their earthly remains are unburied. A careful chronicling of activity on Nikumaroro, made possible by records on file in London, reveals a sequence of events which tracks closely with the bone story.

Kilts' "latter part of 1938" is when the first settlers came ashore (20 December 1938) to "plant coconut trees" and, just as he says, the first work party was all male. The bones were supposedly found when "[t]hey were about through." The coconut planting was not completed until the summer of 1941. Gallagher, who had established a colonial headquarters on the island in September 1940, left on leave in May of '41. Returning in September, he developed appendicitis while enroute aboard the S.S. Viti. Although the High Commission's Chief Pathologist, Dr. D. C. M. MacPherson, was along for a medical inspection of the colony, a shipboard operation was deemed too risky. They arrived at Nikumaroro on September 24 and three days later Gallagher died of peritonitis after an unsuccessful operation. From these facts it is possible to construct a scenario which explains both the Kilts and Goerner versions of the bone story.



The bones are discovered sometime during the summer of 1941. They are shown to Gallagher and MacPherson upon their arrival at the island September 21 (this is the *only* time that both the "young Irishman" and the "island doctor" are present on Nikumaroro). Gallagher's appendix has burst shortly before their arrival and his discomfort abates for a couple of days until the resulting peritonitis takes hold. During this time MacPherson identifies the bones as being those of a woman and Gallagher speculates that they might be Earhart's. Then Gallagher rapidly sickens and MacPherson operates, but the 29 year-old colonial officer dies. The tragedy overshadows any speculation about the bones — except for the Gilbertese, who have seen the man who has led them for two and a half years suddenly die after handling the bones. The

deadly relics are immediately buried. Five years later an American Coast Guardsman asks about Amelia Earhart and the bones are mentioned. When he shows great interest the story is given an ending which guarantees the bones will not be disturbed. Later, Kilts tells his story to Naval Intelligence and inquiries are made. The story is not denied but is changed, again to insure that the lethal spirits are not set loose on the island. The new explanation is recorded in Naval Intelligence files where Goerner later finds it. ❀

"Bones" is excerpted from *The Earhart Project*, Fifth Edition.

RETURN TO NIKUMARORO



Analysis of artifacts and information gathered during TIGHAR's 1989 expedition to Nikumaroro has been so encouraging that the decision has been made to return to the island. Slated for the summer of 1991, this expedition will include technology capable of searching the deep water immediately adjacent to the island's reef. If, as TIGHAR's research has indicated, the aircraft was landed on the dry reef flat at low tide and then, within days, washed over the reef's edge into several thousand feet of water, the Lockheed should survive relatively intact. As with last year's expedition, this effort will be carried out by highly qualified TIGHAR volunteers. **No selection of team members has yet been made.** This will be a Category III expedition. Members interested in applying for a slot on the team should write to Expedition Director Patricia Thrasher for information.

Meanwhile, the need for funding to continue the research and plan the expedition is critical. All TIGHAR members are urged to do what they can to support the work. In appreciation for your tax-deductible contribution, TIGHAR is pleased to offer:

Earhart Project Patch & T-Shirt	\$25.00
Earhart Project Certificate of Appreciation and Lapel Pin	\$50.00
The Earhart Project, Fifth Edition	\$100.00


Those who receive the Project Book will be eligible to receive subsequent editions for a contribution of \$25.00. ❀

STRICTLY BUSINESS

STRICTLY BUSINESS

And the winner is — —

L'Oiseau Blanc — the White Bird of the 1927 Nungesser/Coli transatlantic flight — was chosen by TIGHAR's members as the aircraft to be featured on the new membership decal. The Flying Tiger P-40 which graced the original sticker was runner-up and, for old times' sake, we've decided to produce both versions. Each member will receive one of each with the next renewal (or anniversary in the case of multiple year memberships).

There was an abundance of nominations — great airplanes and great ideas — but the majority of TIGHAR members saw in l'Oiseau Blanc a symbol of the dedication and sacrifice that is aviation history. There was also a strong feeling that, because TIGHAR itself was born and grew out of the effort to find l'Oiseau Blanc, this unique aircraft has come to stand for the dedication and sacrifice it has taken, and still takes, to champion the cause of aviation historic preservation. We are flattered and humbled by the analogy and we'll put the White Bird on your membership sticker because you, the members of TIGHAR, have made this symbol your own. 

TIGHAR (pronounced "tiger") is the acronym for The International Group for Historic Aircraft Recovery, a non-profit foundation dedicated to promoting responsible aviation archeology and historic preservation. TIGHAR's activities include:

- Compiling and verifying reports of rare and historic aircraft surviving in remote areas.
- Conducting investigations and recovery expeditions in co-operation with museums and collections worldwide.
- Serving as a voice for integrity, responsibility, and professionalism in the field of aviation historic preservation.

TIGHAR maintains no collection of its own; neither does it engage in the restoration or buying and selling of artifacts. Instead, the foundation devotes its energies to the saving of endangered historic aircraft wherever they may be found, and to the education of the international public in the need to responsibly preserve the relics of the history of flight.

TIGHAR Tracks, published nine times each year, is the official publication of The International Group for Historic Aircraft Recovery. A subscription to **TIGHAR Tracks** is included as part of membership in the foundation (minimum donation \$35.00 per year). The editors welcome contributions of written material and artwork. Materials should be addressed to : Editors, **TIGHAR Tracks**, 1121 Arundel Drive, Wilmington, DE 19808 USA, Telephone 302/994-4410. Photographs and artwork will be returned on request.

Editors: Patricia R. Thrasher, Richard E. Gillespie

MEMBERSHIP FORM

I would like to join TIGHAR.

\$35.00 for a one year membership

\$125.00 for a five year membership

Enclosed is my donation of --

\$60.00 for a two year membership

\$1,000 for a life membership

As a member of TIGHAR, I will receive the following benefits:

- Annual subscription to TIGHAR Tracks (published nine times a year)
- Membership patch, decal, and directory
- Expedition and educational opportunities

Name _____

Address _____

Telephone _____

Please return this form with your membership dues in U.S. funds only, to TIGHAR, 1121 Arundel Drive, Wilmington, DE 19808 USA; Telephone 302/994-4410, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. EST/EDT, M-F. ALL DONATIONS TAX-DEDUCTIBLE WITHIN THE LIMITS OF THE LAW.



212/11 Namatjira Drive,

Weston, 2611

May 11, 1992

Dear Carol,

It is so good of you to keep us up to date with the Nikumaroos affair; we are very happy to have the bundle of newspaper cuttings & thank you very much indeed for collecting them & sending them on to us. We share them with two friends who are interested in Amelia Earhart & who have both read a lot about her. They are not in the least convinced by Gillespie's claims!

Thank you too for your phone calls, we were very relieved to hear that ^{you} had not been involved in any of the violence which sounded terrifying & so widespread.

Here life is quiet but we keep far too busy for our ages, in the mid-eighties (we have been married for 62 years) but it is all so very much part of the life we have lived in Kiribati. Our last request for information was from Tevalu (formerly the Felice 28); could Harry tell them the date on which the British flag was raised as they wished to celebrate their centenary! Harry was sure he could find the

42/11 Namatjira Drive,
Weston, A.C.T. 2611,
Australia,
12 December, 1991.

Carol L. Osborne,
2464 El Camino Real, No.99,
SANTA CLARA, California 95051,
U. S. A.

Dear Carol,

Many thanks for your letters, with their enclosures, and for your superb book on Amelia Earhart. I am afraid that I am a shocking correspondent these days myself: once upon a time I worked a rigorous 90 hour 7 day week; but nowadays though the spirit is willing the body is weak and I have to concentrate on trying to finish my writing and publishing programme before I can depart from this life with any sense of decency. Thanks also for the cheque, which we have put into our fund for providing literature for the isanders.

Life has been unusually hectic owing to a conference of Pacific historians at the National University in Canberra city. We were too old to go and in any case I was too blind to see and too deaf to hear. But it resulted in our old colleagues with their problems coming out to us here (we are only 11 miles from the city): it was exhilarating to see them again, but exhausting.

We have heard nothing much about the TIGHAR expedition as yet, but it is still early days and eventually there will no doubt be books and learned monographs and articles galore; most of it probably tripe. As you say they have simply got to produce something to justify all the money spent to prove what I fancy never took place.

You suggest that I should dictate my memoirs on to video tape, but I fear that it would not be possible. I am not a talker, I am not photogenic, and I am not egotistical enough, nor interested in self-justification. More importantly, my time has to be carefully allocated; and it takes me longer to prepare a talk for the television or even

Report of Capt. Gibson of H.M.S. "Curacoa" in 1892, & we found it & phoned the date back to the tiny island of Tuarua - most exciting!

At the moment we have in hand two projects, one a collection of the myths of the Gilbert Islands & the other the story of how a small island, Niui, in Tuvalu became inhabited by Gilbertese people. By the way "Kiribati" is "Gilberts" as pronounced by the islanders who have no G - no K, have soft li (s) & never put two consonants together. Say it slowly & you have it.

We have a typist for 2 hours 3 times a week who is a big help but Reid Cowell, who worked on the translations of Gilbertese, died in January, much to our sorrow, after a long fight with cancer. He was in the Gilberts with us in the 40s.

Harry's father kept all my letters for the first 6 years & I have photo copies of one from 1934, which I thought might give you some idea of life in the Gilberts over 50 years ago. I hope you can dip into it now & again.

With our warmest regards & my love,
Honor.

for a radio broadcast than it does to write an article of the same length.

Several publishers have asked me over the years to write my autobiography, offering dictaphones, secretaries or cash inducements in advance, but none of them have been able to satisfy my ethical dilemma: that, granting the premiss that one is sent into the world for a purpose, I am morally justified in stopping my work for others just to write about myself. I have also found from personal experience that life on the remoter atolls in the Pacific does not interest Europeans for it is too remote from anything in their own experience for them to be able to relate to it.

When, for instance, one talks of making bread people cannot visualise that one must first make yeast, usually from sea water and coconut molasses, and then dig an oven in the sand and line it with coral and leaves. Or that butter came in tins, quite liquid, and was brushed on the bread with a neat little camel-hair brush.

Nor do they really understand what it was like to send the grocery order twice a year and wait six or more months for the cases to turn up; there was, of course, no fresh meat, or vegetables, or fruit - but plenty of fish. We were lucky that our son was born in New Zealand, for our predecessor had to deliver his with the aid of plenty of towels, hot water, and Black's Medical Encyclopaedia.

We built our house by the lagoon with floors of gleaming white coral lime, walls of coconut midribs tied together with coconut string, and roofs of pandanus leaf thatch. There was not a nail, or a door or window in the whole place (we just left spaces in the walls); and it cost us in all £80 to build, including the materials.. How I wish we could have such a lovely, large, cool and shady home now.

Alas I am prattling - a sign of old age - and must stop. I see that in a postscript to your first letter you ask about the messages heard on Nauru from Amelia's plane. The people who heard her messages on Ocean Island (now called Banaba) are all dead and I expect that anyone who heard anything on Nauru is also. The only account of them which

- 3 -

I have seen it on p.71 of Nesbit's article in the Aeroplane Monthly for February 1989. I send a copy in case you have not got one already.

Wishing you just the kind of Christmas you like best, and a very happy and successful 1992.

Yours ever,

JLM

November 14, 1991

Professor and Mrs. Henry E. Maude
42/11 Namatjira Drive
Weston, A. C. T. 2611
Australia

Dear Professor and Mrs. Maude:

What a delight to visit with BOTH of you this time. I will enclose another check. The first is on its way, but who knows when it will arrive. One of these days, you will have more material to send me, so please keep them both for the future. You are both such great people.

I feel sure TIGHAR is in deep debt and will need to do something *DRAMATIC* to raise monies. Supposedly they borrowed \$200,000 from Pat Thrasher Gillespie (Rick Gillespie's wife). Their claims will need to be more dramatic so they can get the press to listen and report their stories. Incidentally, I am sure Gillespie is a pilot with only a few hours flying time. And NO, he is NOT a Doctor.

I also understand that NBC TV had a person on board that expedition and it cost them \$50,000. Also Life put up \$50,000, according to Fred Goerner. In these days of tight monies, TIGHAR will have to get a return on their investment. This is the way they make their living, so will probably air some crazy story. Anyway, time will tell. I just hope they do not PLANT A FALSE artifact. I will be looking for SERIAL NUMBERS on the "junk" they dug up. I have a list of much of the equipment she had aboard.

It is now 1:00 a.m. and I must rise at 6:00 to get ready for work. I enclose some of the items that are in the package of books, newspaper of Oakland fire, etc. Since it may not arrive for some time, here is a back up.

Have a terrific week and we'll talk more later.

Love,



October 30, 1991

Professor and Mrs. Henry E. Maude
42/11 Namatjira Drive
Weston, A. C. T. 2611
Australia



Dear Professor and Mrs. Maude:

Tonight I received your parcel and five of your lovely books. You are BOTH great scholars who have devoted your life to documenting the history of the great Pacific! I am so honored to be corresponding with you.

I am also touched with your generosity, and will send you my second book I co-authored, with two other people. The book is Just Plane Crazy about aviation pioneer, Bobbi Trout and her aviation friends of the 1920's and 1930's. Bobbi is 85, and for the past 10 years has been with me off and on. Together we travel on my "time off" from work, and video tape interviews with the aviation pioneers, ie. R. Glenn Osborn (no relation), whose big sister played chess with Orville Wright in the early years when the Wrights were developing their airplane; Ed Lund, copilot on Howard Hughes round-the-world flight in 1938; Tony Stadlman, Lockheed Corporation pioneer and member of the Early Birds of Aviation, Inc., an international organization. An Early Bird is one who flew solo prior to Dec. 17, 1916 (13th anniversary of the Wright Brothers first flight); and the list goes on. I am sending you a roster of the Early Birds (there were a total of 598: now we are down to 8). The organization was formed in 1929 and I send you a copy of the minutes of the first meeting. I realize your research does not revolve around aviation, but perhaps the University Library can use this and the other aviation information I send.

I am an aviation historian and feel I have so much to learn. When Bobbi and I interview these wonderful men and women on video tape, it is a fantastic way to gain some understanding of early aviation; but it is also another way to record first hand memories on video for posterity. The reason I talk so much about this is that I would love to be able to video tape your first hand experiences about the development of the Pacific Islands...just imagine how future generations would feel to hear your voice and your enthusiasm, jubilation or disappointment. You have both made such significant contributions to the Pacific. How wonderful it would be to allow others in the future to hear your stories first hand. If you have not yet considered documenting your wonderful careers on video tape, please do so if possible. I want also to hear you tell what you know about Amelia and Fred Noonan...ie., that if they had been found it would have been news that traveled around the islands, etc. I do hope I will one day travel to Australia, but for now it is not possible. If you do know someone with a camcorder or VCR, I would love to pay for the tapes and have you document

your first hand experiences and accomplishments on video tape. You could have them placed in the Library with your other papers, and of course I would love to get a copy of some of your history for myself. Perhaps the Library or your University would want to help? Please let me know if you are interested.

I am sorry for some of the confusion at my home last Sunday, October 20, 1991. I happened to be in the back of the house, and Bobbi Trout was in the living room listening to the television. We had just begun to listen about the fire in the Oakland hills (live coverage on TV) and the TV was up way too loud. Poor Bobbi answered the phone, couldn't find the remote TV control to turn the television volume down, and when she finally heard it was for me, had to get off the sofa (at 85 years, she says it takes some effort to get up and move about). You cannot imagine the chaos that afternoon. We are "back to normal" now.

The Oakland fire has been reported to be the worst in U.S. history. It was only about 30 miles across the bay (as the crow flies) from my home. I do believe the death toll is up to 24 now, and it's tragic. My mothers' first cousin, Letti, and her husband Bill were home that Sunday. They lived on Swain Land Road, at the top to the Oakland hills, and were told to evacuate immediately. They only took enough time to grab some clothes, and their family dog. Bill wanted to go back but the fire department wouldn't let him...they lost everything...Their entire home and its contents were burned. However, their children are grown and were not in the area...all their lives were saved...Bill and Letti said they have their children, their bank accounts and their credit rating: they want to rebuild soon. There were close to 3,500 homes destroyed. I was in Letti's home about 3 years ago, at a family reunion. It was beautiful...and now so it is sad to know when there is so little we can do. My mom is talking with her family, and as soon as they decide what they are going to do, we will be trying to do something to help...for now the family is staying close by, in Oakland, with some close friends.

I just hung up the phone from talking to you and am very elated. You sounded like you are right next door, when I know you are half way around the world. The package I am preparing has some publicity from the TIGHAR group...I understand they have hired a public relations firm to do their publicity. What puzzles me is the matter reported in the newspaper about "...an anonymous donation of \$200,000, organizers of the expedition said yesterday." I noticed, in the TIGHAR TRACKS newsletter I just received, someone took out a loan...(I have been told it is probably from Pat Thrasher Gillespie's family). It certainly seems strange to take 2 additional expeditions when they have already been to Nikumaroro. The underwater search sounds logical, perhaps, but why divide the trip into 3 parts...oh well...if they have money to burn, and time on their hands to travel the Pacific, on OPM (other peoples money), I hope they are happy.

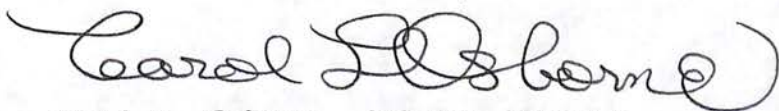
I know there are those of us who have more important things to do with our monies.

I want to be sure both of you know that Ed Barnes, reporter for Life Magazine, called and called and pleaded for medical information about Amelia a couple of weeks ago. He said Life was hiring Dr. Snow (see attached clipping) to fly to Hawaii to meet Gillespie when the boat returned. Gillespie had promised Life they would return with remains. Fred Goerner advised me to lay low and do nothing. I did not wish to loan anything that could be tampered with, to Life or anyone else, plus the Republic of Kiribati said TIGHAR had no permission to excavate any grave (by the way, I do not think TIGHAR even had an archeologist along this time). Within one week I learned Life had done their homework. Ed Barnes said TIGHAR had opened "the grave of a baby." It was just what archeologist Tom King, from the first TIGHAR expedition, had predicted the grave was...how tragic! I am so sorry this happened! My friend, Muriel Earhart Morrissey would be so troubled if she knew, so I talked to her daughter and we all agree that there is no reason to share this with Muriel at this time. She is almost 92, in poor health, and would be mortified if she knew about this act. On behalf of Muriel, and myself, we are so sorry.

The TIGHAR TRACKS said to expect a press conference about Nov. 15th. They are famous for setting up press conferences and of course, there is only one individual who goes before all the cameras and lights. I'll be interested in what fantastic stories will be forthcoming?!!!

I am so happy to have found both of you and pray you stay well. Thank you again, so very very much, for your books, your letter and phone call, your generosity and great warmth. Please stay in touch. Our best to you on your research. You are to be admired!

With sincere best wishes,



Carol L. Osborne, Aviation Historian
2464 El Camino Real, # 99
Santa Clara, CA. 95051

0011-1-

home phone (408) 244-6114 [between 8 p.m.-7 a.m. California time]



P.S. I love your Dedication Page from "Of Island + Men.
How many years and Islands have you now
been together?

Did either of you know anyone on Nauru Island who may have heard Amelia's plane that July 1-2, 1937? That one report of Amelia (see Amelia, My Courageous Sister) pg. 257 - from the USS Lexington dated 20 July 1937, Item 17, "... That the following messages were received from the plane: ... 1030 Nauru Island heard "A ship in sight ahead."))? I found the Nauru string art of real interest. The island people must be dear people -

December 11, 1990 historic meeting in New York (from left): Muriel, Gail (Muriel's friend), Bo, Eddie (Bo's grandson), Bobbi, Liz (Louise's daughter), and Louise.



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Warmest wishes come to you from Muriel, Bobbi and Carol. Christmas and New Years have flown by, we are well into the next decade, yet we're still running on OX5 time.

Muriel had a good year, beginning December 29, 1989, when her daughter, Amy, organized a 90th birthday celebration. Muriel's many friends were in attendance. This year, the celebration was smaller. Muriel just returned from a 3-day trip to the "big apple."

Bobbi and Carol joined Muriel in New York to make a commercial for BellSouth, based on Amelia's (AE) accomplishments. This meeting was a historical event: Dr. Louise DeSchweinitz Darrow (AE's 1919 Columbia University friend) at 93; Bo McKneely (AE's mechanic on her Lockheed Electra) at 82; Muriel (only days from turning 91); and Bobbi (3 weeks prior to her 85th birthday) were all present. In January 1991 the TV commercial began to appear in those states services by BellSouth, and on CNN. BellSouth gave us FIRST CLASS treatment all the way--from living in a 3 bedroom suite, to being escorted in stretch limousines. New York's holiday lights were beautiful when we took our walks along Park Avenue.

While in New York, Carol took Bobbi and Bo to visit the local FBI headquarters, as guests of Jim Fox (Assistant Director and an "old" friend from the San Francisco FBI office). They arrived just in time to attend the FBI's annual Christmas party and, of course, to hear first hand that John Gotti (Godfather of Organized Crime) had been arrested!

Carol loves her job in Security Education. Her Lockheed Ethics poster portraying C.L. "Kelly" Johnson (1910-1990), WHO ACHIEVED MORE THAN 50 YEARS OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS WITH INTEGRITY, was a great success. A poster personally autographed by Kelly made its way into the Smithsonian's collection. Carol produced her first edited video tape, with the assistance of Jim Fox, and the video tape is now being used throughout Lockheed and the FBI. Its titled: Our National Security: FBI, Drugs and Glasnost.

Last October Carol was the guest of Vera and Harvey Christen (retired Lockheed friends--colleagues of the Amelia/Lindbergh/early aviators), at a special "Stardusters" (Lockheed retirees) meeting. The three of them were guests in January 1991 at Zonta's Amelia Earhart Day.

Last March Bobbi and Carol attended Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University's "Women In Aviation" gathering. It was the first of its kind and MOST SUCCESSFUL. We are preparing for the Second Annual "Women In Aviation" gathering, to be held March 21-23, 1991, at Parks College, St. Louis University, Illinois. Dr. Peggy Baty, Dean of Students, had transferred from Embry-Riddle to Parks College and will again act as hostess to at least 400 attendees--we hope to see you there!

Have a great 1991 and let's be sure to keep in touch!



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 Carol (l) and Joe Gurr(r) being interviewed on 6 Sept. 1990. Three weeks later, Joe suddenly passed away. He installed the radio in AE's airplane in 1937. (The scarf worn by Carol once belonged to AE--the same scarf AE is wearing on the cover of Amelia, My Courageous Sister.)

Dateline 1/4/91: Bobbi just broke her right wrist! She won't be writing anyone for a few months.

The BellSouth written ad appears in the following magazines: Barron's, BusinessWeek, CIO, Communications Week, Forbes, Fortune, Institutional Investor, Newsweek, Time Top, and The Wall Street Journal.

42/11 Namatjira Drive,
Weston, A.C.T. 2611,
Australia,
21 October, 1991.

Ms Carol L. Osborne,
2464 El Camino Real, No.99,
SANTA CLARA, California 95051,
U. S. A.

Dear Carol Osborne,

Many thanks for your cordial letter of the 3rd October, and for so kindly sending me the lovely biography of Amelia Earhart, which you wrote with her sister.

Honor and I have read your book with great interest and appreciation, for biographies are particularly hard to write and the nearer you are to your subject the more difficult it is to write with any degree of objectivity and without being unduly eulogistic.

But even admitting that you had a superb person to portray, your research has been exceptional and the presentation, especially the wealth of unusually pertinent illustrations, make it a work we shall always treasure and will eventually place in the Biography Section of our Pacific Islands Library at the University of Adelaide (I send an article showing how it is arranged).

Alas that the books that you enquire about are mostly non-existent for though I have published over 100 items the majority are articles in academic journals (or research papers, as the academic world calls them), monographs on specialist topics, reports, bibliographies and the like, or are written for island people with a rather different cultural and historical background to us.

So I am confining myself to sending Of Islands and Men, because it was written for students wanting an introduction to Pacific history, and Slavers in Paradise, which though written for islanders has proved popular with American readers. Also The Changing Pacific, as it gives a bibliography of my writings to 1977; and The Story of

Karongoa, as it lists my main publications written for the Pacific islanders ~~written~~ after my retirement. From the lists in the last two you can judge for yourself if there is anything else you would like. The Karongoa book is probably the easiest reading, but even it really requires some background knowledge of places and people. We never charge anyone interested, especially if they go into libraries or museums, and in the island co-operatives they sell for five dollars or less, so we lose thousands in any case.

Some of Honor's published works are listed in The Changing Pacific and others in her latest work on Pukapuka. As you will see she writes exclusively on Oceanic String Figures (or Cats Cradles), a subject on which she is the world authority and has built up an extensive correspondence, mostly with fans in the U.S. We are putting in a monograph on Nauru figures, so that you can see what cats cradles are really like.

I have sent your friend Goerner a photocopy of Roy Nesbit's article in the Aeroplane Monthly, which seems to be based on sound research and reaches the same conclusions as you do: there is so much tripe written on the subject that it was quite a relief to read it.

Again thanking you for your welcome book,

Yours sincerely,

Harry Bunde

Mystery of lost aviator may be over

Adelante Advertising

From MICHELANGELO RUCCI

NEW YORK: One of aviation's greatest mysteries – the disappearance of Amelia Earhart – may have been solved with the discovery of wreckage off a Pacific island where the American legend is thought to have crashed in 1937.

The International Group for Historic Aircraft Recovery, which has spent \$650,000 during the past month to mount a search for Earhart's plane, said yesterday it had found aircraft wreckage off the atoll of Nikumaroro, once known as Gardner Island.

"There is sufficient material in hand so that a conclusive identification of the specific aircraft type should be possible," said TIGHAR executive director Richard Gillespie.

He did not reveal how much wreckage had been found or what parts of the aircraft were being recovered.

A search by TIGHAR for Earhart's plane failed in 1989 when the group worked on a theory that Earhart and her navigator Fred Noonan landed on Gardner Island in July 1937 when they ran low on fuel.

The group then worked on the theory that the duo landed on a reef of coral that surrounds the island and tides later washed the plane into the ocean.

Mr Gillespie said an intact plane was not found but pieces of the wreckage were large enough to allow experts to determine if it belongs to the Lockheed Electra plane Earhart flew in her at-



Amelia Earhart:
Vanished in 1937 while trying to fly around the world.

tempt to be the first woman to fly around the world.

"These are very specific pieces of aircraft," said Mr Gillespie, adding that no other Electra had been reported missing in the area.

He expects to reveal the findings of tests at the end of the year.

October 3, 1991

Professor and Mrs. Henry E. Maude
42/11 Namatjira Drive
Weston, A. C. T. 2611
Australia



Dear Professor and Mrs. Maude:

I have read your 1937 report on your trip to Gardner (Nikumaroro) Island, never dreaming of the day I could personally contact you. Fred Goerner has told me many nice things about you and your tremendous research efforts. Fred has shared some of his correspondence with me about the TIGHAR expedition too. You may therefore find the attached of some interest.

I have just contacted Mr. Kaburoro Ruaia, Assistant Secretary of Foreign Affairs and he says he knows you and your work well. I have sent him a copy of the book, *Amelia, My Courageous Sister*, that I wrote with Muriel Earhart Morrissey, Amelia's younger sister. Together we have spent years researching and looking over every possible theory about what happened to Amelia Earhart. I am enclosing one of our autographed book to you that was signed by Muriel and myself.

I admire the years you have devoted to the studies of the South Pacific Islands and I wish to purchase a copy of your books, autographed copies if at all possible. Please let me know the cost and I will be happy to send a check or money order. I will be honored to include your books in my Amelia Earhart collection, one day to go to an American museum, available to researchers and retained for history.

Attached is a copy of the letter I wrote to Mr. Ruaia and I feel it will let you know my position with respect to TIGHAR. I have located 3 people from the first expedition who have similar opinions and will eventually come forward to deliver their knowledge. I have promised Mr. Ruaia that I will mail his book and materials tomorrow morning. Since it is now early in the morning, and I must get some sleep before I begin my full time job in the morning, I will make this note brief. One day real soon I hope to call and talk with you on the telephone. According to information, your telephone number is 288-0122!

I am so happy to have found both of you and pray you are both well. I am anxious to hear from you.

With sincere best wishes,

Carol L. Osborne, Aviation Historian
2464 El Camino Real, # 99
Santa Clara, CA. 95051

home phone (408) 244-6114 [between 8 p.m.-7 a.m. California time]

0011 1 408 244 6114

October 2, 1991

Margaret Baaro
Secretary of Foreign Affairs
P. O. Box 88
Bairiki, Tarawa
REPUBLIC OF KIRIBATI

COPY

Subject: Search for Amelia Earhart and Fred Noonan

Dear Eminence:

This letter is in regard to an expedition to the island of Nikumaroro (formerly Gardner Island), which involves a group calling themselves TIGHAR (The International Group for Historic Aircraft Recovery). It is headed by Richard Gillespie and his wife, Patricia Thrasher. According to their voluminous press releases, and subsequent newspaper accounts, they intend to do some excavating on Nikumaroro because they claim to "know what happened" to aviatrix Amelia Earhart and Fred Noonan.

I represent Muriel Earhart Morrissey, younger sister and sole immediate "next of kin" to aviatrix Amelia Earhart Putnam. Muriel and I have spent years researching, then publishing our book entitled, Amelia, My Courageous Sister. Now, at age 91, Muriel has requested I act in her behalf when things about Amelia need a direction or a response.

Muriel Earhart Morrissey and I are emphatic about two vital points surrounding this expedition: First of all, there is NO EVIDENCE to link Nikumaroro and the disappearance of Amelia Earhart and Fred Noonan. Secondly, and of more importance, NO MATTER WHERE the physical remains of her sister are...and have been for fifty-four years...Muriel wants Amelia's final resting place left undisturbed. I must tell you that Muriel has never authorized ANY PERSON OR GROUP to undertake a search, and she most certainly DOES NOT SUPPORT the desecration of ANY grave site.

All well-researched documentation indicates that Amelia and Fred flew for more than 20 hours, and ran out of fuel somewhere within a 100-mile radius of Howland Island. To disturb the graves of people who attempted to settle an island located almost five hundred miles south of Howland is unthinkable and immoral.

On behalf of Muriel Earhart Morrissey, I am respectfully requesting that you withdraw any permission that TIGHAR may have been granted to disturb any and all grave sites on land that is controlled by the Republic of Kiribati. We implore you to allow whoever rests in the grave, that TIGHAR plans to excavate, to rest in peace.



Carol L. Osborne, Aviation Historian
2464 El Camino Real, # 99
Santa Clara, CA. 95051

home phone (408) 244-6114 [between 8 p.m.-7 a.m. California time]

42/11 Namatjira Drive,
Weston, A.C.T. 2611,
Australia,
18 October, 1991.

Frederick A. Goerner,
24 Presidio Terrace,
San Francisco,
California 94118, U.S.A.

Dear Mr Goerner,

Honor is back again and things are looking up once more, which enables me to spend an hour or two in the evenings to deal with the correspondence. So I am giving what little information I can in answer to the queries in your letter of 18 September.

Like Honor I remember hearing that Ocean Island radio had picked up some signals from the Earhart plane, but if we ever heard anything about the content of the messages it would have been forgotten almost immediately. Actually we were not on Ocean Island ourselves until the 20th July but on a phosphate ship en route to it, having left Zanzibar in East Africa on the 20th May. So what we heard was not until our arrival and was quite possibly told us by the radio operator himself, Thomas Moore, who was a friend of ours.

Moore was called the 'Engineer-Operator in Charge' and there was only one other operator, Arnold Cookson, who however was on leave in Australia from the 29th May to the 16th November. When Moore last wrote to me he was living in retirement somewhere in Adelaide. But that was many years ago and as he was born on 11 September 1891 he would be 100 last month if he was still alive. I therefore conclude that he is dead, and have no idea of his last, or any, address.

There might have been a note concerning the messages in the station log, but I was the first government official to land on Ocean Island (now officially called Banaba) after the war and found the Protectorate and Colony archives wrecked by American bombing. The roof had been destroyed and the rain

had reduced the contents of the archives to unreadable pulp. I did not visit the wireless station but presume that anything in it was also reduced to pulp by the bombers, who were very thorough. Anything readable should have been sent to the Director of the Kiribati Archives on Bairiki, Tarawa, but might just as easily be still lying in the Radio Office on Banaba, or have got as far as the Administrative Officer's Office there.

As to Nauru I know nothing as it was under Australian administration. Honor spent six weeks on the island towards the end of 1937 and wrote a book on The String Figures of Nauru Island (Adelaide, Libraries Board of South Australia, 1971), but heard nothing about Earhart messages. There is, however, an account of them in Roy Nesbit's article which I am sending. Remember that you can also have a copy of the Laxton material should you not be able to get it from Thomas King: it is the best item ever written on the atoll.

I know no one who was working in Australian Military Intelligence before September 1939. Fiji, and the islands north and east of Fiji, including the Gilberts and Ellice, should have been the concern of New Zealand, but the Dominion had neither the resources nor, I fancy, the interest to do anything about the Japanese islands.

We had a limited contact with Japanese Micronesia since the Manyo Boyeki kaisha had a trade store on Butaritari and their supply ship came down periodically from the Marshalls. Normally it entered and cleared at Butaritari but when there was no European officer there they had to come down to Tarawa, which became the only Port of Entry for the 16 Gilbert Islands.

Occasionally there was a passenger on board and I remember particularly poor Pablo Lazlo, a Hungarian who spoke good English and had managed to secure a round ticket in Japan as a tourist though he seemed to me clearly engaged in intelligence work

Lazlo took me aside and besought me to let him stay over on

Tarawa as he felt that the Japanese considered that he had seen too much and that if he got on board again he would be disposed of. I was only visiting Tarawa myself so had to refer the proposal to Major Swinbourne, who was in charge of the Northern and Central Districts. Swinbourne was the epitome of the unimaginative and rule-bound civil servant and nearly had a fit at Lazlo's request, pointing out that he had no visa for the Colony, and many other arguments ad nauseam. It was heartbreaking to see him being rowed out to the ship between two Japanese: presumably to his death.

Then we had two Gilbertese who drifted to the Carolines. Ponape sent a radio message saying that they would be returned on the next supply ship; but they too must have seen too much for not long after Ponape told us: so sorry but they had disappeared.

Yet there were a few Europeans who lived right through the Japanese period: among them a missionary on Kusaie and a Belgian lady who owned and ran a plantation on Ponape. I remember her as a great friend of our best Honolulu friend, Margaret Titcomb, the Librarian at the Bishop Museum.

Just before the war the Australians got the bright idea of asking Robbie Robson, the Editor of the Pacific Islands Monthly, to collect all the information he could on a visit to the Gilberts. But he had nothing to report except rumours.

Most of my work with the intelligence people came a bit later than the period you are interested in, though before America entered the war. Looking after the wants of the New Zealand coastwatchers: a melancholy business. And a hilarious episode acting as liaison with the first American under-cover agent, who kept forgetting his assumed name and occupation. He later repaid me for my help by getting me freed when arrested by the Americans in Noumea as a suspected spy (they had ordered me to report there and given me No.1 priority on their own aircraft).

I am sending my only copy of Nesbit's article in the Aeroplane Monthly and should be grateful if you could return

it after taking any copies you want. There is no hurry but it should be deposited eventually in the Adelaide archives. I take it that you don't want Linda C. Puig's article 'Tracing Amelia's Footsteps' in This World for 17 December 1989?

I see that I am about to get garrulous, a well-known sign of senescence, so will stop, especially as I must write and thank your friend for her lovely book Amelia, my courageous sister and send her some she might like in return.

Yours very sincerely,

John M.

42/11 Namatjira Drive,
Weston, A.C.T. 2611,
Australia.

12 October, 1991

Frederick A. Goerner,
24 Presidio Terrace,
SAN FRANCISCO,
California 94118, U.S.A.

Dear Mr Goerner,

Sorry not to have written before to thank you for your very interesting letters, but alas Honor has been rather seriously ill for three weeks now and this is the first day I have been able to put pen to paper.

One of the drawbacks of corresponding with the frail and aged is that you never know when, or even if, you will get a reply, except possibly from the executors.

I am a reasonably practised nurse by now and for the first fourteen days and nights I was acting as one, as well as doing the shopping, house cleaning, cooking, and everything else

But now Honor is safely housed in our best private hospital under specialist care and as a result is beginning to feel better; in fact with any luck she should be home again in a few days. Meanwhile I visit her twice a day by taxi, as I am considered too blind to be allowed to drive my car.

This is only an interim letter to let you know the present position and to say that I will write in reply to your queries as soon as I can..

Honor particularly enjoined me to thank you for Driscoll's effusions in Airline which gave her more to laugh about than anything else she read during the first week of her illness. It was a real tonic and much appreciated. The author missed his vocation for he would have made a splendid writer of science fiction.

We were happy to find from your letters that our desultory ruminations were of some use to you: we found it an interesting exercise to cudgel our brains in an endeavour to recollect a long-forgotten period of our lives. And many thanks for the cheque which we have cashed and put into our fund for providing secular literature for the Gilbertese, of which the latest is The Story of Karongoa.

In return I am sending you a copy of the Second Progress Report of the Phoenix Islands Settlement Scheme, which has unexpectedly turned up in a file which should have been deposited in the Archives long ago with the other records.

It covers the period in the Phoenix which most interests you and gives more accurate answers to some of your original queries, thus demonstrating that my memory of the long ago is not infallible. For example I apparently got Jones to partition the first settlement blocks on Hull; also we left the airways section untouched in the first partition (reserving it for the second, by which time the airport scheme had fizzled out). And contrary to my recollection I apparently knew that the airways people had been to Gardner, as I mention it briefly in my report.

But the most important passage concerns a discussion with the first settlers on the 17th June 1939 in which I say 'The natives were instructed to explore the island immediately from end to end and, as a result of the knowledge thus gained, to commence planting operations with those areas which required the minimum amount of clearing, provided that they were suitable for coconut cultivation'. So much for the theory that the islanders did not examine minutely the island which was to be their future home. In my opinion anything out of the ordinary would have excited their careful examination and have been reported, as well as becoming the subject of general discussion.

Bye for now, and I shall write a more detailed letter as soon as we have surmounted the present contretemps,

Very sincerely,
Harry Myranda

25% COTTON FIBER USA

FREDERICK ALLAN GOERNER
Twenty-four Presidio Terrace
San Francisco, California 94118

September 18, 1991

Professor & Mrs. Henry E. Maude
22/11 Namatjira Drive
Weston, A.C.T. 2611
Australia

Dear Professor and Mrs. Maude:

Here I am again, and with several more questions.

I believe you must wince when you see my letterhead, but I want you to know how truly grateful I am for your generosity with time, effort and sending me the treasured copy of OF ISLANDS AND MEN.

Mrs. Maude, in your letter to me of August 14th, 1991, you stated, "We were on Ocean Island at the time of Amelia Earhart's disappearance and remember the excitement of our radio operator and the Nauru man hearing her messages."

That is the first time I have EVER heard that Amelia's radio communications were received on Ocean Island.

Are you able to provide me with additional details? The contents of the messages? The times they were received? The name of the radio operator, and if still with us, where that individual can be contacted?

You also mention Nauru as receiving Earhart radio signals. I have information to that effect, but it is not detailed. Can you expand on that aspect as well? Also, I am not familiar with the article by Roy Nesbit in the Jan. Feb. editions of Aeroplane Monthly. If you have it at hand, I would very much appreciate a copy.

Professor Maude, I have written to Dr. Thomas F. King regarding the P.B. Laxton material on Nikumaroro, but I have no reply to date. I will address a second communication to him and hope for better results.

I was fascinated to learn you worked with U.S. Naval Intelligence and O.S.S. during World War II. Your knowledge of the Gilberts and other of the Pacific Islands was at a premium.

Because of your experience with Allied intelligence, I believe you can provide a unique insight into an area of intelligence collection that is still not fully revealed.

By 1937, there is no doubt that British, Australian, New Zealand and U.S. intelligence services were seriously concerned about what Japan was doing in her mandated (Marshall, Caroline and Marianas) islands. There was a continuing possibility of war in the Pacific with Japan, and much of the Pacific was terribly vulnerable in the event of a Japanese attack.

With that in mind, there must have been many attempts by allied agents to penetrate the Japanese Mandates, but so little is known about those efforts.

Professor Maude, do you have knowledge of any of the attempts to gain information about Japanese intentions and activities in the mandates prior to the Japanese attack upon Pearl Harbor in December, 1941? Do you know anyone still with us who was active in Australian Military Intelligence before September, 1939, when World War II actually began? That person might know of intelligence efforts in the Japanese Mandates.

Dear, wonderful people, what exciting and rewarding lives and careers you have had and are having. I am truly honored to have the opportunity to correspond with you.

With respect and admiration, I am,

Most Cordially Yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Fred Goerner". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "F".

25% COTTON FIBER USA
FREDERICK ALLAN GOERNER
Twenty-four Presidio Terrace
San Francisco, California 94118

September 17, 1991

Professor & Mrs. Henry E. Maude
22/11 Namatjira Drive
Weston, A.C.T. 2611
Australia

Dear Professor and Mrs. Maude:

Again, I am most grateful for your recent correspondence. You have provided information that NO ONE else could have possessed.

I am enclosing photocopies of some material which may have some interest for you.

First is a copy of the Associated Press 1961 report that started all the nonsense about Earhart being on Gardner Island. We at CBS dismissed the story as either a fabrication or a wild misinterpretation of something one of the Phoenix Islanders said.

Second is some of Mr. Driscoll's information regarding the New Zealand Pacific Air Survey (NZPAS) which visited Gardner (Nikumaroro) in 1938 and again in 1939. I have taken the liberty of highlighting some of the more pertinent information. Please be aware that I have photocopied on both sides of the page in some instances in the interest of ecology.

You will note that NZPAS erected a temporary radio station on Gardner and that Mr. Jones had a radio at Hull Island. Also, the soundings taken at Gardner indicated that sufficient area in the Gardner lagoon existed for possible use by seaplanes. It is clear that NZPAS had military objectives as well as civilian.

The third group of photocopies are from the book THE EARHART DISAPPEARANCE: THE BRITISH CONNECTION by J.A. Donahue, which I mentioned in my last communication. Donahue's conclusions are sheer fiction, but they should provide some healthy laughter. You will remember J.W. Jones as you met the gentleman.

There is a fine young woman here in Northern California who would like to contact you. Her name is Miss Carol Osborne, and she is the author along with Muriel Earhart Morrissey of the recent book AMELIA, MY COURAGEOUS SISTER. Mrs. Morrissey is the sister of Amelia Earhart.

Miss Osborne is a lovely person and a dedicated researcher. She is not a seeker of sensationalism, but she is interested in truth for the Earhart matter.

I have told her what wonderful people you are, and I took the liberty of providing your address to her.

I have some other questions I would like to pose to you, but I shall reserve them for my next letter.

With respect and admiration,

I am,

Most Cordially Yours,

Fred Goebel

AP90EX

AMELIA

AP 1221

(SAN DIEGO)--ANOTHER THEORY OF WHAT MAY HAVE HAPPENED TO AMELIA EARHART WAS OFFERED TODAY BY A FORMER U. S. COAST GUARDSMAN. HE SAID SHE AND HER NAVIGATOR FRED NOONAN MAY HAVE MET DEATH ON GARDNER ISLAND IN THEIR ATTEMPTED TRANS-PACIFIC FLIGHT 23 YEARS AGO. FLOYD KILTS, NOW ON LEAVE FROM A STATE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS JOB, WENT TO GARDNER ISLAND ON A COAST GUARD MISSION DURING WORLD WAR 2.

HE SAID A NATIVE TOLD HIM THAT IN THE LATTER PART OF 1938 THE SKELETON OF A WOMAN AND THE SKULL OF A MAN WERE FOUND ON THE SHORE OF THE ISLAND.

A WHITE PLANTER BELIEVED THE SKELETON MIGHT BE MISS EARHART'S AND STARTED TO SUVA, FIJI ISLANDS, WITH IT. BUT HE DIED OF PNEUMONIA ON THE WAY AND SUPERSTITIOUS NATIVE BOATMEN THREW THE SKELETON OVERBOARD.

EB14OPPD 21



From: Airline by Ian Driscoll



14. Members of the NZPAS expedition (l to r) Lt Ritchie, CPO M. W. Hay, E. A. Gibson, R. A. Wimbush, Jack Paton and Harlon



15. *Leander* off Hull Island



16. Hull Island



6. Tom Wilkes. (MOTAT)



7. Sir Ralph Cochrane



8. E. A. Gibson



9. D. O. Haskell



10. Alan Prichard



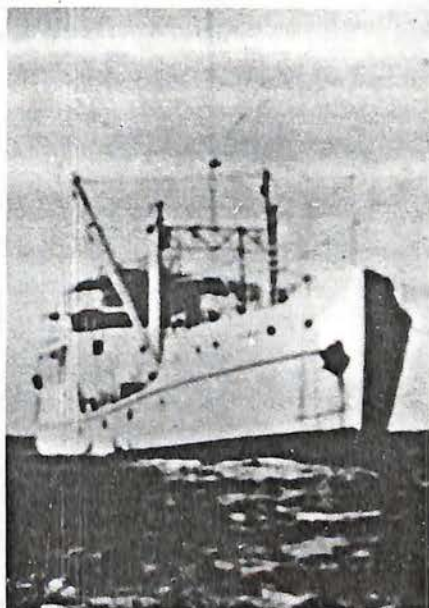
11. E. W. Lee (MOTAT)



21. Transport at 'Croydon' on Christmas Island



22. Surveying



23. m.v. *Yanawai*



24. *Norwich City* wrecked on reefs at Gardner Island

V COCHRANE

There had been a Government inquiry into British civil aviation while the *Centaurus* had been away. A report tabled in Parliament on 8 February 1938 included a recommendation that "plans should be laid for services across the Pacific and in the West Indies, for all of which Parliament should immediately be asked to provide the necessary subsidies". The Prime Minister, Mr Neville Chamberlain, assured the House of Commons that the report would be adopted and the vote for air subsidies was increased by £3 million (\$6 million) in March.

Among the many people for whom this had implications was Robert Wimbush, who had been by paddle-steamer from Malakal through the Sud district of the Nile to establish a flying-boat landing area at Rejaf near Juba. This increased payload and so Imperial Airways revenues by £15,000 (\$30,000) a year; though not Wimbush's four pounds (eight dollars) a week wage. On returning to Cairo in July, he went on leave after five years in the Middle East.

On reaching London, he was told by the Company to take his charts covering the Persian Gulf and the Nile to the Air Ministry. To his surprise these were accepted without discussion and he was shown a map of the Pacific.

"I was ordered to prepare to leave for there," he recalls, "and to get Henry Hughes' firm to adapt for me a more portable and very shallow water recording Echo sounder to save payload. It would be for me to devise fitment to any craft from a canoe to a super-launch."

The assignment was classified as secret. Bob's only brief was to travel incognito to Auckland or Fiji, with the objective of joining the cruiser *Leander* in the South Pacific. He spent his leave preparing for the journey and was introduced to Colonel Falla, who had arrived in London following business discussions in North America.

The Imperial Airways/Qantas Southampton-Sydney flying-boat service had opened in June and both Wimbush and Falla left in the same aircraft during October.

“How fortunate can you be?” Bob wrote.

He was surprised on reaching Rose Bay to be met by Australian newspapermen. One told him they had been alerted by Moscow; others that they had “been through the aircraft consignment notes to find out the contents of my baggage and had drawn their own conclusion”.

Wimbush found their informed guessing not far wrong. They were impatient over the apparent lack of activity towards the Pacific islands, “told me a few useful things I did not know . . . I told them one or two places I was not going to.”

The journalists developed free for him photographs he had taken at Darwin of a flight of RAF long-distance Wellesleys which had flown there non-stop from Egypt — a notable feat in 1938. A cable advised that *Leander* would rendezvous with Bob in Fiji and he and Colonel Falla joined the Matson liner *Monterey*. They sailed for Auckland on 11 November, Falla disembarked and Group Captain Wilkes called to make contact before the ship left.

In Suva Gibby came aboard on the heels of the port officials and met Wimbush outside the purser’s office. His bags were soon on their way to *Leander*, while Bob was spirited away to the Grand Pacific Hotel for briefing. He then paid a brief courtesy call on the Colonial Secretary Western Pacific, after which Gibby took him back to the wharf.

It was pouring with rain. Bob had a fleeting awareness of the smell of copra. Then he was boarding a naval pinnace which took him off to *Leander*. As he came alongside he was “in trepidation to think all this 7000 tons had been awaiting me, the equivalent of a ‘snotty’.”

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The New Zealand Pacific Aviation Survey (NZPAS) was as enigmatic in name as in character. The United Kingdom initiated the expedition to establish marine alighting areas for a survey flight between New Zealand, Fiji, the Phoenix and the Line Islands, which would be flown by one of the TEAL Short S-30 flying-boats soon to be based at Auckland. This reflected Government commitment to carry out the recommendations of the Cadman Report, one of which was to establish immediately a British trans-Pacific air service. The project was classified Top Secret to ensure that the United States Government did not become aware of it.

In 1936 British warships of the New Zealand Division had

made a sortie to Pacific islands which the United States Navy then regarded as of strategic importance to United States defence and aviation interests. American colonists had been rushed to the islands to forestall any British action. It was important that the NZPAS was not similarly frustrated.

Whitehall's misgivings over the dependability of the New Zealand Government were reflected in concern lest a sympathetic hint to Pan American Airways should alert the United States to British intentions. The importance of ensuring that this did not occur was conveyed to Group Captain Cochrane who, as the New Zealand CAS and a RAF officer experienced in the expectations of the Air Ministry, was given overall responsibility for the assignment.

Cochrane is not likely to have overlooked the opportunity offered by an Imperial Government requirement for flying-boat moorings in the equatorial Pacific islands. It could only advance Squadron Leader Isitt's concept of a lifeline for military landplanes linking New Zealand and Hawaii. It is significant that Isitt in 1935 had asked Harold Gatty, Pan American Airways representative in New Zealand, which would be the most suitable islands in the Central Pacific on which to develop airstrips and Gatty had suggested Christmas or Fanning Islands. Commodore H. E. Horan, Chief of the New Zealand Naval Staff at the time of the NZPAS, stated that he had received a secret Admiralty instruction for *Leander* to carry an aviation survey party and sounding gear to Christmas Island, "then call briefly at Fanning Island".

It seems reasonable to surmise that Isitt had advised Cochrane of Gatty's view; that Cochrane had recommended it to the Air Ministry, since neither he nor Isitt had visited the Central Pacific; and that the Air Ministry had requested the Admiralty to make a cruiser available to visit these locations.

Cochrane clearly supported Isitt's proposals but would not indicate this to any New Zealander lest it be leaked to Pan American Airways. He knew that Isitt had had discussions with Gatty; that his ideas had won tacit approval from the New Zealand Prime Minister at the time, who had eventually granted Pan Am landing rights at Auckland; and that this decision had been ratified by the then Labour Government in Wellington.

The CAS was also in no doubt that if there was a hint in Whitehall that he had endorsed any facet of the New Zealand

association with Pan American Airways, his recall would be immediate. The sensitivity of his situation stemmed from the fickle circumstances of his appointment to New Zealand. In dealing with a conflict of interest in which his own career was at stake, Cochrane was to emerge as an inspired strategist and a superb diplomat.

“Any correspondence and coded signals which went between Cochrane and the Air Ministry were unknown to Len Isitt and me,” says Gibby. “But we were certain that he had extensive correspondence with the UK Government — unknown to the New Zealand Government, which could have been very angry had it found out. That Cochrane was right I am convinced in retrospect, because had he let one hint drop anywhere before *Leander* left Fiji the whole subject would have been blown wide open.”

It was decided that Wellington need be advised only that the cruiser would take Major General Sir John Duigan, Chief of the General Staff New Zealand Military Forces, to Fanning Island to assess defence requirements for the cable station there. The impression was cultivated that an army and naval operation was in train which could only be helpful to New Zealand defence. (Nor had a pleasant Pacific cruise by warship for the three Chiefs of Staff been overlooked.)

Cochrane clearly resolved to send a survey party to seek both land and marine aircraft operating facilities in the Central Pacific. He doubtless felt he could justify this as a warranted extension of a civil aviation requirement. He well understood that commerce and communications were the British Government's concern in the Pacific, especially the development of a round-the-world air service. This was impeded by American refusal to grant landing rights for British airliners in Hawaii. The United States and the Empire were in fact commercial rivals as far as trans-Pacific air services were concerned.

But as Chief of the New Zealand Air Staff, Cochrane was concerned at the absence of even an informal understanding between London and Washington on Pacific defence strategy. He was acutely aware that time was against the Western democracies.

His attitude towards airline operations would have been a military one, reflecting British Government policy in establishing an Inter-Departmental Committee on International Air Communications in 1935. Its chairman was Sir Warren Fisher, the Permanent Head of the Treasury and head of the Civil Service. Sir

Warren had also been a member of the Cadman Committee.

The Inter-Departmental Committee comprised civil servants representing the Air Ministry, the Admiralty, the Foreign Office and other Departments of State. Its task was to co-ordinate overseas airline development with total national policy — as Clement Attlee pointed out on 3 December 1935, “this was as much a defence measure as one designed to aid civil aviation”.

Cochrane had progressively assumed charge of civil aviation activities outside New Zealand from Tom Wilkes, integrating them closely with defence strategies and placing them under a common tight security. This safeguarded London’s desire that there be no leaks to the Americans.

He handled as little of the detail of the NZPAS as possible in New Zealand. The expedition was assembled in Fiji, a British colony, and embarked in a British cruiser and a Fijian coastal vessel. Though he had decided that E. A. Gibson was the man to lead the venture, Cochrane withheld all suggestion of it from him until Gibby was in Fiji assessing Eric Smart’s proposals for the construction of military airfields in the group. These would be a complementary part in the Isitt project to the NZPAS investigations.

Gibson, who at the time was understandably put out by the treatment he received from the CAS, was able to bring in only Bill Lee to the expedition from the ASB — and this was because he happened to be in Fiji supervising work on the Nandi and Nausori airstrips.

The remainder of the NZPAS complement were Britons — surveyors resident in Fiji, local labour recruited there, Bob Wimbush seconded from Imperial Airways to the Air Ministry to fill a colourless role as a British Government hydrographer who was hardly likely to attract New Zealand notice or speculation. The classifications of “Top Secret” and “Defence” ensured that most searching questions could be avoided.

* * * *

The issue of divided loyalties perennially distorted relationships between the First and Second World Wars among British and Dominion officers. E. A. Gibson had endured further experience of this in April 1938. In this case the loyalty of Captain R. D. Oliver, RN, Naval Adviser to the New Zealand Government, to his own Service was the stumbling block.

“I don’t know how good he was at running a fighting ship,”

Gibby declares, "but as a competent administrator he was a prize fool."

Gibson, like Smart, had absorbed the Pan American Airways lesson of employing its own efficient depot ship to establish island air bases in the North Pacific. In April Gibby had made a case for the ASB to do the same. He had specified the need for a small vessel with good cabin accommodation for twelve; adding that she must be suitable to house them in the tropics for months at a time.

A large chart room where six to eight draughtsmen could work and a saloon, were essential. Unobstructed deck space for the stowage of launches, punts and awkward cargoes would be fundamental. A capability to carry 150 tonnes, with one large hatch opening, was critical.

The ship had to be capable of keeping the sea in safety in all weather. Her endurance should be of the order of 10,000 to 13,000 kilometres over a period of three, preferably four months.

The vessel should be economical to run, both in manning and fuel. She would need to be capable of landing construction equipment at surf beaches. This required ample power, as well as a high degree of manoeuvrability in confined spaces.

The New Zealand Public Works Department had supported the proposal. An interdepartmental committee was therefore convened in Wellington to determine and recommend appropriate action. But at this meeting Captain Oliver gave an unqualified assurance that the Royal Navy could handle everything.

It had certainly suffered under the notorious "Geddes Axe". Ships and manpower had been punitively reduced until the British Fleet was barely a shadow. Oliver would be aware that it needed all the work it could attract if more vessels and men were not to disappear.

Gibson did not regard the Royal Navy as competent to handle surf requirements. Conditions at Pacific islands he believed were beyond its experience; while the tight schedules sailed by Royal Navy warships were too limiting for such work.

"The naval rating of today is a mechanic afloat," he was to say, "and, while undoubtedly an excellent man at his own job, is as much out of his element in a surfboat as the rating of 40 years ago was at home in one."

On Captain Oliver's assurances the interdepartmental committee deferred the proposition for ASB depot ships. Gibson was understandably furious.

The Chief of Air Staff had been evasive on the subject, fearing that he might prejudice his standing with Peter Fraser and Walter Nash, the two most influential ministers, who wholly supported his recommendations for development of the country's military aviation. At the time he had no assurance that the Imperial Government would ask New Zealand to undertake island surveys on its behalf.

Cochrane convened a conference on the NZPAS in November 1938 to which D. O. Haskell was invited as ASB resources were to be committed. But Cochrane directed him not to advise Gibson of either the project or that he would lead it. This thoroughly upset Doc, who was entirely loyal to the Engineer-in-Charge of the Branch. Normally he was never disposed to speak derogatorily of others, but thereafter Cochrane was the exception.

"Try as I would I could never break down the armed neutrality with which Doc treated Cochrane," Gibby declares. "There was just an unbridgeable gap between a very capable and practical New Zealand engineer and a very unpractical and energetic RAF officer who had not the faintest appreciation of what was involved in building things from scratch in primitive surroundings."

Cochrane could not resist the temptation to use his position as Chief of Air Staff to meddle in construction matters, of which he knew very little. This drove Haskell frantic and, even many years later, he commented that Cochrane's English manners did not endear him to the ASB.

At the November NZPAS conference the CAS advised that *Leander* would call at Gardner and Hull Islands in the Phoenix group; Washington in the Line Islands; and Nukunono in the Tokelaus, in addition to Christmas and Fanning Islands which were included in her original orders. Cochrane must have done this on his own initiative. It is a measure of the length he was prepared to go in New Zealand's interests.

The Chiefs of Staff — Cochrane, Duigan and Horan — embarked in *Leander* on the 5th and she immediately sailed for Suva under the command of Captain J. B. Rivett-Carnac, RN.

* * * *

E. A. Gibson first got wind of the NZPAS and that he would be leading it from an Australian named Vaskness who was Secretary to the High Commission for the Western Pacific in Suva. He received a personal letter from Doc Haskell on the same

lines a few days later — after much heart searching Doc had decided that he was not responsible to Cochrane!

The complex web and the obscurity cultivated around the NZPAS were so successful in confusing everyone that the expedition was left without supplies, equipment, personnel or dependable transport. Gibson always believed he was engaged in a military operation, albeit with a need to acquire information likely to be valuable for civil aviation purposes.

Many misunderstandings could have been avoided had Cochrane felt able to tell him that the NZPAS objectives involved an Air Council directive to survey flying-boat facilities in the equatorial islands, which would enable Isitt's military landplane route to Hawaii to be advanced beyond Fiji. But Cochrane never did.

On learning what was afoot, Gibby immediately cabled Wellington urging that a full and experienced party be sent, accompanied by complete equipment including buoys and mooring chain. A reassuring reply came by return.

Leander arrived in Suva on 11 November and Gibson was at the launch landing to meet the Chiefs of Staff. They invited him to join them that afternoon for a conference. There he learned that the cruiser was on the invariable tight, limiting schedule. He said that this would preclude the gaining of any worthwhile results, even if the whole time available were allocated to one island and assuming no time was lost through high surf making the place unworkable.

Gibson added that extra personnel, equipment and material were required.

Next day it was decided to charter a depot ship and eventually the 320 tonne Burns, *Philp Yanawai* was selected as the best of the poor choice offering. Built at Hong Kong as a river boat, she had a draft of two and a half metres and a speed which seldom attained six knots. The charter charge to the New Zealand Government would be £80 (\$160) a day.

Gibson said that she would be at risk in the hurricane belt but Cochrane requested him to draw up the charter documents. Gibson countered that he was not competent to do so and proposed that the Bank of New Zealand's Suva manager be appointed Government Agent and undertake the task.

The next argument was over the need to provide a radio set and operator with the party for Gardner Island, an uninhabited,

remote atoll. Captain Rivett-Carnac provided a solution — he said to CPO M. W. Hay, one of *Leander's* W/T Technicians: "You don't realize it, but you've volunteered".

The meeting conceded that Gibson had to have launches, surf boats, stores and provisions. It affirmed he was in sole charge of NZPAS and that the master of the *Yanawai* was answerable only to him. But Rivett-Carnac pointed out that stress of weather could prevent *Leander* landing men and equipment at some islands. Gibby could only wish that he had been present at the conference with his naval colleague, Captain Oliver.

General Duigan was Gibby's only fellow-New Zealander. He, during a social hour, whispered:

"There's one thing they've done right. This Colonial Secretary-fellow's whisky is particularly good. We should have our share of that!"

A frantic buying up of Suva's limited supply of ship's chandlery ensued. Gibson was tireless, though very outspoken. Survey parties for Hull and Gardner Islands were to sail on the 22 November in the *Yanawai*. The Chiefs of Staff, Gibson, Wimbush and a civil engineer named Roberts from the Fiji Public Works Department would go ahead in *Leander*.

Following the arrival of *Monterey*, the cruiser sailed at 1540 hours on 17 November "for an undisclosed destination". Commodore Horan, a genial man exemplary as the Senior Service host, soon had everyone feeling welcome. Bob Wimbush was left in no doubt that the members of the ward room were relieved to find him an uncomplicated chap and "not the sinister little man they had expected to be spirited aboard with false beard and dark glasses."

The first morning out Cochrane convened a conference at which the airline nature of the assignment emerged. It was clear, too, that Imperial Airways rather than TEAL, which had yet to be registered as a company and therefore could own no aircraft, was involved. Bob Wimbush explained that the British carrier required moorings laid for its survey flight. He had drafted a signal calling for chain, sinkers, anchors, old tyres and other gear. He asked that this be sent to Suva. Cochrane did not agree.

Gibson however subsequently sent it and added a request for a tonne of gelignite to be delivered by the *Yanawai*. Wimbush, sensing wider objectives for the expedition than the airline survey he had been advised in Britain was involved, became concerned

lest his assignment would not be accomplished. He therefore later approached Group Captain Cochrane, asking that Gibson and Roberts be instructed that they must assist him with sounding operations.

The CAS agreed. But when he began to direct Gibson, the New Zealander pointed out that he was in charge of the expedition. The Air Ministry representative must be told that he was only a member of a team and that ultimate responsibility in regard to work rested with Gibson, who would see that Wimbush received every assistance.

Cochrane accepted this, but affirmed that sounding work was the most important and should be as complete as possible even, if need be, to the detriment of land aerodrome investigation. The CAS knew better than to give the Imperial Government less than everything it expected. But how was Gibson to understand this?

It was Commodore Horan and Bob Wimbush when two days out from Suva who gave the New Zealander his first intimation that *Leander's* original sortie had been restricted to Christmas and Fanning Islands.

* * * *

Leander's first call was to be Hull Island in the Phoenix group and Gibby was critical of Captain Rivett-Carnac's reluctance to send off his Walrus aircraft to make a survey of Gardner Island claiming that the aircraft could have rejoined the cruiser at Hull. But the commander had doubts about range and about difficulties in reclaiming her if sea conditions were adverse. In the end he decided against launching the Walrus while on passage.

Hull Island resembles a parallelogram. A deep lagoon is surrounded by a ribbon of land 400 metres broad. A stone marae and some Polynesian graves are at the eastern end.

The cruiser called on 21 November. Gibson was putting ashore a land surveyor from Fiji named Harlon and a Fijian to survey for a land aerodrome, to carry out a topographical survey marking the largest area of deep water for sounding by the main NZPAS party on its return and to erect notices on the island proclaiming British sovereignty.

He and the Chiefs of Staff landed. Cochrane and Gibson walked over the whole of the boat passage in the reef. Both were surprised when Captain Rivett-Carnac considered it too hazardous to work, though prompt action by Major-General

Duigan alone saved an accident in the surf when the ship was leaving Hull at 1645 hours.

Once the cruiser was at sea her commander warned that it might be impossible to land Gibson at Nukunono Island in the Tokelaus because of surf. The exasperated New Zealander had forecast this all along. He decided to tranship to the *Yanawai*, if possible at Fanning Island.

He told Cochrane that he disapproved of the whole organization and equipment of the expedition. The hurried call in the Phoenix Islands had enabled him to gain little more than the knowledge that there was an obvious bird risk to aviation.

Gibson said he resented finding himself in the role of obstructionist through Cochrane's lack of appreciation of what was required for such work and his refusal to allow the time necessary for its performance without unnecessary risks.

Cochrane was seeking results far in excess of the expedition's capacity. Gibson had given, at an earlier conference aboard the cruiser, his estimate that "a complete topographical survey with accurate triangulation at Christmas Island would take eight months." Wimbush had supported this, saying that a fair survey of the lagoon would take three or four months.

The Chief of Air Staff discounted this, saying the *Yanawai* must not be delayed. He considered a flying-boat landing area could be located and buoyed in as many weeks.

"A survey party and 'pukka blasting people' can come later," he said.

Gibson may still have misunderstood the limited scope of the expedition intended by London. In attempting a full-scale professional job, he was probably compromising Cochrane who alone may have innovated the extra tasks set the NZPAS. Whatever the position, the Englishman had certainly failed to communicate the expedition's objectives.

At a morning conference in *Leander* Gibson later said that without a properly equipped depot ship NZPAS was merely asking for trouble. Cochrane retorted that Gibson had "messed up" representations for such a vessel before leaving New Zealand. Gibby answered that as Chief of Air Staff, Cochrane had not supported his representations and any chance to remedy the situation had been forfeited by the omission in advising him of the expedition, though Cochrane had had the information for some weeks.

Commodore Horan observed that "someone certainly sat on the cable for about three weeks" in New Zealand in respect of the expedition. Cochrane maintained he received it "shortly before sailing". Gibson made it clear that he would resign before attempting any future project that was so inadequately prepared.

Cochrane replied that he did not think New Zealand would again be asked by the Imperial Government to do such work because the ideas put forward were too elaborate.

Learning that the cruiser would be at Christmas Island for only two days, Gibson decided to disembark with his survey party and work ashore until the *Yanawai* could pick them up. He logged with heavy irony:

"As *Leander* will be here 48 hours there will be little survey work to do after she departs!"

* * * *

Captain Rivett-Carnac did not escape his share of frustration. The cruiser anchored off Christmas Island at 0800 hours on 24 November and in the afternoon he arranged for Lieutenant Nicholls, his Walrus pilot, to fly Wimbush round the island.

The aircraft was normally launched by catapult from the deck of *Leander*. On this occasion it not only became airborne but took the catapult cradle with it!

"The Walrus could still be used," recounts Gibson, "in the calm water lee of most islands. When it was landing, the cruiser would turn into wind and steam helm hard over to starboard. This swished her stern round and created a smooth slick, allowing the aircraft to touch down on flat water. The most 'dicy' part of the exercise was recovering her by crane from *Leander's* port side."

The size — 575 square kilometres — and land area available at Christmas Island impressed Gibson, so startling was the contrast with the Phoenix group. He thought St Stanislas Bay the only good stretch of deep water, offering a harbour well protected from the north-north-east, through east to south-south-east. Westerly winds were rare.

Cochrane took the initiative in naming aerodrome sites, choosing "London", "Paris", "Le Bourget", "Croydon" and other nostalgic references to early airline operations in Europe. The Pacific explorers of previous centuries had shown a similar sentimental approach.

But they were pretty meaningless to New Zealanders. Gibby later restrained himself from using "Rongotai", "Wigram" and

their contemporaries.

"I arranged to mark out 'Croydon' for immediate use," he records, "so that the Group Captain could land in the Walrus and have his photograph taken for the papers."

Gibson's distrust of the situation resulted in his sending back a letter to Doc Haskell in which he asked that a disclaimer of responsibility for any limited success that might attach to the NZPAS, or even loss of life, as a consequence of lack of equipment or experienced personnel, be recorded on departmental files.

Yet when Cochrane and Gibson came to say "au revoir" their parting was cordial. The New Zealander assured Cochrane he would do all possible to retrieve the situation. Each was too dedicated a professional to contemplate becoming associated with a poor job, regardless of where responsibility lay. Both had had their say but respect for the other's worth still prevailed.

Before *Leander* sailed Gibson thanked her officers for their generous co-operation and considerable achievements under strange and frustrating conditions.

Yet even after the cruiser had left there were administrative ripples — the day afterwards Gibson picked up Suva Radio calling the *Yanawai* to give her her itinerary and since the information was classified, he sent an appropriate blast.

The ill-assorted personnel and equipment of the NZPAS prompted him to despatch an advanced report to his Department in Wellington. This attracted a signal from Cochrane on 15 November ordering him not to communicate with his head office unless requiring instructions or assistance. Gibson resolved to act at his own discretion, a course which he felt justified by an episode that occurred on the 28th.

Jim Henderson, the 28-year-old surveyor from Oamaru in charge of the party on Gardner Island, had damaged some ribs. A well-built, powerful man, he had tried to carry on, but the pain increased to such a degree that CPO M. W. Hay called in *Leander* for medical assistance. Henderson had been a member of the first ASB party sent to reconnoitre Raoul Island during 1936-37 and was used to roughing it. The cruiser's surgeon examined him, quickly ordered him aboard and Jim was out of the NZPAS after a week. Bill Lee assumed charge of the party and work on the island.

The *Yanawai* had arrived a few days before *Leander* and

Bray, her master, a religious but difficult man, sent off Mr MacRenyie, his chief officer, as soon as the warship anchored, to request the assistance of five men in carrying stores to the beach. ("Mac" MacRenyie was a typical hard-case schooner skipper from the South Seas and must have cut a picturesque figure on *Leander's* quarterdeck.)

Cochrane responded by having a Lieut. Thompson sent with 50 men. Bray had been sending his surfboat into the outer edge of the fringing reef, 400 yards from shore. Fijian crewmen, experienced in such work, carried the supplies from there over sharp slippery coral to the beach. Bray only wanted the naval party to take them on to Henderson's camp and to assist in the erection of tents.

But Cochrane appeared and insisted the ratings "speed up carriage of the stores from the surfboat to the shore." The men were wearing sandshoes and could not keep their feet. They continually fell into holes. Most of the stores got wet, much was ruined and some was a total loss. What did come through was strewn along the beach over nearly a kilometre.

Then Cochrane ordered that the water condenser was not to be put ashore. He said only about five litres of fresh water a day per man was needed and only sufficient drums to meet this need for three weeks, with a small margin, were to be landed.

"If they run out of water, I am sure they could find it by digging wells," the Chief of Air Staff had declared.

Bill Lee refused to proceed with the survey. He was brushed aside and, as a final bit of help, *Leander's* men hauled one of *Yanawai's* surfboats over the reef at high water and left it on the beach.

This boat was vital to the success of work at other islands and Bray told Cochrane he would not have the manpower to retrieve it. Cochrane told him to leave it behind, then returned to the cruiser, which soon sailed.

The *Yanawai* subsequently landed all water and stores. She had been delayed at Gardner Island recovering other consignments strewn along the beach and in retrieving her surfboat.

When she eventually returned with Gibson to the island Bill Lee's party was down to 45 litres of fresh water. Gilbertese settlers had dug 33 wells, but this had produced 45 litres a day suitable only for themselves.

Nevertheless, testimonial to the overriding qualities the Hon. Ralph Cochrane brought to the task of Chief of the New Zealand Air Staff is the affection in which E. A. Gibson, in retrospect, holds him. The headaches he brought to Gibby and his associates are forgotten.

"It is true that he was typical of the officers of any British organization of the time," Gibson writes, "except that he had energy and vision far beyond that which one had come to expect of such people. Cochrane had his shortcomings, as all of us do. One of his worst was that he had no idea of how to control New Zealanders.

"He just could not realize that Kiwis have to be led all the way and those who are not capable of leadership in its widest sense soon lose the respect and command of those under them. At the time of NZPAS in 1938 I was very upset that he had tried to drive a wedge in my chain of command to the extent of giving different instructions to Haskell from those I was giving out in the Pacific.

"But it was Cochrane's drive and foresight which gave us a real Royal New Zealand Air Force, in time so short that I am certain no one else could have achieved it.

"Let us never forget that this British officer did so at a very critical time and, with all his faults, enabled us to establish a civil and military air route between New Zealand and Hawaii.

"I had more than one stand up row with him, but it never affected our personal regard for each other. Cochrane earned a permanent place in New Zealand history; so let us dwell on what he did for us at a very critical moment in the country's development."

His term of attachment ended in 1938 and he returned to Britain — to raise the redoubtable RAF 617 Squadron which, as chief of Number Five Group, he sent in on the historic raid which successfully breached the German Mohne and Eder dams during the Second World War.

Ralph Cochrane retired from active service with the rank of Air Chief Marshal and a knighthood. He lived to the age of 82, dying in December 1977.

VI WIMBUSH

Once *Leander* had sailed from Christmas Island the NZPAS party there settled down to work. Gibby and Bob Wimbush, their respective roles defined and their objectives clear, got along well. Said Gibby of this Englishman:

"He was a good chap and very loyal to me throughout. He was a born gadgeteer and much of the success of the marine surveys was due to his persistence in repairing gear. He had a penchant for getting sunburnt . . . but his one shortcoming was a complete lack of experience of work under rigorous and primitive conditions."

Darkest Africa and the Arabian deserts were seemingly inadequate preparation for the coral atolls of the Pacific! Indeed, it would have been remarkable had the luckless Wimbush not wilted occasionally, for he was destined to work on reefs and islands that were mere upthrusts in this oceanic vastness. Often these rose only a metre or so above sea level. Average noon temperatures were between 32 and 34 degrees Celsius in the shade, 50 degrees in the sun. The normal working day was twelve hours, while at night assault by insects and land crabs³⁷ was regarded as part of living under hard camp conditions.

"Wimbush told me a great deal, of hydrography and of the British aircraft likely to fly the trans-Pacific route," Gibson says.

Imperial Airways in 1936 had called up a design study by Short Brothers of a straightforward enlargement of the S23 Empire flying-boat to carry mails and passengers across the North Atlantic. The specification called for the aircraft to fly between Ireland and Newfoundland without refuelling, carrying two tonne of mail and a crew of five for 4000 kilometres against a 65 km/h head wind.

The type was to be known as the S26, or to Imperial Airways as the "G" Class flying-boats. Three had been ordered at a cost of £87,325 (\$174,650) each, compared to £41,000 (\$82,000) for a S23. Deliveries had been delayed until after the eight S30s were flying; but the prototype S26 was expected to fly about July 1939. Additional aircraft of the type could be ordered for a trans-Pacific

twice the thrill and skill. Capsized again . . .”

The *Yanawai's* boat was sent away to the rescue; but it, too, was soon in trouble. Eventually, with darkness approaching, the local Burns Philp launch had to put out to achieve a touch and go rescue.

“Two hours in the lagoon, but this time no instruments,” Bob recorded nonchalantly, then added: “But incurred wrath of Skipper.”

He had cabled London from Fanning Island for spares for his equipment, but once the *Yanawai* was at sea again he worked desperately to make it serviceable.

The time had come to gather in all the members of the NZPAS expedition. The ship therefore headed for Christmas Island, where Roberts — a competent professional when away from the drink — joined. On passage to the Phoenix group Captain Bray passed within a mile of Enderbury Island at 2000 hours. He beamed a searchlight on the American camp there. Its members had not seen the *Yanawai* approach, so were hugely relieved when she identified herself — they seemed almost nervous wrecks from “Japitis.”

Gardner Island was reached at 0600 on 30 January, 1939. The sea was flat. There was no surf and *Yanawai* tied up to the wreck of the steamer *Norwich City* which lay breaking up on the reef. Bill Lee came off by native canoe, sunburnt as brown as the Gilbertese who were with him. Gibson was greeted ashore by CPO Hay and Lieut. Ritchie, a retired naval officer who had joined the expedition as cook and later became Bray's third mate.

Gibby was delighted and impressed with the results attained at both Christmas and Gardner Islands. A week's sounding work remained to be done at the latter. Rats which had poured out of the *Norwich City* infested the place — Wimbush asked Hay what he should do when, sleeping ashore under canvas on the first night, they ran all over him. “You just get used to 'em,” he was told. Thereafter Bob returned each evening to *Yanawai* and slept aboard.

The reef at low water was like glass. Sharks two metres long wriggled over the slimy surface in search of food inshore. “One dashed between my legs and bowled me,” Gibby recounted. “It would be hard to say who made the best time — I for the shore or the shark for the open sea!”

The fresh water supply for the Gilbertese settlers was checked

and samples taken on request for the High Commissioner for the Western Pacific. Gibson assessed the atoll as having possibilities in the lagoon for flying-boats, but poor for an aerodrome site. He signalled Wellington that Suwarrow and Danger Islands should be inspected.

Gibby planned to reach Suva by 2 March and was furious when on 8 February orders arrived for him to join the liner *Niagara* there on 3 March and sail in her to Auckland. This would allow no time "to clear up all the muddle from *Yanawai's* voyage." He requested a fortnight, assisted by Lee, in which to do so, adding that the alternative was to curtail the survey.

"It is a great relief to have an able lieutenant like Lee to run part of the organizing and do some thinking without being told how," Gibson recorded.

The whole party was embarked on 5 February and the *Yanawai* sailed at 1215 hours, though not before a Solomon Islander crushed a finger in a winch. Gibson at once logged the need for a real depot ship, recording that as gangrene was certain the man had agreed to unskilled amputation with alcohol as the sole anaesthetic. Thereby he "suffered a real risk of alcoholic poisoning in consuming a bottle of Three Star brandy."

Gibson reported that the whole rear of the *Yanawai's* 'tween decks space was open. Only railway sleepers bolted to the upper and lower deck beams to enclose the complete after part of the vessel held off a following sea that could otherwise have swamped her. Nowhere in the 5000 kilometres between Fiji and Hawaii could stores or equipment be obtained. No worthwhile medical attention was available throughout the expedition; while "a large stock of temperate climate gelignite had to be stored in temperatures far in excess of any safety level conceived by the Nobel Explosive Company."

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At Hull Island Japanese throughout one day jammed any broadcast begun by the *Yanawai*. Seven of their call-signs were identified. Harlon, a land surveyor from Fiji, came off in a Tokelauan canoe with Jones, the Administrative Officer, who at one time had been mate of the New Zealand government steamer *Maui Pomare* when she carried an ASB party to Raoul Island in the Kermadecs.

Jones loaned Wimbush a converter from his radio set which

at last enabled him to get his gear working again. Gibby hailed this as a brilliant achievement, "a great triumph which reduced the expedition's workload while ensuring added accuracy to the surveying exercises."

"I managed to rob the converter of some of its entrails," explains Bob Wimbush. "Result, a credit to Heath Robinson but it worked again, much to my gratification."

Captain Bray nevertheless blew up because Bob used batteries for which Bray was responsible. After a valedictory soaking in the surf on the way out to the ship, the full NZPAS team — including Harlon's Fijian companion with a 100 millimetre nail through his foot — sailed on 12 February at 1500 hours.

A signal received at 2200 hours that night affirmed the urgency of the party's return as its leader and his reports were required for a Commonwealth Defence Conference soon to convene in Wellington. Gibson replied to Suva that he was curtailing work immediately, copying his signal to "Summit" in New Zealand.

Bray told him that the ship was critically low in fresh water and that, if he planned to go to the Tokelau Islands, she would have to proceed to Western Samoa to replenish her tanks. Despite his signal, Gibby decided to go to Nukunono.

The strain was beginning to tell.

"It requires tact to keep New Zealand peace when fatigue sets in," records Wimbush.

Nukunono was reached at 0630 on 14 February. Notorious for being surfbound, the island, that morning, was set in total calm. Eight seagoing canoes were placed at the expedition's disposal by a welcoming committee comprising Faipule, the local magistrate, a medical man and a policeman — all Tokelauans. Ashore, the 296 inhabitants lived in a model village where "everything from sanitary arrangements to matrimony seemed perfectly organized."

To Wimbush the island, after the barren atolls of the previous weeks, was "an absolute paradise . . . so obvious as a flying-boat base you can't 'dilly Nuku dally Nono'. So only two days to measure up and get things on paper for posterity. I lost my watch on Washington reef and now my last shirt has gone on wages to Nukunonians."

He wrote home:

"The Japs are beginning to sniff around these waters for fish.

The cost of this 'deep sea' Hong Kong punt is a whopping £80 (\$160) a day, 71 days pay for me less bachelor tax!"

"Even Wimbush is deeply impressed," noted Gibson. "New Zealand administration in the Tokelau Islands cannot be as bad as the Colonial Office says."

The lagoon at Nukunono proved easily the best so far discovered for marine aircraft operations. Depth of water exceeded 16 metres. No bottom was found. Alo, a local official, was so impressed by a trial blast of the hard coral that he asked for a passage to be blown at the village landing to allow canoes to shoot the reef in safety.

The *Yanawai* sailed to a traditional Polynesian farewell at 1600 hours on 15 February. A high north-east wind and a tropical downpour at 0200 hours on the 17th when she arrived off Apia, Western Samoa prevented Bray from entering harbour until 0900.

The town, its churches and trading stores are set attractively along a crescent bay. Wimbush told his family the Australians had work for him at Lord Howe Island after he finished in New Zealand about mid-May.

"We are now in southern latitudes," he said. "It's raining an inch-and-a-half (75 millimetres) an hour. The ship's engines are vibrating like fatigued jellies. In a hurricane she will behave like a one-ended canoe."

Mr A. C. Turnbull, the New Zealand Administrator, after giving the NZPAS party lunch at "Vailima," Robert Louis Stevenson's old home which was then the official residence, drove his guests 32 kilometres to Mulinafua at the western end of Upolu. He suggested coralheads in the lagoon could be cleared to provide a seadrome. Six months later Wimbush returned to make hydrographic studies.

The *Yanawai* sailed at 1700 hours, bucked a Force Six gale until the 22 February when Ovalau was in sight and quietly docked at 2300 hours that night in Suva to conclude the New Zealand Pacific Aviation Survey expedition.

The Earhart Disappearance: The British Connection THE ODYSSEY

In the previous sections of this book, the research technique used was to start with the most reliable information available, use what was acceptable, and add an extrapolation or expansion where necessary. These same sources, documents and mission/search personnel are available to any serious researcher. In this section, new ground is broken. From information in "The Searches," an obvious and logical projection of the forces set in motion were used to trace the Earhart odyssey. In so doing, the reasons for one of the greatest cover-ups in United States history and the reasons why the truth was withheld became known.

To anyone not ideologically biased, the fact that certain elements in the Roosevelt administration (later identified as the "War Cabinet") were behind the Earhart flight subterfuge is evident. Of greatest concern was not the Japanese threat to the United States in 1937, which was minimal, but the threat to the Communist forces in northern China and, to a lesser extent, Siberia. Thus, the Japanese invasion of the Chinese mainland in July 1937 was a threat. With Roosevelt in this ideological camp and running the armed forces, Army and Navy personnel had to become fellow travelers or "be transferred to Guam" as required by his dictum issued prior to World War II. Of course, Guam would not be defended in the event a war began, and military personnel stationed there would become prisoners of war if they survived the invasion of the island.

When Earhart transmitted the names of the mandated islands she overflew, starting with Jaluit, these messages were picked up by *Itasca* radio operators. Once the cover for the "overflight" of Japanese mandated territory had been blown, the alternate Hull Island became her destination. She may not have wanted to go there initially, but after getting instructions using the U.S. Navy-supplied receiver aboard the *Electra* on a designated (secret) frequency and upon the coercion of Noonan, she decided to make what amends she could for her misconduct.

Adequate documentary evidence exists to support the initial leg of what happened after Earhart landed on Hull. She and Noonan were taken by Captain John W. Jones (1901-1965) in his small motorized sailboat from Hull Island to Sydney Island, a distance of 60 miles. Jones was a master mariner with papers in both sail and steam. July weather in the Phoenix Islands was generally tranquil and he could communicate with Naval Radio Tutuila (Pago Pago) and could receive weather forecasts from both there and Apia, Western Samoa. He knew, however, that a floatplane from the *Colorado* was likely to be landed on the lagoon at Hull because he had told the Navy that it was feasible. The solution was to transport Earhart and Noonan to Sydney Island and instruct the natives to keep themselves and their "guests" hidden when the pilots flying floatplanes from the *Colorado* searched the Phoenix Islands.

Except for personal possessions, a Samoan female companion for Earhart because only male natives were on Sydney, and a small supply of food, the only other cargo was the film magazine from the aerial camera, the reason for the entire Earhart flight and "disappearance." It could have caused an international

incident and an early outbreak of hostilities. The primary reason for the PBY-1 flight from Pearl Harbor was to retrieve the film. Apparently, that aircraft had been turned back by weather. Did Lt. Lambrecht, flying a floatplane from the *Colorado* and landing on the lagoon at Hull on 9 July 1937, retrieve the film? Lambrecht's observer, Jim "Ash" Wilson, said no film was picked up at that time. This author believes him.



British resident manager at Hull Island and Sydney Island, Captain John William Jones, Royal Navy Reserve, was key individual in Earhart disappearance.

Photo credit - Via Heather Jones

The search phase of the Earhart mission ended with the fliers on Sydney Island along with the woman traveling companion for Earhart. The *Electra* was off the reef on the northwest corner of Hull Island. Now the Odyssey begins. This analyst is entering virgin territory. With careful research and analysis, however, answers are forthcoming.

The Earhart *Electra* had been flown its last mile when it landed wheels-up on the sandy portion of the fringing reef of Hull Island during the morning of 2 July 1937. Earhart might have thought differently and been promised otherwise. After all, her airplane had been brought back from Hawaii in a basket, the damaged parts replaced, and the bill paid by parties unknown, but suspected. Once the Earhart *Electra* had been hidden from the *Colorado* aviators (and, so far as is known,

the reply from Washington, "Permission granted for *Ontario* to return to home base," signed by Admiral J. O. Richardson, USN, Assistant Chief of Naval Operations.

During more recent interviews with Blakeslee, he stated that not being required to participate in the search was the reason he took his ship back to port. Also, he was short of coal (fuel), water, and supplies and, with only short-range low-frequency radio equipment, could do little to assist in the search.

Ship captains, civilian and military, are obligated by international law to render aid and comfort to personnel of ships and aircraft in distress. Even in wartime, naval ships are not exempted from international maritime law. Although not criticized, Blakeslee was backed up by both his local commander, Captain Milne, and the CNO in Washington. Further questions are raised when these messages are examined. The first concerns Milne's. What was so "imperative" that the *Ontario* was needed back at Tutuila immediately? Blakeslee had no answer for this and couldn't think of anything done that was other than ordinary duty. According to the *Ontario* log, the engine was torn down for dockside repair and only routine duties were undertaken the remainder of that year. This duty was "imperative?" Further, normal assignment and relief of station ships like the coal-burning *Ontario* ordinarily do not come to the attention of the CNO. Usually an officer of far lesser rank handled the lighter traffic. In this instance, however, a senior United States Naval Officer was personally involved in releasing this coal-burning rust bucket from duty. Why? The context of the radiograms makes no sense on casual perusal. No imperative duty existed for the *Ontario* immediately upon its arrival there on 9 July 1937. Obviously, some shift in planning had occurred in Washington. At the time Milne had sent the 2 July radiogram, a mission did exist. By the time the *Ontario* returned to Tutuila 7 days later, however, the requirement for the ship had been superseded. Some other ship had been given the assignment originally intended for the *Ontario*. Personnel at both Naval Operations (OPNAV), Washington, D.C., and the naval station (NAVSTA) at Pago Pago, Tutuila, American Samoa, knew what this mission was. The reason for the exchange of "flimsies" was to inform 14th Naval District (Hawaii) Commandant Admiral Orin Murfin and Earhart Search Task Force Commander Captain Dowell to keep hands off the *Ontario* as it was not to be used in the Earhart search. The "imperative" task for *Ontario* didn't develop until early September, and was not as originally planned because of several unforeseen events and requirements which were:

1. Retrieval of film canister from the Earhart Electra required a fast return to the West Coast under guard.
2. Acquired knowledge of Earhart's dysentery required a drastic change of plans.
3. Medical supplies and a Navy tropical disease medic had to be sent from the West Coast via a fast ship.
4. Suitable medical facilities had to be prepared at the quarantine station on Aunu'u Island just off the southeast coast of Tutuila.
5. Selection of a destroyer, from the West Coast, was required so that no interference with scheduled fleet operations would occur.
6. Selection of a naval specialist in tropical diseases had to be made and that person transported to the West Coast and on to Samoa via a destroyer, with the

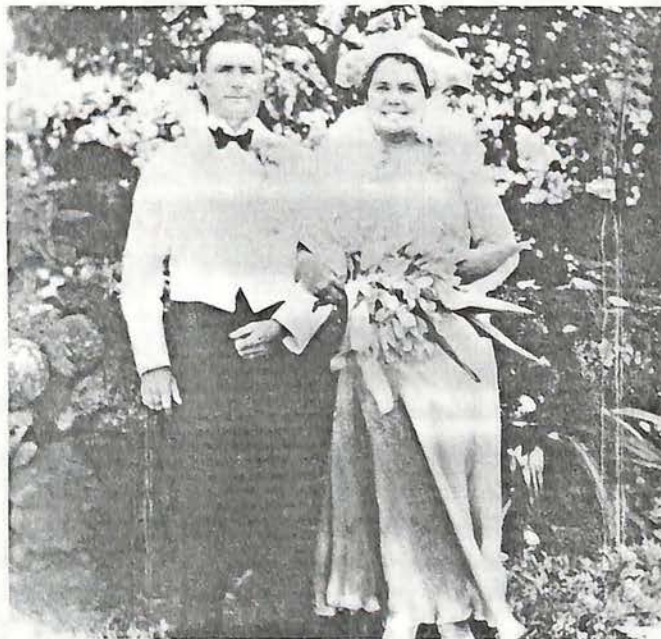
latest medicine.

RETRIEVING THE FILM CANISTER

The first attempt to retrieve the film canister was made by the pilot of a PBY-1 sent from PatWing2 in Hawaii. He was forced to turn back because of severe weather. Admiral Murfin's original intention had been that three of these aircraft, with Howland as an operations base with the *Itasca*, *Colorado*, and the *Swan* as tenders, would provide a superior method for a quick initial search of the Howland Island area. No other PBYs were sent on orders from Washington. An aircraft tender, the U.S.S. *Swan*, was at Howland as a support ship with 10,000 gallons of gas for an expedient search for Amelia Earhart. The 4-5 July diversion of all available surface ships to a point 281 miles north of Howland was wasted effort. Men from the *Swan* recovered the fuel cache on Canton which had been initially left for Earhart.

The second attempt to recover the film was Lt. Lambrecht's "spontaneous" landing on the lagoon at Hull Island.

Existing charts (available on the *Colorado*) showed numerous coral outcroppings in the lagoon, and it is difficult to believe that Lambrecht would have taken the initiative to land there. Captain Friedell was in direct contact with Radio Arlington and would have cleared the landing with Washington. The real reason Lambrecht landed on the lagoon was to retrieve the film from the Electra. Noonan was supposed to have given it to Captain Jones, the British resident manager on Hull Island, who was to give it to the USN as represented by Lambrecht. James "Ash" Wilson, Jr., his back seat observer, would have carried the film canister on his lap on the return flight to the *Colorado*. During a lengthy interview, Wilson stated that no transfer of film occurred. His four years in naval aviation (1936-1940) were a bitter experience, and he resigned in 1940 to fly for Pan American Airways where he had a most distinguished career.



Captain Jones on his second wedding day in April 1936 following his return to Apia, Western Samoa, from Hull Island service, 1937 to 1940.

Photo credit - Via Heather Jones



United States Coast Guard cutter *Taney* made south seas cruise in September and October 1937. When it stopped at Hull Island, the resident manager, Captain Jones, R.N.R., came aboard.

Photo credit - United States Coast Guard

Item Number 15

"At 0811 13 November came up along the southwest shore of Hull Island and stopped off at the village at the northwest point, where the Union Jack was flying from a staff near a long shed. A small skiff came out to the ship with two native paddlers and a white man, who proved to be Mr. Jones, the Deputy Commissioner for the Phoenix Group. He stated that he was alone on the island, except for 39 Tokelau natives; that he had a radio transmitter and receiver with which he could work Australia; that he had a small sailing vessel in which it was his custom to visit other islands of the group; also that he expected to raise about 90 tons of copra a year on Hull Island, which would be handled through Burns-Philp, Ltd., of Apia. He stated that he would be glad to have a party come ashore at Hull Island, but that there was not enough water on the reef to admit the passage of one of our boats. When he heard that we were going past Sydney, he requested that we take his skiff on board and leave it there, as the natives there had no boat of any kind. This was done, Mr. Jones going ashore in an outrigger canoe, and at 1105 *Taney* proceeded on course for Sydney."

Item Number 16.

"At 1555 13 November, anchored on the shelf of the reef off Sydney Island, in 20 fathoms of water, with 90 fathoms on the port chain; the wind being from east northeast, force 2. Lowered motor surfboat and Lieutenant Kenner and the commanding officer went in to take a look at the landing place marked on the chart. A few natives appeared on the beach to watch us and indicated the landing spot by arm signals. Decided that it would be too risky to try and effect a landing with the ship's boats, so motor surfboat returned to the *Taney* and towed to the beach the small skiff brought from Hull Island, with three Hawaiian boys as paddlers. The small skiff negotiated a landing successfully, the three boys swimming back through the surf to the motor boat, which



Captain Jones aboard United States Coast Guard Cutter *Taney* off Hull Island, October 1937. *Taney* cruise report contains details of interview with Jones and leaves little doubt as to his involvement in Earhart disappearance.

Photo credit - Via Kenneth Lum King, Hawaii

ONI regarding Japanese fortifications of their mandated islands.



'Headquarters building at United States Naval Station, Tutuila, American Samoa. Governor Milne, Captain, U.S. Navy, served here from early 1936 to the middle of 1938, a duty of two and a half years. The normal two-year tour was extended six months in Milne's case.

Photo credit - National Archives Negative #80-G-410148

Milne's prior understanding of this sensitive problem may have had something to do with his posting to American Samoa following an earlier posting at Guam (see Dorwardt, 1983). These were the two United States Naval Stations closest to the Japanese Mandated Islands. To illustrate Milne's clout in Washington, it was he who requested the release of the *Ontario*, his station ship, on the phony plea that it was "imperative" to operations at Pago Pago. A detailed check of the *Ontario* log for the 18 months following its return to Pago Pago (9 July 1937 to 31 December 1938) shows nothing other than routine duties, except for an "official" visit to Aunu'u Island. Certainly there was nothing which could legitimately be classified as "imperative." When a ship or aircraft is in distress, international law of the sea requires that any ship in a position to render assistance in a reasonable period of time must abandon its normal pursuits and do so. Milne violated that old rule of the sea. His selfish pursuits at Pago Pago and catering to the native population appeared to be more important than searching for Earhart and Noonan.

Or so it would appear from the overt facts released to the public. There is good reason to believe that Milne knew a good deal more about Earhart's whereabouts on 2 July 1937 and during the remainder of his governorship. More realistically, it may be noted that he knew about her presence on a day-by-day basis from 2 July 1937 until shortly before the end of his extended term as governor.

Being acquainted with the actual situation in his sphere of jurisdiction, it is obvious why he prevailed upon the brass in Washington to have the *Ontario* withdrawn from the "search" on his recommendation. The "essential" requirement, i.e., transporting the fliers from the Phoenix Islands to his jurisdiction, did not materialize because of the requirement to return the film to the

United States as soon as possible and the state of Earhart's health, which required immediate attention.

Milne's corollary duty was recruiting Captain Jones, his Apia neighbor who was well known to the naval fraternity at Pago Pago because of his radio "fist" and visits to the naval station. In 1936 Jones became prominent in the Samoas during the maritime inquiry into the sinking of the *Tiafau*, an inter-island vessel which floundered in January 1936. Because of his nautical background as a master mariner, he was selected to establish the circumstances of the loss of the vessel during the initial court of inquiry.¹

Providing an inter-country water taxi had been a problem for decades even when the German governor of Western Samoa (1914) and the naval governor of American Samoa had found it necessary to license the vessels in the interest of public safety. The principal function of the inter-island service was transporting passengers to and from Pago Pago for connection with the steamers S.S. *Mariposa* and the S.S. *Monterey*. Therefore, Milne had an understandable interest in the safety and continuation of that service.

Milne's earlier contacts with the ONI relative to fortification of the Japanese mandates made him aware of the value of recruiting knowledgeable civilians as intelligence agents. When the call went out from Intelligence Chief Holmes at the ONI, word was circulating about Jones going to Hull Island in the Phoenix Group for Burns-Philp. A retail outlet for this company had been in Pago Pago since 1932, and it was one of the few businesses allowed on the island. While the actual details of how the recruiting occurred and by whom in the United States naval community is unknown, Milne obviously endorsed it. Prior to Jones' departure from Apia for Hull aboard the M.V. *Makoa* on 14 May 1937, he had been informed about frequencies to be used, coding, reporting requirements, and his remuneration. While documentary evidence does not exist due to its probable verbal nature Jones' blood daughters have testified that he was working for both British intelligence and United States naval intelligence before World War II at Hull. Documentary proof of his British Connection is available. Because of Roosevelt's penchant for secrecy, Jones' American Connection is not documented by the written word, but by his actions. Someone in the Phoenix Islands was in radio contact with Naval Radio Tutuila in mid-1937 after Jones activated his radio station on Hull. Perhaps the best evidence of this is what occurred during the search of the Phoenix Islands conducted by the crew of the *Colorado* in July 1937.

1. Someone provided information as to the suitability for landing on the northwest corner of Hull Island on the sand of the fringing reef.

2. Lambrecht knew in advance that it was safe to land on the lagoon at Hull. His mission was to pick up the film canister.

3. Someone told Jones to move Earhart and Noonan to nearby Sydney Island and keep them hidden in the native shacks when the floatplanes from the *Colorado* were above that island.

4. Someone instructed Jones to sink the *Electra* off the platform reef at Hull.

¹ *Pacific Islands Monthly*, March 1936, Page 45

5. Jones coordinated the transfer of Earhart and Noonan from Sydney to a United States naval destroyer for transport to American Samoa.

6. Communication with American Samoa regarding details of the flight and while the fliers were on the islands of Hull and Sydney was ongoing.

7. Jones provided Earhart and Noonan with supplies brought to Hull by the H.M.S. *Achilles*. These included food, sundries, toilet articles, etc. not available at Hull.

8. Jones notified the United States Navy of Earhart's problem with dysentery and her need for medical treatment.

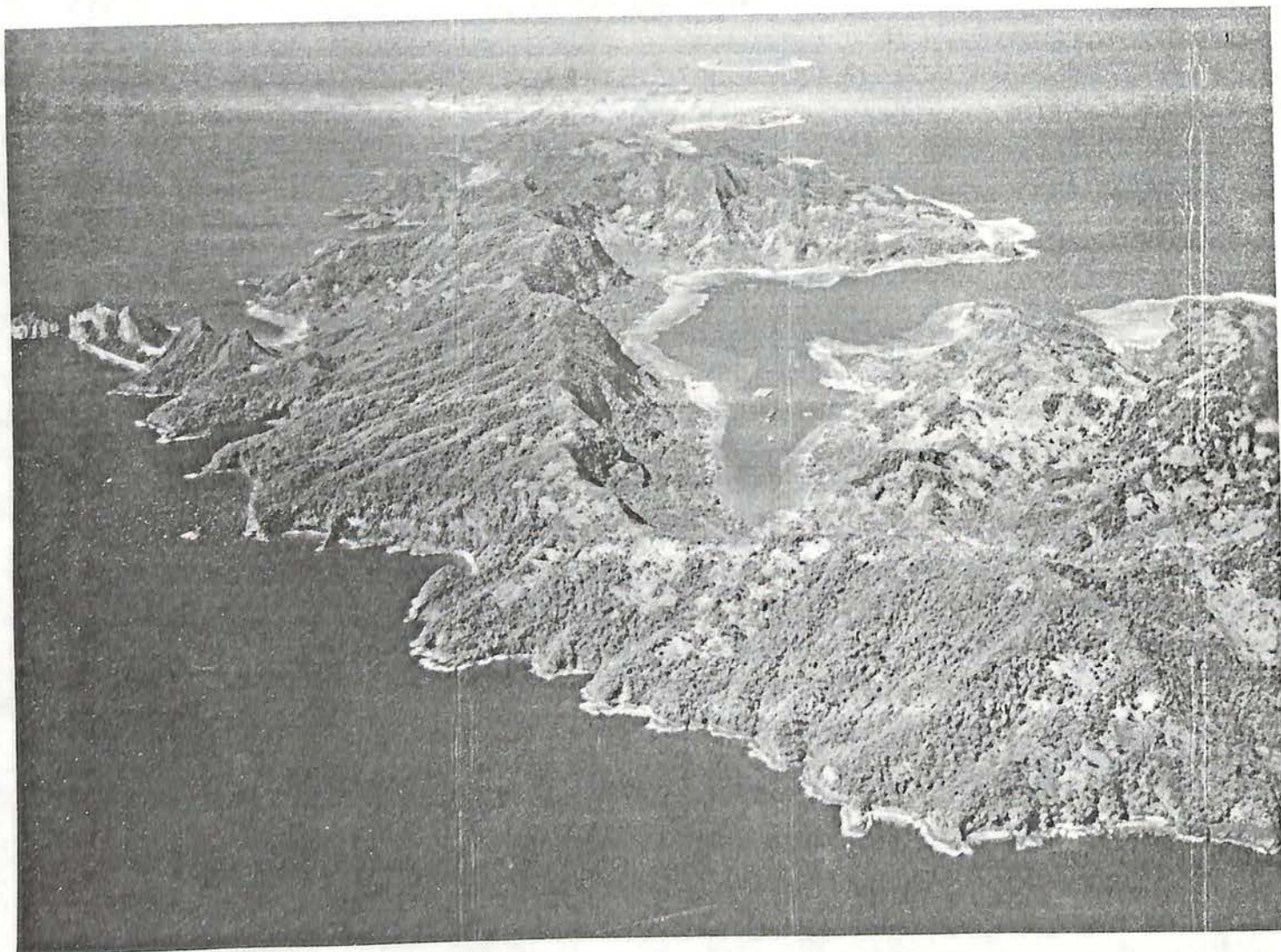
CAPTAIN MILNE'S TENURE AS GOVERNOR OF AMERICAN SAMOA

(20 January 1936 to 3 June 1938)

The long-established tenure for a naval officer assigned by the Navy Department to the billet as military governor of American Samoa was two years. Additional military officers held most of the subordinate offices which ran the administration of the island group. Through the use of the 70-man Fita Fita native guard detachment, for

all intents and purposes, American Samoa was under Martial Law. During the 50-year tenure of the U.S. Navy Department, few abuses of this control were reported. Also worth noting is that a high-ranking naval medical officer oversaw the health of the natives through a network of Navy-constructed medical facilities on various islands. In a few rare occasions, the medical officer assigned outranked the governor. Administrative control of American Samoa was shifted from the U.S. Navy to the Department of the Interior in 1951.

The assignment of the naval governor had the approval of the Navy Department, Secretary of the Navy, and the President of the United States as Commander in Chief of the military forces. During the two peacetime decades between the World Wars, the two-year duty assignment remained quite constant. (See the historical record on the accompanying chart.) Captain Milne's tenure was an obvious exception to the established peacetime precedent. His term was extended six months beyond the established two-year term without any official reason being given for the extension. After Milne's assignment of two and a half years, successive governors' tenures reverted to the established two-year period.



Panoramic aerial view of Tutuila Island, American Samoa, with Pago Pago Bay in center and Aunu'u Island, an outrider, off the southeast corner of Tutuila. Aunu'u Island played a major role in fliers' disappearance.

Photo credit - National Archives Negative #80-G-81886

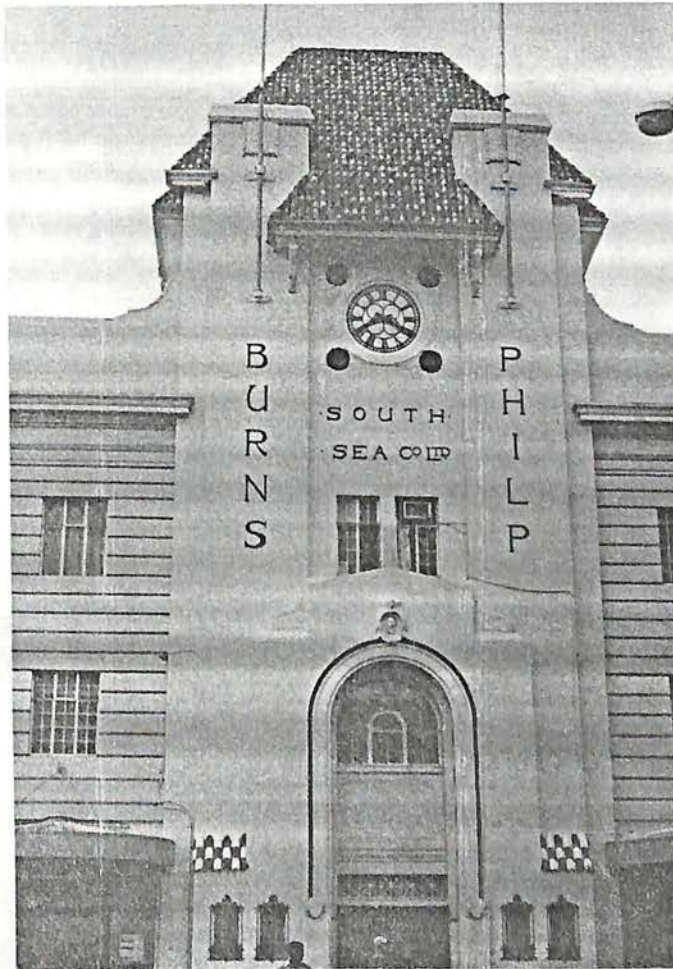
weeks at a speed of 18 knots. Preparation for sea at San Diego to Sydney Island (seven days), to Aunu'u Island (three days), vicinity of that island (no refueling, two days), and return to San Diego (nine days).

A survey of incarceration locales was completed and on-site investigations were made to find the best possible place for detention. Aunu'u Island in American Samoa met the criteria for isolation, security, and accessibility, all of which would have been considered necessary and desirable.

Despite the attributes of the site, a notable lack of consideration on the part of the USN for the "human factor" is reflected and that is what ultimately led to Earhart's demise. It was no secret that both Earhart and Noonan had weak points to their characters. Noonan was an alcoholic. Earhart could not stand confinement of any sort, even in a "gilded cage." She was a finicky eater and normal or conventional fare had little appeal for her. In addition, both cherished their friends above all else. Each

had activities scheduled after the flight was completed. Noonan had just married a beautiful woman and had new business connections with bright prospects for the future. All of this was ruined by the stubborn misconduct of his flying companion. His motivation to escape detention was overwhelming and any possibility was worth considering. Using a raft to cross a one-mile channel seemed like a reasonable risk. In his stupor and impaired state of reasoning, brought on by intoxicating brews like "coconut toddies," he miscalculated and drowned in the cross-channel escape attempt.

Following Noonan's demise, tighter security would have been provided for Earhart, and further restrictions added. With this last human link with her former life and world gone, her despair must have been accelerated. Sleeplessness, lack of appetite, resistance to the coarse diet, the futility of serving an indeterminate sentence, and finally the basic lack of the will to live were all factors in her ultimate demise.



Captain John W. Jones, RNR, was hired as a civilian by Burns-Philip (South Seas) in May 1937 to manage their copra plantations at Hull and Sydney Islands. In early August 1937, Fiji archive records show that Capt. Jones was appointed Deputy High Commissioner for the British Western Pacific Islands and Resident Manager of the Phoenix Island Group (with no prior colonial office experience). Clearly, Capt. Jones had sponsorship in very high places by one or more interested governments.

Photo credit - James Donahue

report of the *Taney* for October 1937, a document which was classified for more than 30 years. Not classified was Jones' presence on Hull Island. The late Edwin H. Bryan, Jr., of the Bishop Museum in Honolulu identified Jones in a 1942 book *American Polynesia and the Hawaiian Chain*.



Captain John Jones' beautiful daughters, Jane and Heather, born, respectively on Hull Island in 1937 and 1938. Daughters said that their father was working as an agent for both British and United States naval intelligence while on Hull Island from 1937 to 1940.

Photo credit - Via Heather Jones

THE CAPTAIN JONES-UNITED STATES NAVY (TUTUILA) CONNECTION

When interviewed, Jones' two blood daughters, Heather and Jane (married names withheld by agreement) stated that their father was an active agent for both British and United States naval intelligence while at Hull Island from 1937 to 1940. The truth of this is easily established from records in the New Zealand National Archives with reference to British authorities in the Western Pacific area. Documents which can be cited include:

1. H.M.S. *Achilles* cruise report, May through August 1937.
2. Request for "legal" radio for Hull Island, PIM reference.
3. Royal Navy reference to Jones as "Phoenix Island" resident manager.
4. Jones' report to the High Commissioner on use of Hull Island as a landing field (New Zealand State Archives).
5. Further activities:
 - a. Union Jack in evidence October 1937 (USCG *Taney* cruise report).
 - b. Jones rehired by British authorities in 1938.
 - c. Radio communications with Canton Island and Ocean Island.
 - d. Integration of Gilbert natives and retirement of Tokelau natives.

In available records, little documentary evidence exists that Jones was actively employed as an intelligence

agent by the United States Navy through the naval station at Pago Pago. Such documents, if available, were still classified as of 1987. Sufficient actions of the United States Navy and United States Coast Guard prove that Jones was indeed an intelligence agent for the United States Navy. One action was the *Colorado's* trip from Honolulu on 4 July 1937 and another the floatplane landing on the Hull lagoon on 9 July. One definite topic of conversation on board was, "Where did the spurious radio signals received on the aircraft frequencies come from?" When Lambrecht returned to the ship after talking to Jones at Hull, he knew their source was Jones' high-powered radio. This and other facts learned from Jones, including his name, were not released to the public. Prior to 1987, one of the four surviving aviators from the *Colorado* revealed that it was well known aboard the ship (after the lagoon landing) that Jones had a high-powered transmitter on Hull. He had to be the source of the signals.

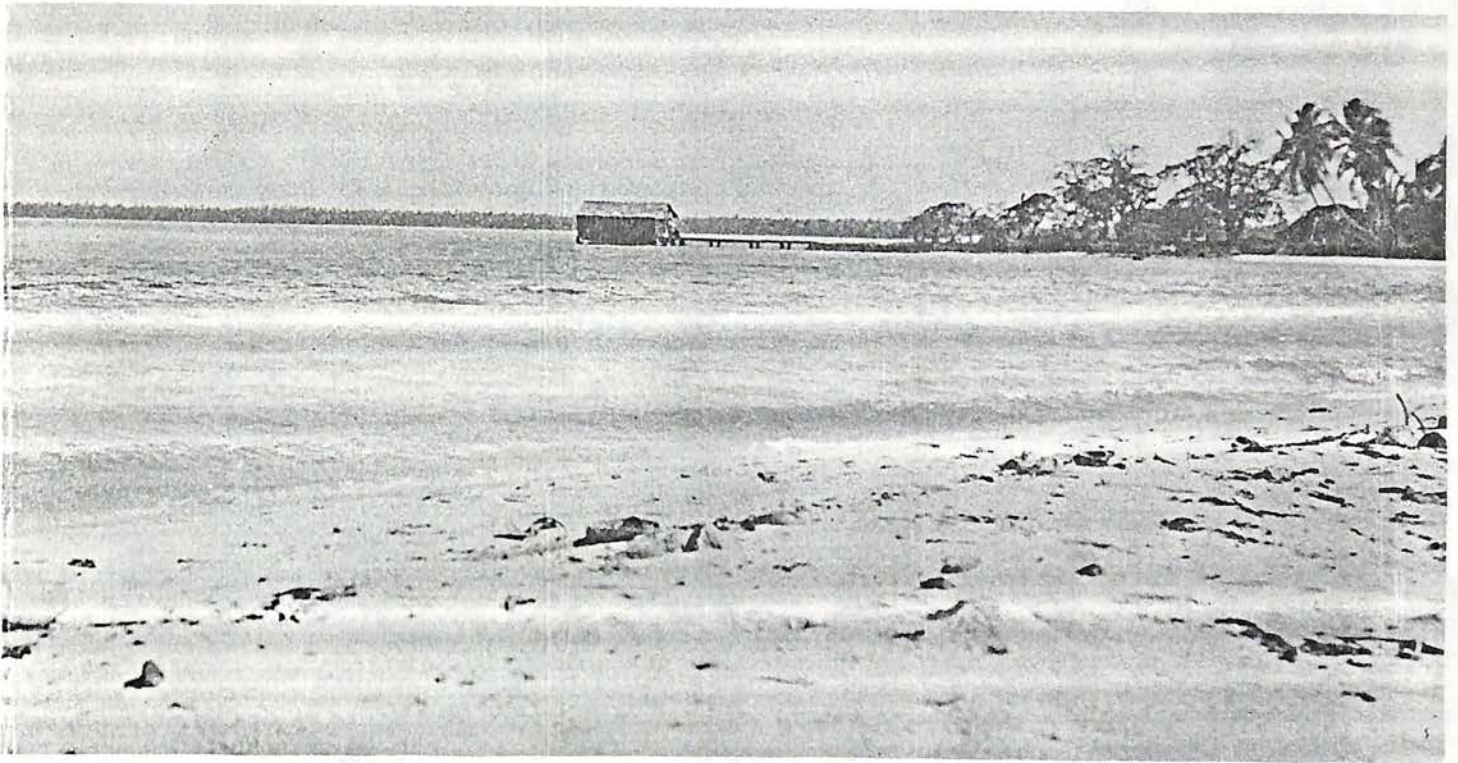
This cover-up, directed from Washington D.C., is proof that Jones was, in fact, working for the United States Navy. The same information was recorded in the *Taney* log. The *Taney* cruise reports of 1937 and 1938, during which stops at Hull Island were logged, were classified "confidential" for 30 years, thus protecting this sensitive information.

In addition to these obvious USN and USCG cover-ups which prove collusion between Roosevelt, Morgenthau, and a foreign national (British citizen), other indications exist that Jones was in radio contact with Naval Radio Tutuila in June and July 1937. Information regarding the safe landing site on the lagoon at Hull, and moving Earhart and Noonan to Sydney Island before the arrival of the floatplane from the *Colorado*, indicate prior knowledge only obtainable by U.S. naval radio contact from Tutuila, American Samoa.

While the British intelligence case can be proved with documentation, the U.S. Navy case is more illusive. During interviews, it has been established Jones' daughters were of that opinion. Jones' visits to ports such as Suva, Fiji, Pago Pago, and his earlier trips aboard a New Zealand inter-island ship as a maritime officer, acquainted him with many South Seas ports. After 1933 and the repeal of Prohibition in the United States and its possessions, beer and liquor were not only legal but inexpensive, especially at the U.S. naval station at Pago Pago. The nearest foreign port of call was Apia in American Samoa, a mere 65 miles away. As radio operator at the Western Upolu plantation, where he worked, his Morse Code "fist" was well known to radio operators at the U.S. Naval Station.

Backup transportation by coastal motor vessel from Savaii Island across to Upolu Island and along the northern coast to Apia and from there to Pago Pago was often used to make connections with the Matson liners S. S. *Monterey* and S. S. *Mariposa* on their runs between Honolulu and Australia/New Zealand.

Jones was a veteran of World War I due to his service in the British merchant marine. Because the "red" ensign in wartime became part of the Royal Navy "white" ensign, he was entitled to wear his Maritime Captain's uniform with World War I campaign ribbons. In full dress uniform, he would have been a welcome guest at the USN Officers' Club at Goat Island in Pago Pago Harbor.



Lagoon at Fanning Island harbored secret tidal flat airstrip of 6,000 feet. This was available from 1934, when prepared for Kingsford-Smith and Ulm, and used infrequently until 1970.

Photo credit - National Archives Negative #80-G-11886

In 1936 Jones attracted considerable attention in the Samoas by sitting on a maritime court of inquiry on the loss of the motor vessel which steamed between Apia and Pago Pago. Because this vessel had been a major link between the two harbors and took passengers for the American liners, the naval governor of American Samoa was concerned with the outcome of that proceeding.

Thus, the white communities of both Samoas shared much common ground and a maritime officer at one port would most certainly be most welcome at the other. Periodic visits of the naval station ships at Upolu (Apia) and New Zealand (British) warships at Pago Pago on their annual summer and winter cruises were common occurrences. Actually, Jones was initially employed at Hull Island by Burns-Philp (South Seas) Co., Ltd., with headquarters at Suva, Fiji Islands. The company was a subsidiary of Burns-Philp (Sydney, Australia), and had retail stores at both Apia and Pago Pago in the 1930s.

Within this framework, Jones was certainly known to the naval officers at Pago Pago. Just why Burns-Philp decided to send him to Hull Island and Sydney Island as plantation manager in May 1937 with Tokelau natives and knowing that the British had annexed the islands to the Gilbert and Ellice colonies and were going to colonize the productive ones with excess Gilbertese natives, is not clear. The company must have known that its investment would soon have to be sacrificed to the "crown." They couldn't recoup their start-up costs before the British took over and the price paid for "improvements" would be minimal.

One can only surmise that a covert deal between the British and Burns-Philp was arranged so that the Crown could establish a presence on the islands to preclude colonization by the United States. Shown in

New Zealand archival records is that the British regarded Hull Island, not Canton Island, as a superior land/sea base for aircraft in 1936-37.

If Jones' blood daughters are correct, he was also acting as an agent for the United States naval authorities at Pago Pago while at Hull Island. He had a good plantation management background and was a radio operator strategically located 600 miles north of that naval station. Initially, as a civilian and free agent, he could have agreed to keep in radio contact with United States naval authorities. Just as Jones disliked and distrusted German nationals because of his World War I experiences, he liked and trusted persons from the United States, according to Heather, his elder daughter. No documentary proof can be offered that Jones was in radio contact with the United States Navy, but the following evidence can be given:

1. Earhart knew where to land on Hull Island.
2. She also knew how to positively identify it from the large copra shed with the conspicuous red roof on the west point of the island.
3. Lambrecht knew he could land safely in the lagoon.
4. A cover-up of the encounter on the lagoon occurred both before and after World War II.
5. Jones experienced a rapid (four month) promotion from a civilian to Deputy High Commissioner of the British Western Pacific Islands.
6. After his return to Upolu Island, Western Samoa, he was rehired by New Zealand Crown Estates (Western Samoa).

THE BRITISH-FANNING ISLAND CONNECTION

Fanning Island was well known in the early part of this century for two reasons. First it was a key link on the

findings were covered up (on orders from Washington) and a completely fictional report made public that nothing whatsoever was found.

THE ODYSSEY

The key to the Earhart disappearance is connected to Hull Atoll and the British resident manager of the island's copra enterprise. Captain John William Jones, RNR, arrived at Hull on 21 May 1937 as a civilian employee of Burns-Philp (South Seas) Company, Ltd. His home base was Apia, Western Samoa, some 65 miles west of the U.S. Naval Station on Tutuila Island, American Samoa. Within two months Captain John Jones was promoted to Deputy High Commissioner of the British Western Pacific Islands with jurisdiction in the Gilbert and Ellice Island Group and British administration manager of the Phoenix Island Group.



Captain John W. Jones, R.N.R., as an officer on New Zealand interisland steamer *Maui Pomare* (circa 1932).

Photo credit - Via Heather Jones

Captain Jones remained in this capacity until 16 January 1940, when he returned to Apia, Western Samoa. Two daughters, named Heather and Jane, were born to Jones on Hull Island in 1937 and 1938. Capt. Jones died at Apia in 1965. However, his daughters have testified that he was an intelligence agent for both the British and the U.S. Navy at Tutuila during his tenure at Hull Island.

Capt. Jones was well known to the U.S. Naval authorities at American Samoa because of his Royal Navy Reserve Rank, radio communication activity from Western

Samoa and frequent inter-island visits. Captain Jones set up a high powered radio station on Hull Island and maintained communication with American Samoa during his Hull Island residency. When interviewed by U.S. fliers from the *Colorado* who landed on Hull Island lagoon, Jones' radio capability became known aboard the battleship. On orders from Washington a completely fictitious report was given to the press to conceal the true island colonies a few hundred miles south of the Japanese Mandated Islands.

An evaluation of the itinerary and activity of the three British ships known to be in the equatorial region of the Central Pacific established the extent of the British involvement in the July 1937 overflights of the Marshall Islands.

British warships H.M.S. *Achilles* and *Wellington* (attached to New Zealand Navy) were both nearby the Phoenix Islands and uncharacteristically monitoring the aviation radio frequencies. The *Achilles* radio intercept from the Earhart airplane hours after the flight ended is well known. H.M.S. *Wellington* fully refueled from *Achilles* in Pago Pago harbor and was standing by just south of the Phoenix group in case assistance was needed in that area.

It was the British freighter M.V. *Moorby* which played the key role of transport for the British airplane to the West Coast for transshipment to Hawaii. After outfitting at the Mare Island shipyard and a brief stop at Vancouver, B.C., *Moorby* was standing by as a radio homing picket ship off the strategic island of Wotje in the eastern Marshalls after 1 July.

The precedents from the Capt. Charles T. P. Ulm trans-Pacific flightplan of 1934 are clearly evident. An Airspeed Envoy was modified with long range tanks, and radio navigation homing equipment and aerial cameras were installed. After assembly in Oahu, the airplane was flown 100 miles south to British Fanning Island where a 6,000 foot tidal flat airstrip had been prepared and aviation fuel stored. At the designated time the Envoy departed Fanning for the 1,200-mile trip westward to home on *Moorby* and to photograph Canton Island (Phoenix Group). The British aircraft ran into trouble and was forced to ditch in the southern Marshalls.

The identity of the British female aviator is unknown but Beryl Markham is the prime suspect. Either Markham was repatriated or a substitute established for her to cover her disappearance.

The evidence of the presence of a second airplane over the Marshalls on 2 July goes a long way toward explaining much of the conflict experienced during the past half century with the details of the Earhart disappearance. Also, the switch of alternate landing places for the Earhart airplane from Canton Island to Hull Island in the Phoenix group indicated that the British airplane got the better airfield but failed to reach it due to mechanical problems forcing them down. After the wheels up landing at Hull, the American fliers were dependent upon outside help for rescue.

Further, the involvement of a foreign government provides an explanation for the half century of security blackout and the bipartisan honoring of intergovernmental security agreements. If the Japanese had been responsible for Earhart's death it would have been role Jones had played in the last flight terminal phase and subsequent activity in transmitting bogus distress calls which were picked up all over the Pacific Basin. Four months later, in September 1937, the U.S. Coast Guard

cutter *Taney* stopped by Hull Island and all of the details of Jones' activity on Hull were documented in a classified cruise report. The fact that neither officers from *Colorado* or *Taney* took any punitive action against Jones while knowing he had to be the source of the bogus "Earhart" distress signals clearly indicated the collusion between Jones and U.S. Naval authorities at American Samoa.

In recognition of Jones' daughters' testimony of his British and U.S. intelligence connections, rapid promotion from civilian to deputy British High Commissioner and obvious collusion with U.S. Naval officials regarding his true status on the island, it is obvious that some highly covert activity was taking place on Hull Island. This activity involved the landing of the Earhart Electra on the sand of the atoll's platform reef and the subsequent transport of the fliers from Hull to Sydney Islands, 60 miles to the east. After Earhart was diagnosed as having dysentery, specialists and medicine were carried aboard a destroyer from the West Coast to Sydney Island. The fliers were then taken to isolated American Samoa, the closest (and most secure) U.S. possession, and quartered at a newly constructed U.S. Naval medical infirmary on the south shore of Aunu'u Island, 18 miles from the U.S. Naval Station. Available evidence indicates that both Noonan and Earhart had died within eight months of protective custody on the island.

THE BRITISH CONNECTION

Evidence dating back to 1944-45 depicts the prewar landing of an airplane carrying a white couple (woman aviator and male companion) who ditched their aircraft in the ocean off Mili Atoll in the southeast Marshall Islands. The testimony of numerous Marshallese natives had remained essentially constant to this day. The Japanese captured the fliers and interned them in the jail on Jaluit Island. Descriptions of the fliers and their airplane clearly shows that the white woman aviator was not Earhart, the male companion was not Noonan and the airplane was not a Lockheed Electra.

With the Earhart flight termination below the equator at Hull Island, a second overflight by another airplane is indicated which ended above the equator in the pre-World War II same time frame.

What the forgoing evidence indicates is that two different airplanes conducted Marshall Island overflight missions. Further evidence suggests a simultaneous overflight from the southeast (Earhart) and from the east (a British civilian airplane). The British are the logical suspect as they had both strategic and economic interests in their revealed during the war trials after the end of WW II. If the U.S. government alone held the secret of her demise, it would have been revealed by now, probably after the enactment of the Freedom of Information Act in 1967. Only if a foreign government with its own idea of security (not in the strategic sense but in the economic sphere) would a half century of concealment make any sense.

The Earhart spy mission is an exact parallel to the U-2 affair of May 1960. Eisenhower's "Open skies" proposal was rejected and overflights of U-2 airplanes started in 1955, initially with British covert participation and subsequent cognizance of the espionage activity. The problem was of strategic importance. There was an extensive restricted area to be covered and such activities frequently entail the use of civilian cover. There was a need for the government to determine by whatever means what was happening in these restricted areas. Failure of

the operation results in the civilian agent being the scapegoat with little government support.

Peacetime espionage is an endeavor in which all the major powers participate using every means available. Unfortunately, some participants, both military and civilian, become victims of the requirement to satisfy a need to know. This is the overriding factor in both the Japanese Mandated Islands in the 1930s and Central Russia in the 1950s and 1960s.

To update the Earhart/Noonan episode another generation, their disappearance could be attributed to their status as Missing In Action (M.I.A.) before United States/Japanese hostilities actually began in the Pacific in 1941.

In a sense Earhart became a victim of her own overriding ambitions. With a fatalistic attitude towards accepting the risks involved in a succession of what she called her "shining adventures," her fellow traveler, Noonan, shared her calculated risk and also paid the supreme price.

Where the analogy ends, is in the aftermath. All evidence indicates that Earhart and Noonan survived the last flight but a pretext had to be made that they were lost at sea to prevent a serious international incident. They had to drop out of sight for an indeterminate period of time until the incident blew over. Unfortunately before this period was over, both Earhart and Noonan died.

A more benevolent government could and should have found a more suitable solution to the predicament in which they found themselves. Instead the blanket of security descended to conceal their misdeeds and has remained for half a century.

To attempt to moralize the episode would be futile, indeed. All participants in covert activities have to accept the risks of being apprehended and convicted with death a likely outcome. Earhart and Noonan paid the ultimate price.



Amelia Earhart and Fred Noonan

Photo credit - Smithsonian Institution's
National Air & Space Museum Negative #71-1095

42/11 Namatjira Drive,
Weston, A.C.T.2611,
Australia,
17 September, 1991.

Mr F.A. Goerner,
24 Presidio Terrace,
San Francisco, California 94118,
U. S. A.

Dear Mr Goerner,

Your letters of the 2nd, 4th and 5th August arrived out of sequence but my wife Honor has got them straight and I must now gird my loins to reply.

We are naturally predisposed to help you in any way we can as Honor said at once that you must be the suthor of that superb book The Search for Amelia Earhart, which we bought immediately it appeared and have always regarded as the only bit of well-researched sense ever published on this emotionally-plagued subject. Most of the rest is tripe.

Honor has sent you Of Islands and Men and in Chapter 8, on 'The Colonization of the Phoenix Islands', you can read about my first stay on Gardner in October 1937; my second, when I brought the first worker-settlers to the atoll on the Nimanoa (1938-39), and later when I promised to fetch their wives (p.338); and my third, on the Moamoa, later in 1939, when I spent over a month on Hull, Sydney and Gardner establishing co-operative societies, appointing local governments and arranging a postal service, with three local post offices.

I then developed a crook back and handed over to Gallagher, who made Gardner his headquarters. The article tells how by March 1941 8,000 coconut palms had been planted on Gardner and the transfer of lands to the workers (now settlers) was commenced.

For later data on Gardner see P.B. Laxton, 'Nikumaroro', Journal of the Polynesian Society, vol.60, nos 2-3 (June-September, 1951), and particularly his typescript

memorandum dated 6 April, 1949, which is very detailed, with maps showing the work being done all over the atoll, land allocations, the road bulldozed through the Buka forest, etc.

I had the whole of this typescript copied by Xerox and sent to Dr Thomas F. King, 410 Windsor Street, Silver Spring (I enclose a copy of his letterhead). Dr King was last year contemplating writing a novel on the drama of Gardner and its settlement. Surely he would let you borrow this photocopy, but if he declines I can get it recopied, if I can find it. He went to Gardner on the first TIGHAR expedition and apparently fell in love with the place and its rather unique history.

The Roberts you mention must have been P.G. 'Robbie' Roberts, the author of several good articles in the Journal of the Polynesian Society. I recruited him, and a few other officers in the New Zealand Army, at the Demobilization Barracks in Wellington, N.Z. Robbie did well and I later got him the job of Public Relations Officer with the Bougainville mining outfit; when I last heard of him he was Registrar at the University College at Lae; but I believe he is now retired somewhere in New Zealand.

You ask what I think of all the TIGHAR razzmatazz: strictly not for publication I regard it as bull, to use an Australian term. Gardner is such a small atoll and was inhabited for so long that every inch of the place must have been walked over many times; anything out of the ordinary would have been reported and be on record. Not so much happens on a small atoll from day to day and unusual events and findings form the subject for endless gossip and conjecture. A skeleton wearing lady's shoes would have been a sensation retailed throughout the Central Pacific.

But it should not be difficult for the TIGHAR people to find something, for there was quite an amount of debris and probably many bones buried there from time to time - the Loran people alone must have buried a lot of bric-a-brac, or

left it on rubbish piles, for the Americans were much admired for their conspicuous expenditure by the islanders. I cannot imagine two expensive expeditions being sent to Gardner without finding anything: it is the significance of what is found that may cause controversy.

Re your PS: we were at Ocean Island in July 1937; and later in our lovely island home on Beru, while I was preparing to depart for Gardner. with my entourage of Old Men who were elected to appraise the islands for settlement by the hoi polloi.

Now for replies to your second letter. I attach a copy with the queries listed by numbers so that you can identify the one under reference.

(1) Yes. We explored Gardner to examine the vegetation, dig wells and assess the potential of the atoll for settlement; but we saw nothing at all during our peregrinations relating to the Earhart flight

(2) No: nothing at any time.

(3) Nothing at all.

(4) No. Any visitor could have dropped a shoe. I am told that quite a few trans-Pacific yachts call at the Phoenix Group with, or more usually without, the permission of the central administration at Tarawa.

(5) I never met anyone from this survey party except a couple of surveyors on loan from the Government of Fiji who were marking out sites for a landing ground and accessory buildings on Hull. I was told, however, that it was a rush job and that inspection from the sea sufficed to show that most islands were quite unsuitable for an airstrip. In fact they considered Hull was the only really suitable island so the others were discarded. These people were technicians on a business venture and not sent to look for Earhart relics. I was told later by the Americans that they were quite right in choosing Hull, which was far more suitable than Canton for a mid-Pacific landing base.

(6) As instructed, I declared Gardner and the other Phoenix Islands to be part of the British Empire. Enclosed is a copy of the first page of a biographical sketch by Robert Langdon which refers to these ceremonies, copied from Gunson, Neil, (ed.), The Changing Pacific: Essays in Honour of H.E. Maude. Melbourne, Oxford University Press, 1978. See also the picture of one of these symbolic acts in Of Islands and Men, p.330. If, as you say, the survey party also put in a claim it was ultra vires. In any case they put up no notification to that effect, for I saw none on any island; nor, for that matter, did they cut mine down.

Light aircraft from Canton presumably on joy rides used to fly over any or all of the Phoenix Islands, or so I was informed, but the Gardner lagoon was not suitable for landing on and, as I know from personal experience, nobody landed on the open ocean except from dire necessity. It certainly was a ticklish business except in a dead flat calm. I should be astonished if any seaplane ever landed off Gardner at any time: planes cost money even if pilots and personnel were expendable.

(7) I enclose a curriculum vitae which gives a broad outline of what I did in World War II. Briefly I was in New Zealand when Pearl Harbour occurred. As I could not get back to the Gilberts I was made First Assistant Secretary to the Western Pacific High Commission. In the early part of the war Honor and I were marooned on Pitcairn for eight months as British shipping was not allowed to stop lest they got sunk by a submarine.

Finally an American timber freighter took us to Panama and from there we flew through Brownsville to Los Angeles where we caught the last Matson sailing to Fiji. Then a stint as Consul to the Kingdom of Tonga, 'and all United States possessions south of the Equator'. I swelled with pride until I counted them up and found there was only one - American Samoa. Then I was seconded to the Tongan Public Service to do a Report on its reorganization for Queen Salote.

In 1943 and 1944 I worked for American Naval Intelligence at Pearl Harbour, being attached to the Fifth Amphibious Force. There I wrote a little Handbook entitled Notes on the Gilbert Islands for the use of U.S. Forces, Intelligence Section, Fifth Amphibious Force, 1942, which was sewn up in water-proof envelopes and distributed to all troops before they landed at Tarawa and Makin: I never heard of anyone who actually read it but a copy would be worth a lot now. This was really one of many sidelines, for most of the time I was helping to prepare the plans for the recapture of Tarawa.

Then COMSOPAC, Noumea, sent me to Pitcairn again to keep the peace while they built a Loran Station. It was one of those Liberty ships and the propellor fell off just as we ran into a cyclone. After drifting for days with a sea anchor New Zealand's largest tug reached us and towed us back to Wellington, taking three weeks over the job. Eventually we reached Pitcairn and, after a stay, San Francisco.

In my spare time I worked for the C.I.A., then the Office of Strategic Services. producing inter alia their Handbook on the Phoenix Islands. Throughout the war I commuted to and from Suva and Honolulu, I think 14 times, but the jobs I was on were too diverse and discrete to itemize. For one of the most interesting see the Preface to my Slavers in Paradise, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1981.

Then in 1946 I flew to London, via Majuro, and thence to Washington, as Adviser to the British delegation to the long Conference at the Pentagon on the U.S. claims to 22 of our islands (including Gardner). It took me four months to produce a detailed, historically-based report on The Phoenix and Line Islands, with special reference to the Question of British Sovereignty, which was published but marked 'Restricted': I don't know if it still is, since the islands now belong to the Republic of Kiribati or else to the Cook Islands. But its detailed history of Gardner is all pre-Earhart and therefore I presume useless to you.

(8) No. The Loran crowd were great wanderers over the island (there was nothing much else to do) and had they

found anything they would surely have told the world about it, or at least reported it.

(9) I cannot find the figures because I sent all my reports and correspondence to the Archives at Adelaide (see Honor's letter)...Susan Woodburn, the Archivist, will copy and send you the lot, if you want it, but will have to charge for the work.

(10) Drought was given as the reason, but the settlers said that the drought was no worse than the periodic droughts in the southern Gilberts. My guess would be that it was due to lack of interest in maintaining communications with the Phoenix (which was an expensive drain on the limited Colony revenue) now that the Group was no longer of any strategic or other interest to Britain, who would therefore be unwilling to subsidise the expenditure, especially as from an economic point of view the settlers were better off in the Solomons.

(11) Gallagher was Officer in Charge of the Phoenix Islands Settlement Scheme (or 'oic piss, as I regret to say we were known by all and sundry) until his death in 1941. I seem to remember that after that the Settlement Scheme ceased and Gardner was administered as part of the Phoenix Islands District by the Administrative Officer in Charge, whose headquarters were on Canton. But he was lucky if he could scrounge one of our 60-footers to visit his District.

(12) The plantation director (first time I've ever heard that title) was G.B. Gallagher, the local Pooh-Bah.).

(13) Yes, he has a good grave erected by the islanders, who loved him, but the war prevented me from putting a bronze plaque to his memory on it.

(14) We had no radio communication when I was in charge; and supply ships (mostly the small island schooners) were high;ly irregular and infrequent.

(15) How would the USN know anything about me or the

Phoenix Islands Settlement Scheme? In any case the U.S. claimed Gardner as their own territory, so they would scarcely ask my permission before visiting their atoll. This is the first time that I have heard of the Bushnell visiting Gardner but I imagine that they visited all the Phoenix Islands. When I was disembarking the colonists at Hull a U.S. warship was watching our movements with great interest and this was probably the Bushnell (I have forgotten her name after 50 years).

I protested formally to her captain about her plane surveying the atoll and he replied politely that he was sorry and meant no offence but unfortunately had no means of recalling the plane as it had no wireless. So we had a drink together and I went ashore to get on with the work of settling in the settlers.

The two Fiji surveyors then protested to me that the colonists were building their homes right in the middle of the airstrip; and this time it was my turn to say that I was sorry but unfortunately they had taken all the best coconut-growing and food-producing land for their airport and where else could I build the village? (See the picture facing p.346 of the book we sent; Aririki was called after our son Alaric, their idea, not mine - a near-by village was called Ona after my wife Honor).

In the end we had houses all over the airport but I never heard another word about it; the surveyors went back to Fiji and nothing ever came of the New Zealand/British Defence Scheme: it was probably somebody's bright idea which would have cost millions for absolutely no purpose.

(16) I never knew the U.S. Navy had any concern about Gardner other than to build a Loran station there, as they had done in the Gilberts, Pitcairn and anywhere else where technical reasons indicated the desirability. They raised no objection to our colonizing the atoll.

(17) No, I know of no one. I imagine that you could find information on the defence team in the National Archives at Wellington, and it might be written up in one of N.Z.'s

published war histories. I have no idea where Roberts is now, but I heard that he was retired in New Zealand. Possibly the Colonial Pensioner's Association in England would know his address. Roberts was for a time an officer in the Colonial Secretariat at Tarawa but I doubt if he was ever concerned with the Settlement Scheme; at least not in my time. I was the Administrator of the Colony until 1949, when I became Deputy Secretary-General and O.i.C of the Social Development Section of the international South Pacific Commission.

(18) I think that this question has been answered in my letter of May 4 to Gillespie, which Honor has sent you - it is on p.2. I could live on Gardner indefinitely and I cannot see why anyone else with average intelligence could not do the same. The fish were so plentiful and tame that I could scoop them up in my hands from the shallow pools on the reef. One of my jobs in Honolulu in 1942 was to help my friend Kenneth Emory prepare his Castaway's Baedeker to the South Seas, Honolulu, Objective Data Section, Intelligence Center, Pacific Ocean Areas, 1942. This was later published as South Seas Lore, Honolulu, Bernice P. Bishop Museum, 1943, and it will, I think, convince you that survival on tropical atolls is not, except in very dry areas, a great problem. Of course if one believes the TIGHAR's journalist, who writes in 'Tracing Amelia's Footsteps' (This World, Dec.19, 1989) that the climate of Gardner was so hot that 'drinking a quart of water a day, members would go for days without urinating', then life on the island must have been rather different than in my days.

Finally to deal with the query in your letter of August 2, I knew Jones well. In fact I found him on Hull an emaciated bag of bones because he had not been eating any fresh greens. I really saved his life by recommending him to eat plenty of Boi (Portulacca), and when I saw him a few months later he was as plump as a partridge.

Jones was a typical beachcomber-type island trader and I imagine called himself captain, as many others, of his ilk did, because he had run his own small craft when engaged in village trading. He was not very educated but could have

been a seaman in the Navy.

He was living with a Samoan woman who was always getting pregnant and I arranged with the American doctor on Canton for him to have a vasectomy, which fixed the trouble.

Burns Philp had engaged him some years before, I presume as one of their village traders, and later put him in charge of their Tokelau labour on Hull and Sydney; he ran a small trade store for them as a sideline. When their contracts had expired he took them back to their islands on a Burns Philp vessel and settled in Samoa, where for a time I believe he acted as Harbour Master at Apia, and later ran a chicken farm to earn a living.

That bit about Jones being a British Agent is, in my opinion, hokey. Whoever said it did not know the hierarchical nature of the British governing system and the ramifications of the Old Boy network. Why should the British want a secret agent in their own Phoenix Islands: to spy on the well-connected Oxford and Cambridge graduates with high honours degrees whom they had specially selected to run the place? My uncle, Sir John Maude, was, for instance, then the head of all the British Civil Services - the top public servant in the Empire. And why pick on a Burns Philp labour overseer stuck on Hull with no wireless and no transport and no means of knowing what was going on anywhere?

Both the Americans and the British in the Phoenix carried on their work quite openly and were on good terms with each other. In my talks with my American counterparts we agreed that the question of who owned the islands was one for Washington and London to settle and that nothing we could do would have the slightest effect on the result. So we might as well share each others beer and anything else we could scrounge.

For the work of the Americans in the Phoenix you should read a book by another lifelong friend, E.H. Bryan, Jr, called Panala'au Memoirs, Honolulu, Pacific Scientific Information Center, Bernice P Bishop Museum, 1974.

As to appointing Jones to be an Administrative Officer, I had no authority to do any such thing. All I did was to ask him to look after the interests of the settlers as well as those of his labourers and to keep the peace between the two. Some of my unmarried young ladies had complained to me that the Tokelauans had made advances to them which they had no desire to accede to because they smelt so badly.

Re NZPAS, as I have said they sailed through the Phoenix while I was away selecting colonists in the Gilberts, selected Hull as the only possible place for their airport, left two Fiji Government surveyors to lay out the runway and building sites and disappeared into oblivion, leaving me to obliterate all traces of their presence by setting up our village on their site.

I do not know what significance they were supposed to have as Sir Arthur Richards, the High Commissioner for the Western Pacific, was well aware what I was doing and never said nay to me, or even tut tut. Pan Am., on the American side, also had their representative in Suva, and probably also at Canton, but they settled for the time being on Kingman Reef: not a salubrious spot. Harold Gatty and his wife Fenner were friends of ours and I recruited the labour for his fishing venture. He wrote the counterparts of Kenneth Emory's books: The Raft Book (1943) and Nature is your Guide (1958) on survival at sea if your plane came down.

I think I've answered all, but you will have to forgive the garrulity of an old man of 85 (Honor is even older and has recently published her seventh book on Oceanic string figures), and your queries have revived long suppressed memories of half a century ago for both of us. My present books, aimed to give the Gilbertese of today a sense of identity and a pride in their ancestral heritage (see attached list) keep me pleasantly busy, but tend to keep my thoughts in another time and place. I love my Olivetti Word Processor, but learning to operate it at my age was rather difficult, as it has a will of its own.

I do appreciate your difficulties in writing a new work on

the same subject as your 1966 one, for I take it that much will have to be discarded that you formerly believed to be correct. But I wish you all good fortune for, as you say, the truth, based on factual evidence, is what we are all aiming at, or should be. Anyway, let me know if we can be of any further assistance.

Very sincerely,

serm.

FREDERICK ALLAN GOERNER
Twenty-four Presidio Terrace
San Francisco, California 94118

August 30, 1991

Professor & Mrs. H.E. Maude
42/11 Namatjira Drive
Weston, A.C.T. 2611,
Australia

Dear Professor and Mrs. Maude:

What absolutely wonderful people you are!

I cannot properly express how grateful I am to you, both, for the extraordinary amount of effort and time you devoted to answering my requests for information.

You are indeed dedicated scholars and communicators.

You MUST accept the enclosed personal check to at least cover the cost of your postage.

OF ISLANDS AND MEN will be a cherished part of my library. In my will, I am leaving my entire library, research and personal papers to the Admiral Nimitz Museum of which I am a Trustee, so your book and your correspondence some day will become a part of the permanent library there.

Again, my deep thanks for your efforts on my behalf. I'll be sending you some material under separate cover in a few days. I hope you will find it of interest.

Most Sincerely Yours,

Fred Goerner



P.S. It may not surprise you that Mr. Gillespie has not released to the public ANY of the information you sent to him. His is a very selective research.

42/11 Namatjira Drive.
Weston, A.C.T. 2611
Australia.

Aug. 14th. 1991

Dear Mr Goelmer,

My husband has received your letters of Aug. 2nd & 5th & will reply as soon as possible. He now has very bad eyesight which slows him down with his work so I offered to let you know that we are very interested in your search for Jack & Tutu.

We were on Ocean Island at the time of Amelia Earhart's disappearance & remember the excitement of our radio operator & the Navue man, hearing her messages. My husband knew Mr Jones on Hull very well, he was a trader at the time & later settled down in Apia, W. Samoa. where he married a Samoan.

We have had much news & information from the TIGGAR group & do not agree with any of their findings or speculations.

I am sending you a copy of "Of Islands & Men" as we have some in hand. We read your 1966 book, "The Search for Amelia Earhart", with great interest & found your suppositions

entirely plausible & well researched.

I enclose a copy of a letter from my husband to J^r Gillespie as some of your questions are answered in it.

Your letter dated Aug. 4th has just come. Thank you for the series of questions; I have numbered the paragraphs & work has begun on them.

We have a copy of an article by Roy Nesbit published in Jan.-Feb. 1989 editions of *Aeroplane Monthly*. We expect you have seen it but if not could make a copy for you.

Also enclosed is a copy of items housed in the archives of the Barr Smith Library, University of Adelaide, under the heading "Papers of Henry Evans and Honor Maude, 1904-1984."

In some haste but our good wishes!

Yours sincerely

Honor Maude.

FREDERICK ALLAN GOERNER
Twenty-four Presidio Terrace
San Francisco, California 94118

August 2, 1991

Professor H.E. Maude
11 Namatzira Drive
Weston, ACT 2611
Australia

Dear Professor Maude:

I am reliably informed that you are THE most knowledgeable person in the world with respect to the history of Central Pacific islands and most particularly the history of the Gilbert, Ellice and Phoenix Islands.

You may be aware of the recent claims of a small group of Americans known as The International Group For Historic Aircraft Recovery that the American flyer Amelia Earhart, and her navigator, Captain Frederick Noonan, who disappeared in the Pacific near the vicinity of Howland Island in 1937, actually landed on Gardner (Nikumororo) Island and perished there.

On a recent trip to Gardner, they allegedly found a piece of metal which appears to be part of a navigation container case found in aircraft of the 1930's and 1940's. This piece of metal, they stipulate, could have come from the Earhart plane, and they are raising a large amount of money from public contribution to return to Gardner for further search in October of this year.

My research has indicated that it is not possible that Earhart and Noonan landed on Gardner and their presence there went unnoticed until 1989. I will list the findings of my research below, and I respectfully ask for your learned comments.

The rumor appears to have begun in 1961 with a gentleman named Floyd Kilts, who was at that time living in San Diego, California. Mr. Kilts stated that he had gone to Gardner during World War II in connection with a U.S. Coast Guard military Loran navigation station. Mr. Kilts continued that he had been told by a native on Gardner Island that "in the latter part of 1938 the skeleton of a woman and the skull of a man were found on the shore of the island," and Mr. Kilts added, "A white planter believed the skeleton might be Miss Earhart's and started to Suva, Fiji Islands, with it, but he died of pneumonia on the way and superstitious native boatmen threw the skeleton overboard."

I dismissed the story at the time because my research indicated that planes from U.S.S. COLORADO searched Gardner from the air eight days after the Earhart disappearance in July, 1937, and

there was absolutely no indication of the Earhart plane or any inhabitants of the island.

In 1968, when I visited Tarawa with General David Shoup for the 25th anniversary of the battle there and the dedication of a cenotaph at the pier on Betio, I spoke with a very nice gentleman named Roberts, who held a top job with administration for the Gilberts.

My notes of our conversation were roughly drawn, but they do indicate that Mr. Roberts believed there was no possibility that Earhart and Noonan reached Gardner. He told me a ship was sent from the Gilberts to Gardner late in 1937 for the purpose of sending colonists to Gardner. Nothing that would link Earhart to the island was found.

Mr. Roberts said it was his understanding that the remains of a man were found at some point on Gardner, but they were believed to be the remains of a person indigenous to the area. He said no one attempted to take the remains to Suva. He added that the planter who died was a British subject, and that he had died of peritonitis and was buried on Gardner.

I wrote to the Suva Archives in 1969 and received a reply which supported Mr. Roberts' comments.

I later learned that New Zealand and British defense representatives surveyed Gardner in 1938 ostensibly for British Pacific Airways, and they found nothing that would indicate Earhart and Noonan had ever been there.

Further research indicates that colonists occupied Gardner from late in 1937 until the early 1960's, and none of them ever found anything which would link Earhart and Noonan to Gardner.

U.S. Navy records reveal that U.S.S. BUSHNELL surveyed Gardner early in 1939, and again nothing was found.

The U.S. Coast Guard constructed the Loran Station late in 1943, and the station operated until after the end of World War II, when it was removed. Again nothing appears in the official records.

Gardner was again surveyed by the U.S. Military at the time a tracking station was being built at Canton Island for the Pacific Missile Test Range, and still further survey was accomplished as Canton became a part of the U.S. effort in space. Still nothing was found concerning Earhart.

More recently an expedition from The Smithsonian Institution, interested in bird populations did extensive research on Gardner, but still nothing about Earhart.

FREDERICK ALLAN GOERNER
Twenty-four Presidio Terrace
San Francisco, California 94118

August 5, 1991

Professor H.E. Maude
11 Namatzira Drive
Weston, ACT 2611
Australia

Dear Professor Maude:

I apologize for the plague of letters requesting information, but you are an acclaimed scholar and I believe you will understand an author's sincere attempt to establish truth before he writes about a subject.

In a 1987 book titled THE EARHART DISAPPEARANCE: THE BRITISH CONNECTION, the author J.A. Donohue alleges that a Captain John William Jones, Royal Navy Reserve, who was British Resident Manager of Hull and Sydney Islands at the time of the Earhart flight in 1937, was actually a British secret agent who was somehow involved in an intelligence mission where Earhart was concerned.

Even stretching credulity to the maximum, I find it difficult to believe any of that is true.

In his 1979 book AIRLINE, author Ian Driscoll states, "H.E. Maude, a gentlemanly Cambridge academic, and his wife Honor were dedicated to the welfare of the islanders. It was Maude who appointed Jones Administrative Officer at Hull Island."

Was there any intelligence aspect to Captain Jones' duties on Hull Island circa 1937? To your knowledge did Captain Jones later serve in an intelligence capacity which might have led to such a conjecture?

Did you coordinate or have any association with what was known by the acronym NZPAS, New Zealand Pacific Aviation Survey, which surveyed and claimed various islands in the name of British Pacific Airway?

Any clarification you can provide will be most gratefully received.

Thank you again for your continued patience.

Sincerely Yours,

Frederick A. Goerner

FREDERICK ALLAN GOERNER
Twenty-four Presidio Terrace
San Francisco, California 94118

August 4, 1991

Professor H.E. Maude
11 Namatzira Drive
Weston, ACT 2611
Australia

Dear Professor Maude:

It occurred to me after I mailed my August 2nd letter to you that it might be productive and time-saving for me to send a list of specific questions regarding the matter of Gardner (Nikumororo) Island and the allegations that Miss Earhart and Captain Noonan perished there in 1937. They are listed below.

1. Did you make the cruise to Gardner in October, 1937, and if so, was anything found on Gardner that could be connected to the Earhart flight?
2. Did you at any time during your service in the Gilbert, Ellice and Phoenix Islands find or hear of anything which would indicate the fate of Earhart and Noonan?
3. What do you know about the skeleton or skeletons which were ostensibly found on the shore of Gardner Island circa 1937-38?
4. Are you aware of any information with respect to the finding of a women's high-heeled shoe or shoes at Gardner during the above mentioned period of time?
5. Did anyone from the New Zealand/British defense survey party in 1938 report finding anything at Gardner or McKean Islands which might link the area to the Earhart flight?
6. In that the New Zealand/British defense survey party established a claim to Gardner in the interests of "British Pacific Airways", were there, to your knowledge, any actual flights of seaplanes made to Gardner? Were any made during World War II?
7. What was your experience during World War II? Knowing the Japanese quickly occupied the Gilbert Islands after Pearl Harbor, I am anxious to know about your personal experience at the time and throughout World War II.
8. To your knowledge, did the American service personnel who established the Loran station at Gardner during World War II ever speak of finding ANYTHING that would link the island to the Earhart flight?
9. How many colonists occupied Gardner in the years 1937 and 1938?

10. Specifically when and for what reason were the colonists finally removed from Gardner?
11. Who directed the colony on Gardner during the years from 1937 through 1943?
12. What was the name of the plantation director who died on Gardner of peritonitis?
13. I am informed that the gentleman is buried on Gardner. To your knowledge is this true?
14. When the Gardner colony was established in 1937, was there radio communication with the island, and how often did supply ships visit?
15. Did the USN coordinate with your office at the time it sent the survey ship BUSHNELL to Gardner in 1939?
16. What did you understand at the time was the reasoning behind the U.S. Navy concern with Gardner?
17. Do you know the whereabouts of anyone who might have additional knowledge of the Gardner colony and the efforts of the New Zealand/British defense team circa 1938-39? I understand that Mr. Roberts retired quite some time ago, but I have not been able to find any current address.

Again, I thank you so much for your gracious cooperation. As a scholar yourself, you know of the difficulties and vicissitudes of seeking information about events which happened fifty years ago.

Most Sincerely,



Frederick A. Goerner

18. P.S. With your indulgence, here is one additional question. In your opinion, would it have been possible for individuals stranded upon Gardner Island to survive for any considerable period? In information I have from a U.S. Navy classified publication titled PACIFIC AIR PILOT which was distributed in 1936, brackish water, cocoanuts and abundant fish could be found at Gardner. Given the intelligence and skills of Miss Earhart and Captain Noonan, it seems unlikely to me that they would have starved to death had they found themselves on Gardner or McKean.

The American group, acronym, TIGHAR, at first claimed a battery they had found on Gardner in 1989 to be from the Earhart plane. When it was established that aircraft do not use that kind of battery and that the Coast Guard did, they shifted to claim to a cigarette lighter that was found on a Gardner beach. The rationale seemed to be that Captain Noonan smoked. When it was pointed out that U.S. service personnel used those kind of lighters during World War II, the emphasis shifted to the piece of metal which purportedly comes from an aircraft navigation cabinet.

The TIGHAR Group also makes much of a "women's high-heeled shoe" that was found on Gardner circa 1938. Mr. Roberts did mention something to me about a "women's shoe", but my notes are not clear on that point; however, Earhart never wore high-heeled shoes when she was flying. The last photograph taken of her at Lae, New Guinea, shows her wearing men's style brogans. TIGHAR now is stipulating that the high-heeled shoe is of American manufacture and is Earhart's size. How that was divined they do not say.

What do you make of all this, Professor Maude? I believe you led that October, 1937 trip to Gardner. You were there. You know the truth. Will you help me sort this out?

I am writing a book on the entire Earhart saga, and I am making a considerable effort to deal with truth. I will be most grateful for any assistance you can provide.

Also, I would very much welcome information as to how I may obtain a copy of your book OF ISLANDS AND MEN. Our local libraries do not have a copy, and my efforts through several book search firms thus far have been unproductive.

Thank you for your kind consideration.

With respect and admiration, I am,

Most Sincerely Yours,



Frederick Allan Goerner
24 Presidio Terrace
San Francisco, CA. 94118
U.S.A.

P.S. Were you at Tarawa in July, 1937? My research indicated that U.S.S. ITASCA, the U.S. Coast Guard ship which searched for Earhart, visited Tarawa during the search, so those from Tarawa who visited Gardner in October, 1937, would certainly have been aware of the Earhart flight, and anything found that could

possibly relate to her and her navigator would have been a matter of instant attention.

1/20

Skeleton Keys

WITNESSES FROM THE GRAVE

The Stories Bones Tell

By Christopher Joyce and Eric Stover.

Illustrated. 333 pp. Boston:

Little, Brown & Company. \$19.95.

By Malcolm W. Browne

RETURN TO LIBRARY

WHEN a mother visits a forensic laboratory to inspect the skeleton of her murdered daughter, is there any way of arranging the bones so as to spare the mother unnecessary pain?

Such searing questions as that pervade this fascinating and deeply moving book. As one would expect in a text by two science writers, "Witnesses From the Grave" is filled with technical information about the field it covers: forensic anthropology. At the same time, the human subjects of these studies — many of them anonymous victims of modern-day pogroms — are brought to the reader from every chapter.

The central figure in the narrative is Clyde Collins Snow, a genial Texan who in childhood began learning to identify skeletons when he accompanied his physician father on trips to accident scenes and morgues. As an adult, Mr. Snow became one of the most famous of all forensic anthropologists — a key member of the team that identified bones taken from a Brazilian grave as those of the infamous Nazi concentration-camp doctor Josef Mengele. Besides the Mengele case, Mr. Snow's career has encompassed investigations of murders and mysteries, airplane crashes, the identities of unknown American soldiers and mass executions by Latin American death squads. Mr. Snow's career is the thread Christopher Joyce and Eric Stover use to tie together a rather complex scientific story.

Some of the forensic identification techniques the authors describe are already familiar to fans of crime literature. For example, the art of sculpturing a true-to-life face over a skull — a technique that sometimes permits identification of the skull's owner — was a feature of "Gorky Park," a mystery set in Moscow. But many readers will be surprised to learn that facial reconstructions were attempted as long ago as the 19th century; in 1895 an anatomist named Wilhelm His used the skull of Johann Sebastian Bach to reconstruct the composer's face.

Malcolm W. Browne is a science reporter for The New York Times.



Wax models of the head of Josef Mengele as a young man (left) and nearing 70, reproduced by forensic scientists from the skull (center) found in a Brazilian grave in 1985. The hat belonged to Mengele, who died in 1979.

Nuggets of obscure but interesting information sparkle throughout the book. We learn, for instance, that dental records are not the infallible indicators of identity that many television crime shows would have us believe. Forensic experts have found that appreciable numbers of American dentists falsify their patients' records to cheat health insurance companies or the I.R.S.

Clyde Snow's career has encompassed investigations of murders, airplane crashes and mass executions.

Mr. Joyce, the United States editor of the British magazine New Scientist, and Mr. Stover, a freelance writer and consultant to the organization called Physicians for Human Rights, skillfully outline how one measures bones to reveal the time, place and manner of

a person's death as well as the physical features that person possessed in life. Though the techniques, the authors acknowledge, have sometimes faltered, they have improved dramatically since the 19th century, when the great French forensic pioneer Alphonse Bertillon (who was much admired by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle) devised a fairly successful identification system based on precise body and bone measurements.

THE book's scientific exposition is salted with gruesome cases. The 1849 murder of one Harvard University professor by another might have gone unpunished but for the identification of scorched bone fragments in a chemistry laboratory furnace. And forensic detection led to the 1897 conviction of a Chicago butcher who disposed of his wife's body in a sausage vat filled with boiling potash. "Unable to dissolve his marriage," the authors quote Mr. Snow as saying, "he decided to dissolve his wife."

"Witnesses From the Grave" is most poignant in the chapters describing efforts to identify victims of government extermination campaigns, notably the slaughter of suspected political troublemakers in Argentina during a period of military rule from 1976 to 1983.

During that terrible era, remembered as *El Proceso* (the Process of National Reorganization), some 10,000 Argentine citizens — many women and children

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During that terrible era, remembered as *El Proceso* (the Process of National Reorganization), some 10,000 Argentine citizens — many women and children among them — disappeared in police cells and concentration camps. Only after the return of civilian government did the extent of the atrocity become apparent to outsiders. At the few mass graves already examined, the experts have found countless bullet-riddled skulls, some belonging to young mothers whose babies were torn away from them for distribution to military families. And to this day, many more sites remain to be excavated and studied.

Much of the digging has been turned over to a team of young Argentine anthropologists, picked and trained by Mr. Snow to sift evidence from the ghastly cemeteries where the nation's recent past is buried. These young scientists, the authors note, would be prime targets themselves if a vengeful military regime should seize power again.

The Argentine story is not ancient history, nor even as removed from our time as the Nazi death camps. As recently as Dec. 3, a clique of Argentine soldiers rebelled (unsuccessfully) against their commanders, and at year's end the President of Argentina, Carlos Saul Menem, pardoned the highest-ranking perpetrators of *El Proceso*, including the former general Jorge Videla and the infamous former Buenos Aires police chief Ramón Camps.

"What I don't understand," Mr. Snow observes, "is how they can retroactively legalize murder." But at least the truth is slowly emerging. "Bones make good witnesses," he says. "Although they speak softly, they never lie and they never forget." □

They Hit Bone Within an Hour

Snow had the students place wooden planks across the open hole. Stretching across the boards, they reached into the grave and gently scraped away the earth with trowels and spoons. Within an hour they hit bone....

Snow... leaned over the lip of the grave, and delicately brushed dirt from the skull. The gracile brow ridge and smallish mastoid process indicated a woman. "And there was a bullet hole right up over the eye," Snow remembers. "There was an earthworm right next to it. This was the first *desaparecido* that the kids had ever seen. I didn't know what they were going to do."

The students grew quite still. Looking over Snow's shoulder as he whisked the earth away from the skull, they saw that its jaw hung open, as if in mid-scream. They didn't know that as the muscle and ligaments that hold the jaw together



FROM WITNESSES FROM THE GRAVE
Clyde Collins Snow

decompose, gravity pulls the mandible down until the chin rests on the clavicles of the upper chest, giving the skull its gape.

Pato dropped her trowel, stepped from the grave, and walked away. Snow reckoned they had lost her, then and there, and maybe the rest as well. But Morris, accustomed as a medical student to seeing skeletons and corpses, kept digging with his spoon at the soil around the remains. The others, though reluctantly, followed suit.

Ten minutes passed in silence. Then Pato reappeared at the side of the grave, her eyes red but her composure regained, and picked up her trowel.

"Morris," Mimi said, "give me your spoon." He looked up, perplexed. "Why?" he asked.

"Because," Mimi replied, "it's time for coffee."

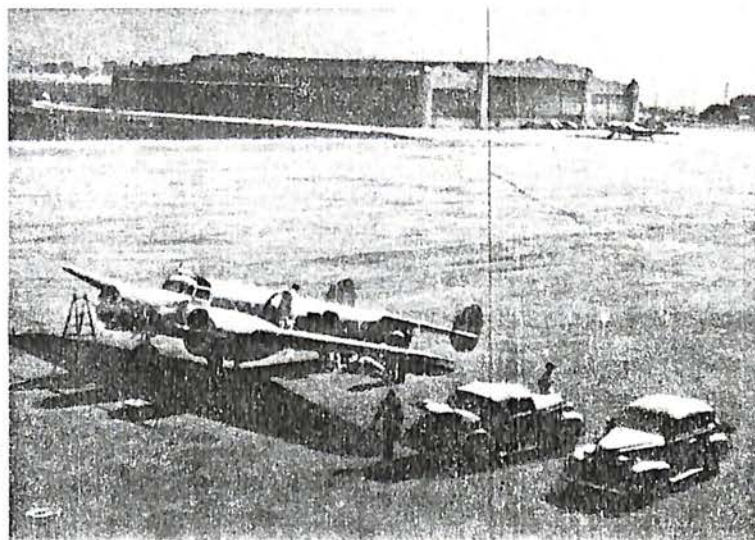
From "Witnesses From the Grave."

TIGHAR TRACKS

A PUBLICATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL GROUP FOR HISTORIC AIRCRAFT RECOVERY

This never-before-published photograph was taken by a youth named Dustin Carter at Burbank Airport on the morning of May 21, 1937. It shows Amelia Earhart's Electra being loaded for the unpublicised departure of her second world flight attempt. AE stands near the tail in conference with an unidentified person while Fred Noonan unloads gear from the trunk of his wife's convertible. Mary Bea Noonan watches from beside the front fender. She will never see her husband again.

DEPARTURE



From an original negative in the Carter/Johnson collection acquired by TIGHAR courtesy of John T. Johnson (TIGHAR #0939C).

Whatever drama occurs during the expedition that is departing as this *TIGHAR Tracks* goes to press, it will be hard-pressed to match the cliffhanger of the final fund-raising.

Friday night, September 13 (Departure minus 14)

Fax arrives from Oceaneering International. They will start mobilizing their personnel and equipment on Wednesday the 18th. TIGHAR's contract calls for payment in full 48 hours before mobilization. Please wire \$146,970 Monday morning. We're still about \$200,000 short of the expedition's total budget. There's no way we can meet that payment.

Monday morning, September 16 (departure minus 11)

Call to Oceaneering. We don't have the money. Can you do the job on spec?

Monday night, September 16 (departure minus 10.5)

Call from Oceaneering. *Disaster*. The boss says no. No money, no sonar, no ROV, no chance to find the airplane.

Tuesday, September 17 (departure minus 10)

Defiance. We'll go anyway and do just the onshore search. Do our best with what we have. Some counsel postponement. That would be death to TIGHAR's credibility. We go as scheduled if we have to swim to Nikumaroro.

Wednesday, September 18 (departure minus 9)

Grim determination. We're not going to give up without a fight. Call to Oceaneering. How long will you hold everything ready to go? One week, until Wednesday the 25th. Okay, we've got one week to raise \$200,000.

Monday, September 23 (departure minus 3)

Desperation. Despite burning up the phone and fax lines and singlehandedly supporting Federal Express, we've only been able to scare up a few more thousand from the faithful. Those who have the capability to do more won't.

Tuesday morning, September 24 (departure minus 2)

Oceaneering calls. They're under pressure to release our equipment for other jobs. Tomorrow is definitely the last day. *Hoping against hope*.

Tuesday afternoon, September 24 (departure minus 1.75)

An old friend has gone to his friends. He and they will lend TIGHAR the money knowing full well that this is not what you'd call a secure loan. That kind of faith is really humbling. That kind of debt is terrifying. But The Earhart Project is fully funded.

Wednesday, September 25 (departure minus 1)

Jubilation. The biggest check (and the biggest obligation) in TIGHAR's history arrives by FedEx. Oceaneering is paid and mobilized. Trucks will roll, airplanes will fly, and the ship will sail – all as planned.

While all of this was going on there were a hundred other crises, minor only by comparison, which had to be resolved. Only a heroic effort by White's Electronics of Sweet Home, Oregon overcame technical difficulties to specially modify ten PI3000 metal detectors in time for the expedition. Robbins Engineering Instruments of Gloucester, New Jersey went to great lengths to equip the expedition with hi-tech surveying gear and to train us in its use. Pacific Stihl of Chico, California arranged for the donation of power equipment for use on the island and United Airlines efficiently handled the complex travel arrangements.

The expedition sails from Honolulu on September 30 and is scheduled to return October 30. No press announcements will be made during the expedition or afterward until we've had time to analyze the results. At present we anticipate holding a press conference on November 15. It is very important that TIGHAR members continue to support the project while the expedition is in progress. TIGHAR headquarters will remain open and staffed during the entire month of October (see "While We Are Out," page 5). TIGHAR has gone into significant debt to complete the funding for this expedition but, as Amelia said, "The future is mortgaged, but what are futures for?"

Columbia Still Sleeps

The evaluative excavation of a barn foundation suspected of containing relics of the W.B.2 Columbia, announced in the last *TIGHAR Tracks*, didn't happen. The dig was set for July 19-21 but because of delays in publication many members who wanted to participate just didn't have enough time to arrange their schedules. The excavation has, therefore, been postponed until after this fall's Earhart expeditions. When the dig is rescheduled we'll make sure to leave plenty of lead time. Given the jungle of poison ivy on-site in July the postponement was merciful. 🐾



Photo courtesy Frank Strnad Collection.

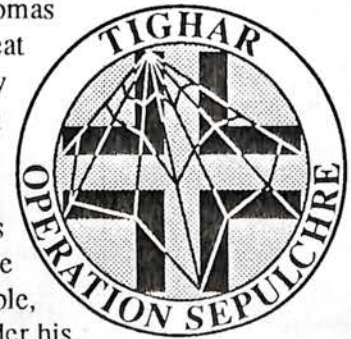
Drawing a l'Oiseau Blanc

TIGHAR's oldest and most difficult project, the search for The White Bird of French transatlantic aviators Charles Nungesser and Francois Coli, is pressing forward thanks to the efforts of Jay Veith (TIGHAR #0767CE), Bill Alexander (TIGHAR #0403E), and Don Ward (TIGHAR #1134CE) who have been trying to track down various reports of television and magazine accounts describing the discovery and removal of the wreckage by hunters. It's the most tedious kind of research, hunched over a stack of old magazines at the Library of Congress or squinting at poorly microfilmed newspaper articles. So far, although they've uncovered a wealth of information, the elusive source of all the rumors has not yet been found – but their search goes on. It's one thing to glory in the chase amid the grandeur of the Maine woods, but it's another to fight boredom and frustration in the solitude of archives and libraries. We salute their commitment. 🐾



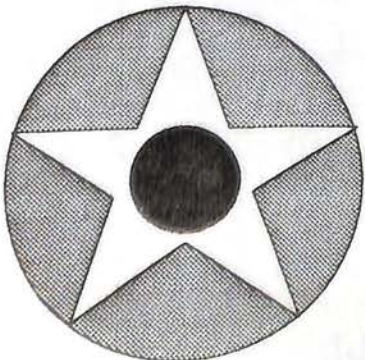
“Palishaw” Found

Remember the mysterious “Specialist Palishaw” who allegedly took photos of Luftwaffe aircraft in an underground bunker? (see *TIGHAR Tracks* Vol. 7, No. 1) Thanks to Walt Holm (TIGHAR #0980C) Thomas Palshaw (not Palishaw) has been found alive and well and living in Connecticut. It would be great to say that Walt tracked him down through an old parking ticket or something but the real story is sort of dumb and embarrassing. It turns out that Mr. Palshaw visited TIGHAR's booth at an airshow years ago and we had his name and address all nicely written down in an old project file where Walt found it. While Palshaw is familiar with the stories of underground airplanes at Mainz-Finthen he denies being the person who saw or photographed them and, in fact, says he never saw the pictures. However, Walt has tracked down someone who does claim to have seen the photos and is now trying to nail down who really did go into the bunker. For his trouble, Walt Holm has been designated the new Project Director for Operation Sepulchre and, under his direction, the project is moving closer to finding out if there really are WWII German aircraft awaiting discovery in underground hangars. 🐾



Doolittle B-25

Plans to determine the precise location and condition of the only Doolittle Tokyo Raider which may reasonably still exist are in the diplomatic permission phase. Colonel Zhang Yongyin, Assistant Air Attache for the embassy of the People's Republic of China, will personally seek approval for TIGHAR's request to investigate the crash site in Chinese coastal waters when he completes his tour of duty and returns to Beijing this fall. Col. Zhang is an enthusiastic supporter of the project and will do his best to clear the rather difficult diplomatic obstacles to an on-site investigation and eventual recovery. 🐾



THE EARHART PROJECT



NEW EVIDENCE

On the eve of the expedition's departure, new evidence continues to come in. Late developments include:

- **Testimony obtained by Lou Schoonbrood (TIGHAR #1198) of The Netherlands who interviewed Gerson Van Messel, formerly a pilot with KNILM (Dutch East Indies Airlines).**

Captain Van Messel was at Andir Airport, Bandoeng, Java when Earhart and Noonan were there in late June 1937. AE and Fred visited him at his home there and he discussed the Electra's navigation station with Noonan. He remembers that Fred told him that he had recently moved the storage facility for his maps and books because "the original storeplace was in his way." TIGHAR had already determined that the navigator's bookcase found on Nikumaroro in 1989 shows signs of having been removed from its original mounting and reinstalled in a temporary fashion.

- **Corroboration of accounts that bones were found by the first settlers on Nikuamroro in 1938.**

Bauro Tikana, formerly clerk and interpreter to the British magistrate on the island in 1940, reports that he was told by laborers that they had found bones on the southeast end of the atoll when they first arrived in 1938. TIGHAR had long known of a similar tale related by a now deceased Coast Guardsman who was on the island in 1946 (see "Bones" in *TIGHAR Tracks* Vol. 6 No. 1), but that story contained many inaccuracies and had to be considered suspect. This recent corroboration by a living witness, however, lends the basic account much more credibility and indicates, in a general sense, where on the island the discovery was made.

- **Recognition of the possible significance of a grave found by the 1989 TIGHAR expedition.**

Tikana's account of bones being found at the southeast end of the atoll prompted a review of the various island features cataloged by the 1989 expedition. It happens that a small and isolated grave was found and photographed on that end of the island on October 6,

1989 but was presumed, at the time, to be that of a Gilbertese child. In the light of Tikana's information, the grave seemed oddly distant from the village two miles away. Anthropologists familiar with Gilbertese burial practices agree that it appears unlikely that the grave is that of an island resident and is probably that of an *I-Matang* (EE-matahng), a white outsider. The grave's small size (about 1 m by .5 m) could, of course, be due to the burial of bones rather than a body. The 1991 expedition will examine the grave more closely and take appropriate measures based upon the results.

- **Corroborating documentation from U.S. Naval Intelligence files which indicates an unexplained human presence on Nikumaroro's eastern beachfront immediately following the Earhart disappearance.**

A photograph taken during the U.S. Navy's aerial search of the island on July 9, 1937 (one week after Earhart's disappearance) was found at the National Archives on July 15, 1991. It confirms



U.S. Navy photo, National Archives

Recently discovered photograph of Gardner Island taken on July 9, 1937 during the U.S. Navy's search for Amelia Earhart.

several suspicions TIGHAR has had about that operation: that the tide was high at the time of the search flight thereby masking the fact that the reef-flat provided an inviting landing area when dry at low tide; that the search was conducted from a relatively high altitude (the photo appears to have been taken from about 1,000 feet) due to concern over possible bird strikes; and that the section of the island considered most interesting by the searchers, and possibly the place where they saw the "signs of recent habitation" described in the official report, is precisely the section of beach where U.S. Coast Guardsmen saw an abandoned campsite in 1944.

- **Confirmation that a November 1939 U.S. Navy survey of Gardner Island by a team from the U.S.S. Bushnell did not survey the ocean beachfront on the southeast end.**

Critics of TIGHAR's hypothesis have cited the Bushnell survey as proof that there was no sign of Earhart or Noonan on the island a scant two years after their disappearance. However, the map generated by that survey was recently found by

TIGHAR researchers at the National Archives. The surveyors' notations show very clearly, if ironically, that the one neglected section of beachfront, the one place where no one bothered to go, is the very area where other evidence places the Earhart/Noonan campsite. That evidence was not available to TIGHAR at the time of the 1989 expedition and, as in 1939, that particular beachfront received little or no attention. Needless to say, that will not be the case on this expedition.



EVIDENCE, CONCLUSIONS, AND EXPECTATIONS



The following is a summary excerpted from
The Earhart Project, Sixth Edition.

A realistic assessment of the known facts shows that the loss of Lockheed NR16020 conforms to a general pattern established in countless other (and no less tragic) aviation losses before and since and is, in that regard, unremarkable. Nonetheless, the disappearance of the Earhart World Flight has, through endless sensationalization, entered the realm of folklore and any attempt to establish what really occurred must confront barriers of credibility thrown up by more than half a century of speculation. The only weapon against that formidable obstruction is a rigid adherence to accepted academic standards. Using those criteria TIGHAR has established as unwarranted the supposition that the flight ended with fuel exhaustion and a crash at sea. Likewise, abundant documentary evidence leaves little doubt that the allegations of clandestine government involvement or Japanese culpability are groundless.

To sort out what really did happen requires that we accept as fact only that information which meets the most rigorous criteria for credibility. We must disregard all anecdotal and circumstantial evidence (even, or indeed especially, that which appears to support our own hypothesis) and restrict our assessment to the scant data that meet the test. From the panoply of purported evidence assembled over the years, only four sources of fact qualify for this distinction.

1. USCG Itasca Radio Log #2 entry for 08:44 on 2 July 1937. Record of Earhart's last inflight transmission heard by the Coast Guard.

Significance: Establishes Earhart's final course of action to be one which would logically bring her to Nikumaroro.

2. Pan American Airways System Memorandum dated July 10, 1937. Record of post-loss signals received and bearings taken by stations at Oahu, Midway and Wake.

Significance: Establishes the presence of an active transmitter in the vicinity of Nikumaroro from July 2 to July 5, 1937.

3. Weekly Newsletter - Aircraft Search for Earhart Plane, dated 16 July 1937. Description of aerial search of Nikumaroro by aircraft from U.S.S. Colorado on July 9, 1937.

Significance: Establishes the presence of unexplained human activity on Nikumaroro one week after the Earhart disappearance.

4. TIGHAR Artifact 2-1 recovered from Nikumaroro on October 6, 1989. Part of a Navigator's Bookcase, Consolidated Aircraft Corp. Part Number 28F 4023.

Significance: Establishes the presence on Nikumaroro of an airplane component consistent with the Earhart aircraft.

This is not a great deal of information but it does, as one would expect of legitimate evidence, provide a clear, if still incomplete, picture of what transpired in the central Pacific in July of 1937. The sequence of events that is indicated by the evidence conforms to aeronautical navigational procedures conventional within the context of the times and is specifically precedented in Earhart's own experi-

ence. The navigational emergency which precipitated the landing at a destination other than that intended was caused by a failure in Earhart's and Noonan's weakest area of expertise - radio. Faced with that failure, and that emergency, the crew appears to have responded rationally and prudently with a course of action that brought the flight to a safe conclusion. In the final analysis, what went wrong was that nobody found them. And yet, the fact that the U.S. Navy's search for the lost flight was ineffectual cannot be laid to any lack of commitment or desire on the part of the searchers. The official records make clear that a best effort was put forward by all involved and if, with the luxury of unrestricted time and access to worldwide resources, we can see in those records vital clues that were invisible to those who wrote them, we must remember that while we are engaged in an historical investigation, they were racing the clock to carry out a rescue.

The overall picture of what was intended, and of what went wrong, is now clear and the issue of where and how the flight ended would appear, in an academic sense, to be adequately resolved. It would, however, be folly to suppose that fact will replace folklore in the public consciousness without dramatic, intuitive proof that Earhart and Noonan landed and perished at Nikumaroro. Fortunately, there is every reason to believe that such proof is extant and discoverable at the site. The anticipated physical proof can be divided into three categories.

THE AIRCRAFT

The Lockheed can be expected to lie in the deep water immediately adjacent to the atoll. Its distance from the fringing reef, and therefore its depth, will depend entirely upon how long it floated and drifted before sinking. From the standpoint of preservation it is to be hoped that it is below 500 feet. There the effects of corrosion and coral encrustation should be minimal and the aircraft structure can be expected to be much as it was when it arrived there in 1937. A realistic

*Grave on
Nikumaroro
discovered
by 1989
TIGHAR
expedition.*



*TIGHAR
Photo by
John Clauss.*

I would like to help fund the Earhart Project. I enclose my check payable to TIGHAR for _____ ; please send me the items checked below.

Poster		\$20.00
Wearables (T-Shirt, Patch, Pin) T-Shirt Sizes (please circle one): S M L XL		\$25.00
Project Book and Companion Set		\$135.00
Certificate and Inclusion on Permanent Memorial Name on certificate and engraving to read:		\$250.00
Commemorative Model of NR16020 Name on plaque to read:		\$1,000.00
Project Sponsorship Name of Sponsor:		\$5,000.00

Name _____

Address _____

Daytime Telephone _____

*Please make your check payable to TIGHAR in U.S., Canadian, or any European Community currency.
All donations tax-deductible in the U.S. to the extent permitted by law.*



TIGHAR • The International Group for Historic Aircraft Recovery
1121 Arundel Drive • Wilmington, DE 19808 • USA
Telephone (302) 994-4410 • Fax (302) 994-7945



picture might be that of an airplane with a somewhat crumpled nose (from impact with the bottom) and considerable skin damage to its under-surfaces, wings and empennage from being washed off the reef. Damage to the interior could be severe due to the breaking free of fuel tanks which would pile up in the aft fuselage, then crush from water pressure as the airplane sank. Any organic material (cloth headliner, leather seats, etc.) will almost certainly be long since devoured by various marine organisms but the aluminum airframe, the cockpit glass and cabin windows (if not shattered earlier), instruments and radios, the rubber tires, the engines and propellers should be essentially intact. All of the metal will, however, be impregnated with chlorides from the seawater and highly unstable if disturbed without proper preservation materials and procedures being applied immediately upon recovery. It is important to remember that the recovery of any artifacts from Nikumaroro or its surrounding waters is conditional upon the approval of the government of the Republic of Kiribati which exercises ownership control over them.

ARTIFACTS ONSHORE

Anecdotal accounts of an unexplained "old campsite" on the eastern beachfront and documentary evidence of an unexplained human presence in the same area immediately following the Earhart disappearance indicate a high probability for the discovery on the island of further artifacts associated with the Earhart flight. The navigator's bookcase found in the abandoned village in 1989 exhibits surprisingly little corrosion (as did aluminum objects in the debris of the island's 1944 USCG Loran station) giving reason to expect that other aluminum artifacts associated with Earhart and Noonan still survive in relatively good condition. Ferrous objects fare much worse in the island environment and can be expected to be heavily rusted and in poor condition. Possible opportunities for positive identification of Earhart/Noonan artifacts include specifically identifiable items catalogued in the inventory of the aircraft done following the March 20, 1937 crash at Luke Field., such as:

- Bausch & Lomb field glasses, 6X30, serial no. 221939
- One quart fire extinguisher, Pyrene, serial no. Q-990198
- One and one half quart fire extinguisher, Pyrene, serial no. 116610
- Kodak Duo 6-20 camera, lens no. 865715, shutter housing no. 5116031
- Bone handle, double blade jackknife, no. 22309
- High pressure hand pump, serial no. 799

Also known to be aboard the aircraft in March of '37 was a Pioneer bubble octant borrowed from the U.S. Navy, serial no. 12-36. Other unique objects, such as the 149 gallon fuel tank possibly used as a water collection device, may be positively identifiable by comparison with photographs.

HUMAN REMAINS

Anecdotal accounts indicate that the skeletal remains of Earhart, Noonan, or both may have been discovered by Gilbertese laborers in the early days of the island's colonial period. From what is known of Gilbertese tradition it is virtually certain that if that happened, the bones were buried and the grave marked in the customary fashion (an outline of coral slabs - see photo at left). Such a site was found by TIGHAR in 1989 in a location that does not seem consistent with the burial of a colonist. During the 1991 Expedition, the grave will be examined. Identification of Earhart's or Noonan's remains should not be difficult given the state of the art of forensic pathology. If identification is made disposition will, of course, be at the discretion of next of kin.



While We Are Out —

When you call TIGHAR these days, you may hear an unfamiliar voice. Meet Suzanne Hayes, TIGHAR's new part-time employee, TIGHAR member #672C. Sue comes to us via the Old Rhinebeck Aerodrome where she worked for several years, before moving on to the Smithsonian Institution and then (for a real step up) to us. If you notice you're getting your orders and receipts a lot faster than you used to, Sue's the reason.

IMPORTANT MESSAGE			
TO <u>All TIGHAR Members</u>			
DATE <u>October</u>	TIME	A.M. P.M.	
WHILE YOU WERE OUT			
M <u>TIGHAR</u>			
OF			
Area Code & Exchange <u>(302) 994-4410</u>			
TELEPHONED	PLEASE CALL	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
CALLED TO SEE YOU	WILL CALL AGAIN	<input type="checkbox"/>	
WANTS TO SEE YOU	URGENT	<input type="checkbox"/>	
RETURNED YOUR CALL		<input type="checkbox"/>	
Message <u>Will be in all month.</u>			
Operator _____			

An artist and writer, as well as an experienced office worker and a good airplane mechanic, she's just the kind of all-rounder we need our members and employees to be. Welcome aboard, Sue!

One very important consequence of having Sue come to work for us is that TIGHAR's office will be open every business day during the upcoming Earhart Expedition. Mail will be opened, messages taken, calls returned, orders filled, renewals acknowledged, bills paid, and plants watered. So keep those cards and letters coming, folks — we always want to hear from you, and now we won't go deaf while we're in the Pacific.


BUT NOT FORGOTTEN

In January of 1991, we received a letter from Chris Hollinger, TIGHAR #834, of Fairfield, Ohio. His membership had expired, he was out of work, and just couldn't scrape up the \$35 to renew just now, so he thought he'd write and tell us he'd be back someday. Well, there are occasions when loyal support is measured in ways other than dollars. We quietly extended his membership for a year, and asked him to "pay" TIGHAR by recruiting more members - and renew when he had regular work. He responded enthusiastically to this suggestion, and outdid himself in passing out newsletters and conjuring new members out of the Ohio air.


Chris is dead. He died flying co-pilot on a charter flight on March 16 of this year. He was twenty-two years old.

Over this summer Chris' family has worked with TIGHAR to institute a memorial of some kind to make permanent his interest in and support of the organization. We agreed that a donation of a specific amount of money to purchase a specific, long-term asset for the foundation would be the best way to remember Chris. In addition to the asset purchased, the donation will be entered into a permanent book kept at TIGHAR headquarters, and a certificate sent to Chris' family.


TIGHAR wants to say a public and special thank you to the Hollingers for thinking of us, and for continuing Chris' involvement in TIGHAR on a permanent basis. We hope that knowing they have helped in a material way to support the deep interest Chris had in aviation's history will help to ease their grief.

Should any TIGHAR member (or family) wish to make a memorial donation to TIGHAR in the same manner, please get in touch by telephone or letter at any time. 

Apologies


Scrambling to raise the funding, complete the research, and organize the logistics for the up-coming Earhart Project expeditions has, unfortunately, left little time for acknowledging the flood of comments, suggestions, clippings and good wishes which have come in from members. If we haven't had time to thank you individually please accept this poor substitute. TIGHAR relies on you for information, and most of the foundation's projects begin with input from a member. Everything that comes in is carefully read and (in peacetime) acknowledged. We're always happy to hear from you. 

Woodsman Spare That Plane

Clippings of a recent Los Angeles Times article sent in by several members alerted us to an impending salvage operation of airplane wrecks in the Los Padres National Forest. A parts and information marketer known as Wreckfinders had proposed a "clean up" of wrecks in the area. As explained by their spokesman, Terence Geary, "We just sell the parts. We're talking about big bucks." What Wreckfinders didn't count on, and the local U.S. Forest Service didn't know, was that the Historic Preservation Act prohibits such commercial salvage unless steps are taken to insure that historic properties, in this case historically significant aircraft, receive proper consideration and treatment. Once the legal and ethical situation was made known to the Forest Service the Wreckfinders plan was squelched. Thanks to those who sent clippings. 

After much hand-wringing, meditation, and a couple of stiff Scotches we've decided to adopt a new logo. Several members had expressed an opinion that the present logo (thrown together with rub-on letters way back in '85) could stand some improvement so we asked our logo-lama Geoffrey Hurlbut (TIGHAR #242CEB) to see what he could come up



with. True to form, Geoff presented us with a number of good designs among which was this great image in the art-deco style of aviation's golden age. You'll be seeing it more and more as we use up old supplies and have new things done. Your comments, as always, are welcome. 

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If you receive a package from TIGHAR with styrofoam peanuts used as padding, those peanuts were salvaged and recycled from packages received by TIGHAR. Please pass them on rather than throwing them away.

TIGHAR recycles all cardboard boxes it receives unless they are torn beyond the possibility of use. This includes boxes which once held stationery, file folders, computer programs, office supplies, and any other box of a convenient size. Please re-use these boxes if at all possible.

PLEASE
BACK TO
USE



MAIL IT
US FOR RE-
than throwing

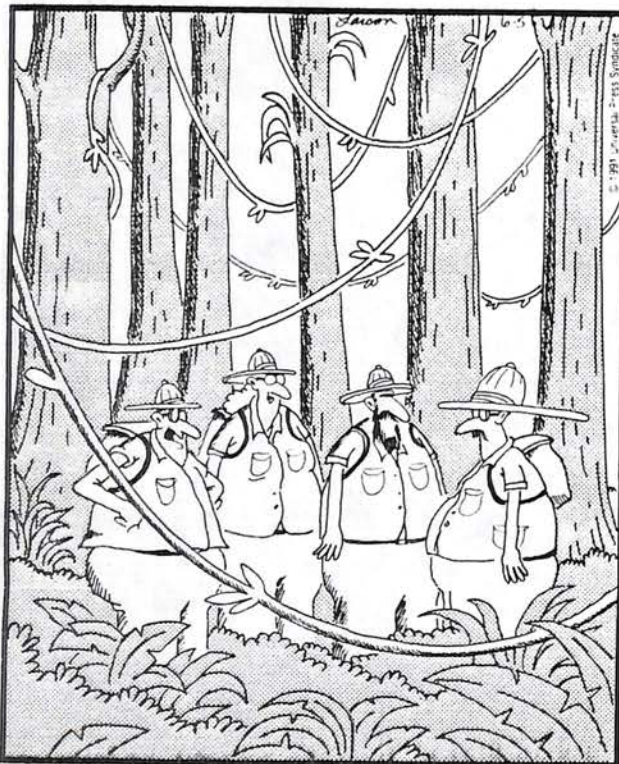
If you receive a mailing tube from TIGHAR and do not expect to have any further use for it, PLEASE MAIL IT BACK TO US FOR RE-USE rather than throwing it away.

TIGHAR recycles all its office paper, and uses only recycled file folders, presentation folders, hanging files, and other common office products. We use only recyclable copier paper and stationery, and expect to begin using recycled paper within the year, as product availability improves. TIGHAR Tracks is printed on recyclable paper; we will begin using recycled paper for TIGHAR Tracks as soon as we are able to find a high-quality semi-gloss paper which our printer considers adequate. 

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THE FAR SIDE

By GARY LARSON



"Well, we're lost. I knew from the start that it was just plain idiotic to choose a leader based simply on the size of his or her respective pith helmet. Sorry, Cromwell."

THE FAR SIDE COPYRIGHT 1991 UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE. Reprinted with permission. All rights reserved.

TIGHAR (pronounced "tiger") is the acronym for The International Group for Historic Aircraft Recovery, a non-profit foundation dedicated to promoting responsible aviation archeology and historic preservation. TIGHAR's activities include:

- Compiling and verifying reports of rare and historic aircraft surviving in remote areas.
- Conducting investigations and recovery expeditions in cooperation with museums and collections worldwide.
- Serving as a voice for integrity, responsibility, and professionalism in the field of aviation historic preservation.

TIGHAR maintains no collection of its own, nor does it engage in the restoration or buying and selling of artifacts. The foundation devotes its resources to the saving of endangered historic aircraft wherever they may be found, and to the education of the international public in the need to preserve the relics of the history of flight.

TIGHAR Tracks, published seven times each year, is the official publication of The International Group for Historic Aircraft Recovery. A subscription to **TIGHAR Tracks** is included as part of membership in the foundation (minimum donation \$35.00 per year). The editors welcome contributions of written material and artwork. Materials should be addressed to: Editors, **TIGHAR Tracks**, 1121 Arundel Drive, Wilmington, DE 19808 USA, Telephone 302/994-4410. Photographs and artwork will be returned on request.



MEMBERSHIP FORM

I would like to join TIGHAR. Enclosed is my donation of

\$35 for a one year membership

\$60 for a two year membership

\$125 for a five year membership

\$1,000 for a life membership

Please send me —

TIGHAR Tracks seven times a year, and a membership patch and decals
Invitations to participate in expeditions, courses, seminars, and Gatherings
Opportunities to subscribe to special internal TIGHAR project publications
Opportunities to do research, interviews, and reports for aviation historical projects

Name _____

Address _____

Telephone _____

Please return this form with your membership dues in U.S. funds only, to TIGHAR, 1121 Arundel Drive, Wilmington, DE 19808 USA; Telephone (302) 994-4410, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. EST/EDT, M-F. ALL DONATIONS TAX-DEDUCTIBLE WITHIN THE LIMITS OF THE LAW.



FREDERICK ALLAN GOERNER
Twenty-four Presidio Terrace
San Francisco, California 94118

October 28, 1991

Professor Henry E. Maude
42/11 Namatjira Drive
Weston, A.C.T. 2611
Australia

Dear Professor Maude:

What GOOD NEWS that Mrs. Maude is back home with you and feeling so much better.

Although I am your junior by several years (I just enjoyed my 66th birthday), I know whereof you speak with respect to the uncertainty of even the immediate future.

Last year I had a major encounter with cancer, but I have surprised everyone with my recovery, although I live from CT-Scan to CT-Scan. The truth is that if I had tangled with this type of cancer even twenty years ago, I would not be writing this letter.

Well, Gillespie and his TIGHAR cohorts are scheduled to return from Nikumaroro on Wednesday, October 30th, and I am told by Mr. Ed Barnes of Life Magazine, who has been in contact with the group during their stay on the island, that they are returning with more metal which they will attempt to claim "could be" from the Earhart aircraft.

According to Mr. Barnes, Gillespie has also done extensive excavation on Nikumaroro for human remains, but to the last report had only found the grave of a child.

Because it would be most difficult for Gillespie to return empty-handed, he may well recover the remains of Mr. Gallagher or one of the sailors from Norwich City and try to claim they "may be" those of Fred Noonan. Sad. Sad. Sad.

Many from the American media have contacted me for information which might confirm or refute Gillespie's pronouncements. I'm afraid that all I have been able to give them falls into the "refute" category.

Because you and Mrs. Maude are the world's leading experts on the islands of the Central Pacific Islands in general and specifically of Nikumaroro, I have taken the liberty of telling several in the media of your expertise and providing them with your address.

Thank you, both, so much for your letters and the enclosures.

I will photocopy the Nesbitt article and the Second Progress Report for the Phoenix Islands Settlement Scheme and return them forthwith.

The Nesbitt article contains certain crucial misinformation, particularly where it stipulates the amount of petrol the Earhart plane was carrying when it left from Lae, New Guinea. I will attach the proper evidence when I return the Nesbitt document.

Mr. Gillespie and TIGHAR are still pushing two bankrupt theories to support the possibility of an Earhart/Noonan presence on Nikumaroro.

First, they cling to the bogus information that "a female skeleton wearing women's shoes" was found circa 1938 on the shore of Nikumaroro. When this concoction first surfaced in the 1960's, we at CBS contacted the Central Archives of Fiji and the Western Pacific High Commission, and the archivist (Tuinaceva) replied that "no skeleton has ever been reported found on Gardner Island." At the time I filmed the television documentary THE BATTLE FOR TARAWA at Betio and Bairiki in November, 1968, Mr. Roberts questioned some of the Gilbert Islanders for me, those who had lived at Nikumaroro. They reported that there was a "legend" about a Polynesian man being found on Nikumaroro, and there was a funny story about someone finding some "high-heel women's shoes" on Nikumaroro, but this was not connected to the Polynesian. The Polynesian incident was supposed to have happened "long before" 1937, and of course, Miss Earhart did not wear "women's shoes" when she was flying. She wore men's low-heel brograns. I wish I had asked more questions in 1968 at Tarawa, but what I learned was enough to quench my modest interest in the matter. By the way, are you familiar with Tuiniceva, The Archivist?

The second Gillespie and TIGHAR claim concerns a supposed "Earhart and Noonan survival camp" on Nikumaroro. Gillespie states that the Navy report filed by U.S. Navy Lieutenant John Lambrecht, who flew one of the Navy planes over Nikumaroro July 10, 1937, in search of Earhart and Noonan, indicates a sighting of "recent human habitation." It is true that Lambrecht made such a report, but in my personal conversations with Lambrecht, he said all he and his observer had seen was "some stones piled up that might have once been walls." Lambrecht went on to say that he and his observer certainly had not seen anything that would lead them to believe that the island was inhabited in July, 1937, and they had not seen anything that could possibly indicate that Earhart and Noonan had ever been on the island.

It may interest you to know that I first found mention of Mr. Gallagher's name in the NZPAS files at the National Archives in Auckland, New Zealand. That led me to believe that he was a New Zealander until you put the matter straight.

Well, we shall see what Mr. Gillespie and TIGHAR come up with to justify more fund-raising from the unwary.

Because you mentioned the name of Pablo Laslo, you may be interested in the attachments.

Laslo survived his time with the Japanese in the mandates. He was not a U.S. intelligence agent, but he wanted to be one. As you will read, he attempted to sell his observations of the mandates to the U.S. Office Of Naval Intelligence, but he was not trusted.

He had moved to Buenos Aires by 1939. A later report (1942) from J. Edgar Hoover of the American Federal Bureau Of Investigation to William Donovan of O.S.S. indicated that Laslo was not to be trusted. At that time (1942), Laslo was teaching in a school in Argentina, and he was still trying to sell information to U.S. intelligence.

This is about the time you were preparing material for O.S.S. on the Pacific Islands.

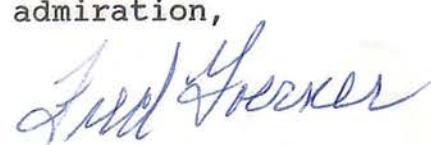
The fact that ONI was even willing to consider Laslo's claims about the Japanese mandates indicates how desperate American intelligence was for information concerning that area. It is also interesting that \$1500 was too much money for a depression constricted 1934 Navy intelligence budget. I cannot lay my hands on the FBI report at the moment, but when it turns up, I will forward it to you.

In addition to my question concerning Tuiniceva, I respectfully pose another query: What did you find when you first set foot upon Nikumaroro in October, 1937? Do you find anything that might have once been a shelter? Did the surviving sailors from Norwich City build a stone marker beacon? Norwich City was wrecked in 1929, and 11 sailors, (5 British and 6 Arabs), were killed and their bodies washed ashore. They were buried on Nikumaroro by the survivors. I do not have information about when the survivors were rescued, but they must have been on Nikumaroro for some time.

What was it that Lieutenant Lambrecht and his fellow flyers saw during their July 10, 1937 overflight of Nikumaroro which led them to indicate there were "signs of recent human habitation"? Certainly whatever they saw in July, 1937, would have been there when you arrived in October, 1937.

Again, it is terrific news that Mrs. Maude is doing well. My kindest wishes to you, both. Stay well and happy. Part of your happiness may depend upon my no longer plaguing you with questions!

With respect and admiration,



MI-7/CH5(1-12)
Op-16-B-11

CNO Administrative Council
1927-1944
of ONI

FEB 19 1934

SECRET

From: Director of Naval Intelligence.
To: Commandant 16th Naval District.
SUBJECT: Pablo Laslo.
Enclosure: (A) Copy of a letter from Pablo Laslo.

Handwritten initials

1. The writer of enclosure (A) is unknown to this Office. In view of the nature and the importance of the information offered however, it is suggested that a thorough investigation concerning the antecedents, connections, character, etc. of the subject might prove profitable; and that if the circumstances warrant, an effort be made to obtain the information offered.

2. This Office is not in a position to pay any such sum of money as mentioned in enclosure (A) for any information subject may have. If subjects assertion that he has valuable information should appear to be well founded, it is suggested that it might be possible to obtain this information by an appeal to his patriotism as by some other means that may suggest itself.

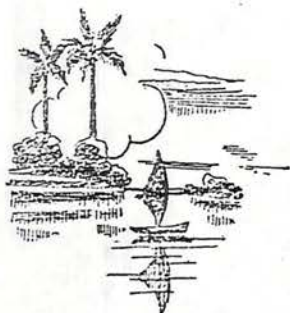
MEM

HE
HAYNE ELLIS.

Dictated 17 Feb. 1934
Dictated by Lt. McCollum
Typed by F.M. Sublett.

Handwritten initials

SECRET



Pablo Laslo

American-European
Young Men's Christian Association
Manila, P.I. Jan. 12th. 1934.
Correspondence Room

Naval Intelligence Service,
Navy Dept.
Washington, D.C.

Should the contents of the annexed letter be of interest to you, I am willing to give you full particulars and detailed information on the subject.

I would ask \$1500 (fifteen hundred Dollars) for this information. I do not consider it exceedingly elegant to ask money for such a service, but times are so bad now that I cannot afford to disclose these things free to a country which is spending millions on armaments and intelligence service anyhow.

As I do not know how long I shall stay in the Philippine Islands, please communicate with me as soon as possible in case you are interested in my proposition.

NAVAL INTELLIGENCE DIVISION
Yours truly,

Pablo Laslo

FEB 13 1934

H-7/OH5-(1-12)

"O Lord, keep me ready to help others at some cost to myself; send me chances to do a little good every day, and so grow more like Christ."

Please write to the
American Y.M.C.A.
Manila

Having lived for nearly two years as a trader in the Japanese Mandated Islands, I am in position to furnish you with information about the Marianas, Carolines and Marshall-Islands and the activities of our yellow friends there. I have been over 4 months in the Marianas, namely Saipan, Tenian and Rota and nearly a year in the Carolines, namely Yap, Yap, Palao, Angaur, Biliou, Truck and the islands that surround it; as Fefen, Toll Udot, Uman and several others; - Ponape, the Natiks, Nagur and the Greenwich Islands, Kusai and the following Marshall Islands: Jaluit, Ebon, Alilinglapalap, Namo and Kwadjelin on the Railick chain and Aur, Arno, Majura, Wotje and Ligieb on the Ratack chain. On the Marshall Group I lived for 6 months.

In spite of being continually followed by the police (every white man is watched day and night) I could find out that there are soldiers and airplanes on an island near Guam (I know how many they were in August) and that from certain doings on Rota, only abt. 60 miles from Guam it is clear that the Japs are getting ready for war. I can tell you the 4 islands where quite important coaling stations are and the 3 islands with seaplane bases. One of them is splendidly situated and is marvellously protected by great rocks and small islands before. There are also certain small islands (uninhabited) where no white man is allowed to go! On two places landing fields for airplanes are being prepared. Prince Fushimi, a relative of the emperor held a speech at Ponape that will surely interest the USA. - I can also tell you something about the introduction of the obligatory military service in the Islands, in spite of their being only a Mandate. I know the approximate number of battleships which took part in the manoeuvres between Palao and Saipan and have seen a certain number of them myself in Truck and Ponape. Saipan is the base of an eventual attack on Guam and Palao for an attack on the Philippines. I do not think that Guam could be held in case of war. There were also sounding ships busy at all the islands, measuring the passages and putting up flags in several places where there have been no signs up to now. The native say (and they know their waters well) that the new nautical signs are faked. I could give some more detailed information about this.

There is also a new wireless station on one of the Islands. The machinery is already there and the cementwork (sockets) put up. The see of the Administration of the Marshall-Group will probably be shifted from Jaluit to another island. I know to which.

I have also been in the fortified zone at Futamã (Ogasawara) I know the situation of the radio-station at Chichidjima (it cannot be seen from the sea) and more or less the situation of the fortifications. - I also know which islands have good anchorages.

I have some details about the death of the former Colonel of the Marines Robertson, who died mysteriously in Palao in 1931. He was of the Intelligence Dept. The USA Government suspected that he had been poisoned but could get no proofs. I can give you details which are ignored at Washington. -

I was not allowed to return from Truck to Japan in June 1933, nor from Ponape in July as they did not want me to see the manoeuvring fleet. I had one opportunity to get out from the Japanese Mandate by a small steamer plying 3 times a years from Ponape to Rabaul (New-Guinea) now under Australian mandate. The captain of this steamer, "Heiyei Maru", used to come to Ponape already, in German times as a poacher, fishing and gathering shells on a sail-boat with an engine, but his chief aim was to take spondings. When the Japanese battleships took Ponape in 1914 he was the pilot on the flagship. - Now he is getting his informations about New-Guinea,

An attempt was made to poison me and abt. 10 years ago they tried to poison another white man at Ponape. - The background of the Japanese smiles is not so pleasant after all as some people may think.



IN REPLY ADDRESS COMMANDANT, NAVY
YARD, CAVITE, P. I., AND REFER TO
No. (SC) A8-2 (#3)

SIXTEENTH NAVAL DISTRICT
PHILIPPINE ISLANDS

COMMANDANT'S OFFICE, NAVY YARD, CAVITE, P. I.

(12)

SECRET

15 May 1934

From: Commandant Sixteenth Naval District.
To: Director of Naval Intelligence.

Subject: Pablo LASLO.

Reference: (a) DNI ltr. HI-7/QH5(1-12) Cp-16-B-11 of 19 Feb. 1934.

1. In accordance with the reference, the subject man was investigated by the Intelligence Department, U.S.A. Their report is quoted herewith:-

"With reference to your memorandum of 2 April re Pablo Laslo:

- (1) Age: 30 years and 1 month;
Occupation: Ostensibly a hardware merchant;
Race: Magyar, born in Hungary;
Citizenship: Mexican;
Last permanent residence: Yokahama, Japan;
Nearest relative: (Father) Dr. Samu Laszlo,
v. Lipot Korut 5,
Budapest, Hungary;
Arrived in Manila, January 3, 1934, aboard the S.S. "Nellore"
from Melbourne, Australia.

(2) Laslo has been in several occupations, such as literature, south seas trading, etc.

He lived for about two years in Palao, where he dealt in hardware, and was reported to be fairly successful. However, for some reason the Japanese began to force foreign residents out, and Laslo left Palao. He thinks he escaped poisoning only by chance. He claims that foreign residents, who refused to leave Palao after several hints were poisoned.

Some of the things he claims to know are interesting, if true. For example he claims to know certain facts concerning the death of a Marine officers, named Robertson, several years ago; also that certain aids to navigation in the mandated islands have been installed so as to mislead visitors.

Laslo claims to have information concerning radio stations, aviation centers, etc., in the mandated islands. He is anxious to sell his information. I believe his first price was five hundred dollars.

SIXTEENTH NAVAL DISTRICT
PHILIPPINE ISLANDS

COMMANDANT'S OFFICE, NAVY YARD, CAVITE, P. I.

SECRET

MMA

Subject: Pablo LASLO.

An article, supposedly anonymous but actually written by or in collaboration with Laslo, will appear in the "Philippine Magazine" in the near future. It will deal with the mandated islands.

Laslo is a shrewd man, and anxious to enter the American service in some capacity. As a matter of fact, he is probably short of money.

It is my belief that it is dangerous to have very close dealings with Laslo. He may have information of some value, but he is also rather prone to talk to outsiders.

At present Laslo is reported to have some sort of connection with the Bureau of Science, for which he receives P100.00 per month. Inasmuch as he is pressed for money, this position is probably a god-send to him."

2. After receipt of the above report, the District Intelligence Officer met Laslo by appointment. The latter was shabbily dressed, talked volubly, but stated that as he was extremely short of funds, he believed that he owed it to himself not to divulge his information until he was reimbursed \$1500. At present he is making a hand-to-mouth existence by selling translations of the works of Rizal. Laslo stated that an officer representing Admiral Upham had visited him early this year. He denied being employed by the Bureau of Science. The District Intelligence Officer's estimate of this man is that he is untrustworthy and that it would not be worth the Department's trouble to pursue this subject further.

3. When, and if the article referred to in the first paragraph appears in the "Philippine Magazine" it will be scrutinized by the District Intelligence Officer. If this article proves to be of any importance it will be forwarded to Director of Naval Intelligence.

W. H. Allen
W. H. ALLEN.



Original by Air Mail

JAN 9 1939

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

12 December, 1938

41-710415

From: Naval Attaché, Buenos Aires
To: The Director of Naval Intelligence

SUBJECT: Pablo Laslo, returned to Argentina.

Reference: Ltr., your confidential, series 1549 of 16 July, 1938.

1. In accordance with paragraph 2 of reference, I report that subject man has returned to Buenos Aires.

2. Upon his return I had a long conversation with Laslo, and from his talk I assumed that his business in Washington had been conducted satisfactorily to all parties. He told me that the office of Naval Intelligence had been pleased to obtain his information, but that in conversation with Mr. Creighton he realized that not being an ordnance expert he could have been confused as to the size of the guns that were to be placed on the gun implacements that he saw prepared in the Islands.

3. He told me that he would live in Buenos Aires at the same boarding-house he was in prior to going to the United States.

Nat. Archives 2638
41-710415
1927-1944
Chief of Naval Ops
Administrative
Covers of
CPT

T. J. Doyle - class 1414
04198
Thomas John Doyle, Jr.
Capt USN
died 11/23/22 Campbell
901 904 917 918

He never saw
any gun
implacements

Jmc

A friend
arranges for
me to get this
internal public advi
to TIGHAR members

The Earhart Project



The Return to Nikumaroro

Project Bulletin # 10

January 30, 1992

90%

We are very close to proving that at least one of the artifacts recovered during the October 1991 expedition to Nikumaroro is from the Earhart aircraft. Other artifacts may follow, but one in particular holds the potential for qualifying as absolute proof that it is not just from a Lockheed Model 10, but specifically from NR16020.

The artifact is a piece of aluminum aircraft skin approximately two feet long by a foot and a half wide found on the beach at Nikumaroro. Tangled on it were approximately thirty inches of copper wire with remnants of insulation still present. This is a complex artifact with many unique features including over 100 rivet holes, one surviving rivet, traces of the manufacturer's labeling, and evidence of other structures once attached to it. As a tool for making a conclusive identification the artifact is better than a fingerprint (in fact, it's more like having the whole finger). So far we have matched 90% of the artifact's distinctive features (dimensions, rivet pattern, rivet type, aluminum alloy, etc., etc.) with a specific location on the Earhart aircraft. But 90% isn't good enough. To qualify as absolute proof the match has to be 100% and, if our luck continues to hold, research still in progress will bring us that last 10%. Once the research is complete (probably sometime in March) we'll release all the specifics but for right now we'll continue our policy of no public speculation.

THE CHATER REPORT

One of the great areas of contention among Earhart researchers has always been what went on in Lae, New Guinea between Earhart and Noonan's arrival there on June 29 and their departure for Howland Island on July 2. Why the delay? What preparations were made for the hazardous Howland leg? How much fuel was aboard when they left? The only reliable report has always been an all-too-brief letter written August 28, 1937 by James A. Collopy, District Superintendent for Civil Aviation at Lae. The closing sentence in that letter states, "Mr. Chater advised me that he forwarded a comprehensive report dealing with the aircraft's stay at Lae, work carried-out, radio messages received, etc., to Mr. Putnam."

Eric H. Chater was the General Manager for Guinea Airways at Lae. The airline operated Lockheed Electras similar to Earhart's and their maintenance people assisted Amelia and Fred with preparations for the flight. Chater's "comprehensive report" would settle the questions once and for all, except the report disappeared. It didn't

go to the Purdue archives with Putnam's other papers and it has never turned up in U.S. government records nor among the various other collections of Amelia (new word) in private hands. The Chater Report was lost.

And now it has been found. Soon after TIGHAR's return from the Pacific, Mr. Hugh Leggatt, Manager of Corporate Communications for Placer Dome, Inc. in Vancouver, British Columbia, called to say that he had come across an interesting document relating to Amelia Earhart in the company's old files. He had read about our work in the newspapers and thought we might be interested. His description of the document made it clear that what he had was the lost Chater Report and he generously offered to send TIGHAR one of the two "flimsies" which accompanied the original report as well as photocopies of the various telegrams and letters which document its transmittal. Once we had received and reviewed these documents several things became clear.

The genesis, and odyssey, of the report goes like this: Following the failed search for Earhart, W. T. Miller of the U.S. Bureau of Air Commerce wanted to find out what had happened in Lae. He knew that his friend Frank Griffin of the Canadian gold mining firm Placer Development had connections in New Guinea where the company had a large operation, so he asked Griffin to help him get information. Griffin was an old friend of Eric Chater of Guinea Airways so he asked Chater to prepare a report for the U. S. government. Chater sent his eight page report, quite naturally, to his friend Griffin who forwarded a copy to Miller at the Bureau of Air Commerce in Washington. What became of Miller's copy is still a mystery but the original and two flimsies remained in the Placer company's files until recently found by Mr. Leggatt.

The report itself confirms that the delay in Lae was caused entirely by difficulties in getting an accurate time check for Noonan's chronometers (no, Fred was not drunk). It describes a test flight AE made on July 1 in which she could not get the Radio Direction Finder to work and assumed the problem was her proximity to the ground station. And the report settles forever the question about fuel. There were 1100 U.S. gallons of fuel aboard the aircraft when it departed for Howland (just as Collopy said). Also, Earhart left without waiting for the current weather report and, although it was sent to her by radio later, there is no confirmation that she received it. All in all, the report describes a series of events and decisions which make it clear that Amelia Earhart died of "get-home-itis" - a malady that has always killed impatient pilots.

KEY WITNESS

I think TIGHAR's desperate now:

There has been another important development in our attempt to piece together events on Nikumaroro following Earhart's disappearance. Critics of TIGHAR's work have pointed to a visit by what they call "a team of British surveyors" who supposedly "covered every inch of the island" in October 1937 (three months after Earhart disappeared) as proof that there was no sign of her or Noonan there. The "team of British surveyors" was made up of Lands Commissioner Harry Maude and Cadet Officer Eric Bevington (neither of whom was a surveyor) and 19 Gilbertese islanders who were there to evaluate the island for future colonization. Maude is still alive and has recently expressed his opinion that there was no sign of Earhart on the island. It turns out, however, that Maude had severe back problems and didn't explore the island himself. His assistant, Eric Bevington, took several of the Gilbertese on a walk around the island the first day they were there, and on the second day he took Maude on a canoe tour of places of interest. Courtesy of *Pacific Islands Monthly* and the magazine's Washington Bureau Chief, David North, we recently discovered that Eric Bevington is also still alive. On January 22, 1992 we visited him at his home in England and received a copy of the diary he kept of his visit to the Phoenix Islands in 1937. The diary and his own recollections confirm that the inspection of the island was cursory at best and that, even so, "signs of previous habitation" were seen in precisely the location where TIGHAR in 1991 found the remains of a pair of size nine American shoes and the cap from a bottle of traveler's medication manufactured in the U.S. The research on these artifacts is not yet completed but if they turn out to date from the '30s we'll have original source documentation and artifacts which indicate that there were Americans on the island prior to October 1937.

As is apparent from the above, the post-expedition research is going very well and, like a jigsaw puzzle nearing completion, pieces are rapidly falling into place. The work continues.

Honor.

*wouldn't it be nice
to hop a plane to England
to find what ever means
possible to support
ones theories!*

Carol

TIGHAR TRACKS

A PUBLICATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL GROUP FOR HISTORIC AIRCRAFT RECOVERY

A PROMISE OF CERTAINTY

We're going to know. We don't know yet, but we now know that we're going to know whether or not Amelia Earhart and Fred Noonan landed their Lockheed at Nikumaroro. TIGHAR's most recent expedition to that far away island has returned with airplane wreckage – bits and pieces of aluminum and other materials which were, without question, once part of an airplane. The artifacts recovered are of sufficient variety and complexity to permit a conclusive identification of the aircraft from which they came. Is it the Electra? Are these shards of debris the long-sought answer to the Earhart enigma, or can Nikumaroro be eliminated from the puzzle? This expedition, organized and executed at such cost in dollars and sweat, has taken the problem out of the realm of theory and speculation and made it an issue of conclusive material analysis. The significance of that accomplishment can hardly be overstated. We're going to know.

SURPRISES

In historical investigation it is wise to remind ourselves that we really don't know one tenth of one percent about anything. History hands us tiny scraps of certainty around which we try to assemble a picture using theory, probability and conjecture to fill in the huge blank spaces. If we're careful, disciplined and rational, the picture we concoct will bear some resemblance to what really happened, but it will never, ever be exactly right. It may, however, lead us to the discovery of more of those precious scraps of certainty with which we can correct our picture, and begin the process anew. Surprises, therefore, in an investigation like The Earhart Project should not be – well – surprising. And indeed, Nikumaroro handed us a number of surprises during the ten days the expedition spent at the island.



DISAPPOINTMENTS

The grave which we suspected might contain the bones reportedly found by the island's early settlers turned out to contain the remains of a tiny, possibly stillborn, infant. The excavation was undertaken only after we had re-examined the whole situation with the aid of our representative from the government of Kiribati and obtained his concurrence that the grave was very suspicious. The dig was meticulously executed over several days under very difficult conditions and, in the end, we were rewarded with the knowledge that all we had done was disturb the grave of a baby. As badly as we felt, as we carefully restored the grave we also knew that we had had no choice if we were to carry out the investigation we had come there to do. Speculation had been replaced with another scrap of certainty. The contents of the grave are now known, although the reason for its odd location and the origin of other objects found nearby are still a mystery.

Less conclusive was the search for the possible remains of a campsite seen by World War II Coast Guardsmen on the island's eastern shore. Day after blistering day of metal detector sweeps along the carefully surveyed and gridded beachfront yielded nothing unusual or unexplainable. Whatever the Coasties saw in 1944 is now either gone or hidden deep in the impenetrable underbrush. The TIGHAR team carried out an excellent search under truly brutal conditions and all we know for sure is that there was nothing where we were able to look.

HOPE AND FRUSTRATION

There is, however, no underbrush in the ocean and the sonar search of the waters surrounding the atoll was more conclusive. The 1989 expedition had determined

cont. p. 2

that there was no intact airplane parked on Nikumaroro. The 1991 expedition proved that there is no intact airplane resting on the ocean bottom anywhere near the island. In fact, Oceaneering International found the sea floor adjacent to the atoll remarkably free of any debris except for one spot along the section of beachfront photographed by the U.S. Navy search planes in 1937 and directly off shore of where World War II Coast Guardsmen reported seeing an unexplained campsite. There are anomalous sonar contacts in that area that are too small to be an intact airplane and might simply be unusual coral outcroppings. Then again, they could be chunks of airplane. Maddeningly, the targets were too deep for inspection by divers without special support equipment, and too close to the reef-edge to permit visual inspection with our ROV (Remote Operated Vehicle), so any further information about these targets will have to come from analysis of the sonar read-outs. At the very least, Oceaneering's sonar search has allowed us to make a fundamental correction to our historical picture. If the Earhart aircraft landed at Nikumaroro it has not survived intact.

REVELATION


Along with the confirmation that there is no intact airplane, wet or dry, at Nikumaroro came the discovery of components from a very much un-intact airplane scattered throughout the long-abandoned Gilbertese village. The most obvious parts were not visible in 1989 but had appeared, or re-appeared, as the result of severe beach erosion caused by very large waves which hit the west end of the island sometime between our two visits. Other pieces were, in 1989, undoubtedly right where we found them in 1991. In our failure to recognize them on the first expedition is a valuable lesson in historical investigation. We have always been, and must necessarily be, our own worst skeptics. In our abhorrence of the wild speculation and unfounded leaping to conclusions which have typified Earhart research for more than fifty years, we have gone to great lengths to avoid such errors in TIGHAR's work. And yet healthy skepticism, if taken too far, can become blindness. In 1989 we were quick (too quick it turns out) to ascribe aluminum debris seen among the ruins of the village to non-aviation sources. After all, there had been a Coast Guard Loran station on the island during World War II. Surely they had left behind objects made of aluminum, and weren't scraps of the metal found in the village more likely to be from that source than from an airplane? It was only when confronted with a box-like structure stamped with what looked suspiciously like an airplane part number that we were willing to concede that it was worth checking

out. And even that artifact, which turned out to be the navigator's bookcase, took two years to thoroughly analyse. A handful of other pieces of aluminum were also collected, almost grudgingly, but they didn't have numbers and never received much analytical attention. Then, on this expedition, the island handed us more aluminum artifacts which are quite obviously airplane parts. We're pretty dense, but eventually we catch on. A harder look at that 1989 junk reveals that several pieces are undoubtedly from an aircraft. So focused had we been on the notion that there had to be an intact airplane somewhere that we hadn't seen the evidence under our noses. The airplane at Nikumaroro, whatever airplane that might turn out to be, ended up in little pieces. With that realization it's hardly surprising that our searches for a complete aircraft, on land and underwater, came up negative. Of course, we would have much preferred an intact airplane – better visuals for the media (who would go to see *Raiders of Debris From The Lost Ark?*) – but when we set out to learn history's story it's best to remember that it's not Hollywood writing the script.

GRACE UNDER PRESSURE

So what's next? The press and the public are clamoring for answers. TIGHAR's critics (primarily Earhart authors who see their royalties threatened) are predicting that we'll announce results that are just unfounded speculation. Some are so frightened that they're shouting "fraud" before we've even made an announcement. The TIGHAR membership, on the other hand, has been understanding and supportive of our decision not to say anything until we know for certain what we have. Meanwhile, NBC News Productions is working on its two-hour documentary to be syndicated nationally in early April. LIFE magazine is waiting to see how the analysis comes out before deciding whether to run the story. And all the while we're measuring, testing, comparing, squinting at reel after reel of poorly microfilmed aircraft plans, consulting dozens of experts, doing everything we can think of to make positive identification of the materials and structures discovered.

FINISHING THE JOB

But artifact analysis is expensive in dollars and in time. The major sponsors whose loans made the expedition possible are 100% behind the project, and fund-raising on TIGHAR's behalf by The Pacific Society in Japan has exceeded all expectations. Nevertheless, our ability to finish the job quickly and thoroughly is directly dependent upon membership support. The expedition's full story has yet to be told (and quite a story it is too), but first we have work to do and, as always, we need your help to do it. 

THE CRASH AT SYDNEY ISLAND



A crucial piece of information needed to evaluate the wreckage found on Nikumaroro is the identity of an aircraft reported to have crashed on another island some 200 miles away. The logic goes like this:

- TIGHAR has established that the Gilbertese settlers on Nikumaroro used a variety of aircraft components as a source of lightweight metal. The abandoned village was fairly littered with little, and not so little, pieces of aluminum which were once part of an airplane and had been subsequently torn, hacked, and sawn apart for any number of local uses.
- Since December of 1938 when the first settlers arrived, there has been no recorded instance of any aircraft ever being damaged or abandoned at Nikumaroro. Therefore, either an airplane came to grief at the island prior to its settlement, or wreckage was brought there from a crash that occurred somewhere else.
- There have been no civilian aviation losses in the region (except a rather famous one in 1937). During World War II, only one military wreck is believed to have occurred in the Phoenix Islands which might have provided a source of airplane parts which could have, subsequently, ended up on Nikumaroro. The problem is, we don't know what kind of airplane it was.

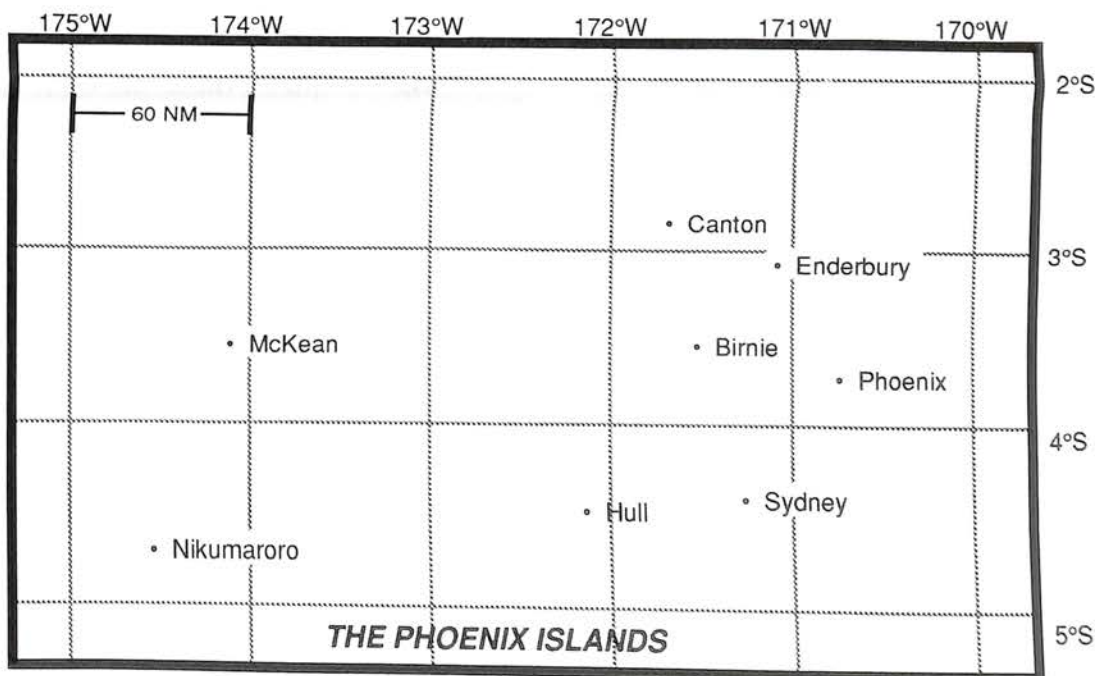
As early as May of 1989 we started hearing rumors concerning a large aircraft that supposedly crashed on Sydney Island during the war and was picked apart by the settlers there. Then, about a year ago, Dr. Tom King (TIGHAR #0391CE) came across this passage in an anthropological work entitled *Titiana* written by Kenneth Knudson:

"During the late war years, a large four-engined aircraft from Canton Island crashed on Sydney. ...[I]t circled the island once before attempting to ditch in the lagoon. The approach was made too low, however, and the airplane ... crashed just inland from the village. It burned on coming to rest, but the islanders hastened to pull the crew members from the wreckage. One man lived for a short time, but succumbed after an hour or so as he was badly burned. ... The next day a ship arrived from Canton and the bodies were removed and taken aboard. ... After the ship left for Canton, the wreck became the chief source of aluminum for the islanders, who had learned on Canton to make combs and other ornaments from this material. Eventually almost nothing remained of the aircraft."

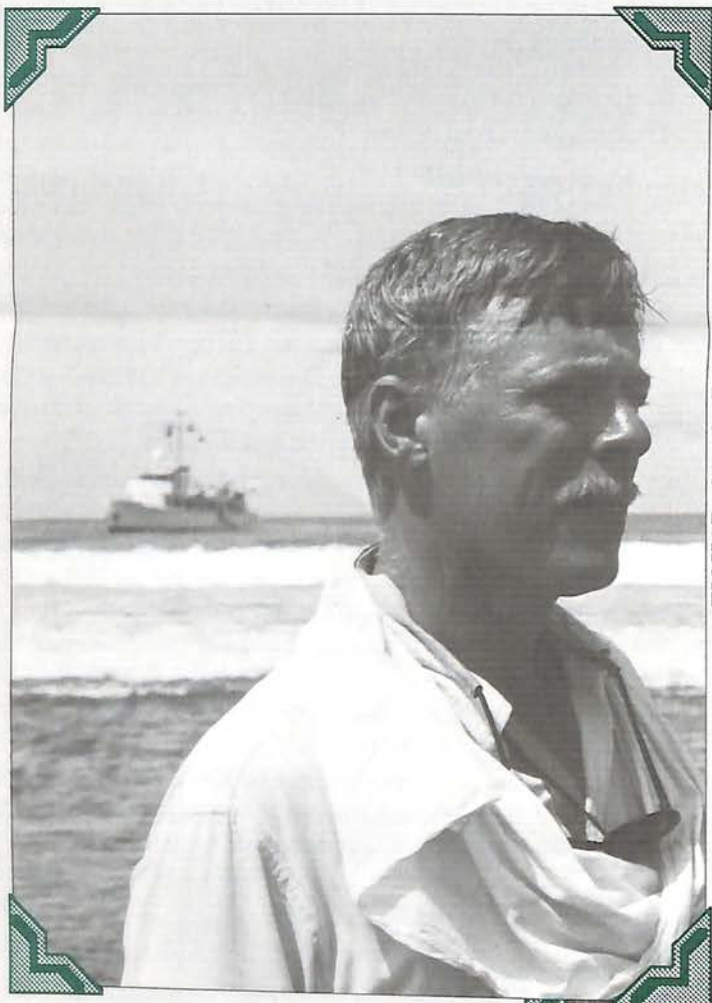
After the war, traffic between Sydney (later renamed Manra) and Nikumaroro was

not uncommon and there is certainly a possibility that pieces of the Sydney wreck might have left that island. We can't eliminate that airplane as the source of the wreckage we found on Nikumaroro until we know for sure what kind of airplane it was. Here's our reasoning so far:

- U.S. Navy operations out of Canton were flown by elements of Fleet Air Wing Two. A check of the records shows that they had only two losses out of Canton for the whole war: a PB4Y-1 lost at sea on October 18, 1943, and a PBM-3D lost at sea on September 5, 1944. It would appear that the Sydney crash was not a Navy airplane.
- Army Air Force combat operations out of Canton were associated with the Gilberts and Marshalls campaigns in late '43/early '44. The 7th Air Force was flying B-24s, the most common "large four-engined" aircraft of the Pacific Theatre, so it could have been a battle-damaged or lost Lib trying to get back into Canton.
- Later in the war, Canton became a major waypoint for cargo and personnel flights enroute between the States and the Southwestern Pacific. However, the lack of mention of any cargo or unusually high loss of life seems to argue against it being one of these aircraft.
- Perhaps the most promising lead is a mention by Knudson, in another part of his book, that the Gilbertese on Sydney were receiving repeated airdrops of supplies from aircraft operating out of Canton. Sydney is not really on the way to anywhere so it's easier to explain a crash by an airplane that has a reason for being there. But what unit was doing the airdrops and what kind of airplanes were they using? Let's get the TIGHAR network cranking on this one. 🐾



PICTURES FROM AN EXPEDITION



TIGHAR photo by R. Matthews

A glimpse of TIGHAR's Return To Nikumaroro.



Executive Director Richard Gillespie searches for the expedition ship.

Photo courtesy R. Matthews

Expedition Media
Liaison Russ Matthews
at work.



EARHART PROJECT SUPPORT

I would like to help fund the continuation of the Earhart Project. I enclose my check payable to TIGHAR for _____ ; please send me the items checked below.

Poster		\$20.00
Wearables (T-Shirt, Patch, Pin) T-Shirt Sizes (please circle one): S M L XL		\$30.00*
Project Book and Companion Set		\$135.00
Certificate and Inclusion on Permanent Memorial Name on certificate and engraving to read:		\$250.00
Commemorative Model of NR16020 Name on plaque to read:		\$1,000.00
Project Sponsorship Name of Sponsor:		\$5,000.00

** Price increase due to price increases from our suppliers. Even TIGHAR cannot stem the tide of inflation ...*

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All donations tax-deductible in the U.S. to the extent permitted by law.*



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HOLIDAY SHOPPING

Is there someone on your holiday giving list who:



- stops whatever they're doing at the sound of a radial engine?
- has no idea what a radial engine is but could probably look it up in their collection of history books?
- would quit their job for the chance to go on an expedition to a malarial swamp?
- knows better than to go anywhere near a malarial swamp but enjoys reading about people who don't know better?

Then you know someone who needs a TIGHAR Gift Membership. As a TIGHAR member, it's the perfect way to say, "I like you! You remind me of me!" Just send us the name and address of the new TIGHAR (and a check for \$35) and we'll send a special holiday greeting welcoming them on your behalf.

New!

TIGHAR Mugs

These high quality 10 oz. white ceramic mugs feature the TIGHAR logo in blue and silver. Warning: The Executive Director has established that the presence of a TIGHAR coffee mug in the work place frequently incites protracted conversations which can be detrimental to productivity.



Individual Mug

\$7.50

Set of Four

\$26.50

TIGHAR Mouse Pad



There you sit all day at your computer, scooting your mouse around on your mouse pad, wishing you were someplace else like maybe Nikumaroro, Third Round Lake Hill, or even the Agaiambo Swamp. Well it can't be all fun and games, but at least you can have a reminder at your fingertips that there's a TIGHAR at your desk. This heavy duty 9.5 x 8" pad is aircraft gray with the TIGHAR logo in dark blue.

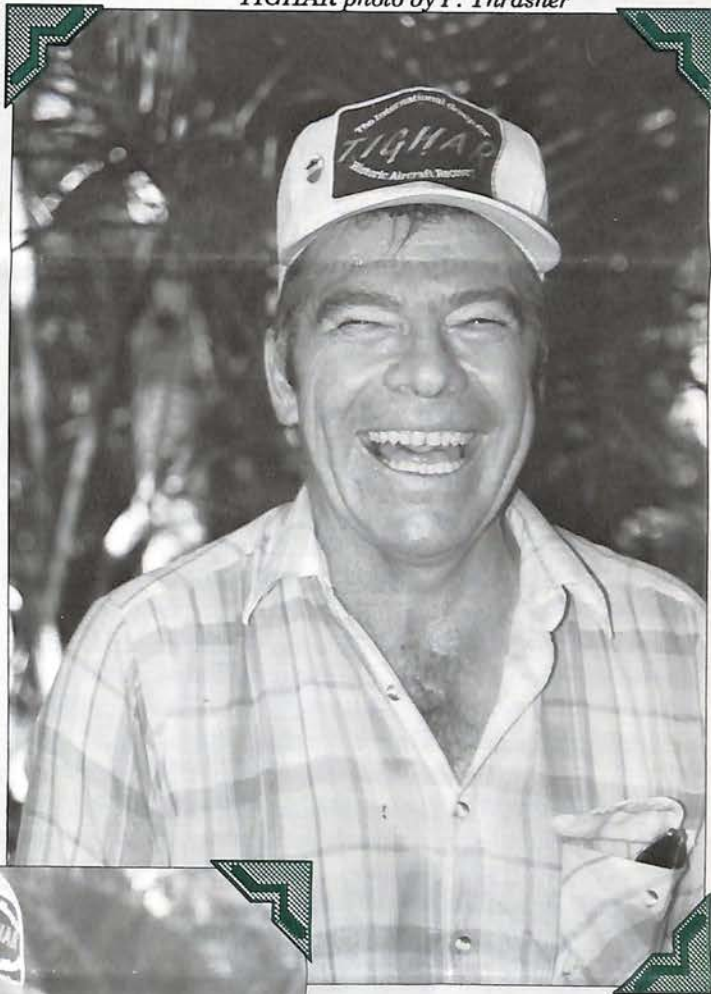
\$12.95

Please use order form enclosed.



Photo courtesy R. Matthews

Team Leader Kristin Tague searches for Amelia Earhart.



TIGHAR photo by P. Thrasher

Expedition Quartermaster Veryl Fenlason realizes that he actually volunteered for this - twice.



TIGHAR photo by P. Thrasher

Kiribati Customs Officer Manikaa Teuatabo wonders what he did to deserve this assignment.

BOOKS BY TIGHARS

***WINGS From Burma to the Himalayas* by John W. Gordon (TIGHAR #1223). Published by Global Press, Memphis, Tennessee, 1987. 265 pp. 10 pp. of photographs. \$17.95 (hard cover). Available directly from the author, R.D. 2, Middleburgh, NY 12122.**

Global Press specializes in historical memoirs, whether fact or fictionalized. *Wings* is a fictionalized account of flying the Hump in C-47s. The author served as a navigator in the 27th Troop Carrier Squadron in 1944 and 1945, and has written this book as a way of capturing both his experiences and the experiences of others: "Based on facts, some names disguised, others true, in some cases composite experiences of different individuals, some fictionalized incidents, this is the way it was" (from the introduction). Told mostly in dialogue, slangy and profane, this is war stories in their purest form, including bailout, injuries, bandits, rescue by missionaries, capture by Japanese troops, final rescue by Americans – all the John Wayne action one can hope for. Not a tool for the serious historical researcher, it does succeed at capturing some of the emotional impact



TIGHAR photo by P. Thrasher

of the war, the flying, the climate, and the foreign-ness on inexperienced young men from the States. This is also not a book for those easily offended by racial, ethnic, or nationalistic slurs; the tales are told using the authentic slang of wartime, the language reflecting the assumptions and indoctrinations the men shared.

An annoying fault this book shares with many aviation books is sloppy typesetting and proof-reading. Misspellings, mis-usages and a number of apostrophe and comma problems on the first several pages make it difficult to concentrate on the text if one is sensitive to such things. Considering the many very good spell-checkers and excellent typesetting programs currently available, there is no excuse for this. Get with it, aviation books!

***Ladybirds, The Untold Story of Women Pilots in America* by Henry M. Holden (TIGHAR #1118) with Captain Lori Griffith. Published by Black Hawk Publishing, Mt. Freedom, New Jersey, 1991. 203 pp. \$19.95 (paper). Available directly from the publisher, P.O. Box 24, Mt. Freedom, NJ 07970-0024. \$2.00 shipping & handling charge.**

Ladybirds begins with six separate introductory pieces (all short) describing how the book came to be written, and why the various people feel it was important to write on the subject – all of which more or less subverts the ultimate goal of an historical work, the purpose of which is (or should be) self-evident. Once that part is done, however (and one can always simply not read it), we are introduced to Blanche Stuart Scott, the first woman to pilot an airplane – if, in fact, the whole thing wasn't an accident! Beginning with that day in 1910, women have participated in aviation to the greatest extent that personality, determination, talent, and downright stubbornness have made possible, and this book begins the process of telling the story beyond the ready-made romance of Earhart, Cochran, and Lindbergh (Anne Lindbergh, that is).

Ladybirds is divided into nine chapters, the headings of which are: The Early Years; Barnstorming; The Golden Age of Aviation; Women & Warbirds; Whirly-Girls; Military Aviation (with a sub-title for each service); Astronauts; Commercial Aviation; and Aviation Entrepreneurs. The reader will note from this that a great deal of attention is paid to modern, even current aviation. This is a book more about women in aviation today than yesterday, in jets and helicopters rather than biplanes and long white scarves. From ladies in Edwardian dresses and parasols to airline pilots in captain's bars, *Ladybirds* traces the connections and shows the progress over eight decades of flying for women. Each chapter features a number of individuals and a generous splash of photographs. While it is clearly beyond the scope of a 200 page book to go into any depth on any one person, this volume makes for an excellent overview. It is clearly written, footnoted, and indexed; it contains a reasonably extensive bibliography, and an appendix listing addresses and contacts for those interested in learning more about careers in aviation. This is a must-have book for any girl or woman who contemplates learning to fly or continuing to fly, if only to know that she is not alone.

Apostrophe, quotation mark, and comma problems continuing throughout make it clear that Mr. Holden should invest in a good book on typesetting and page layout, and in better software. See last paragraph of the review above ...

***Aircraft Wrecks in the Mountains and Deserts of California, 1908 – 1990* by Gary Patric Macha (TIGHAR #0411). Published by Aircraft Archeological Press, Huntington Beach, California, 1991. 149 pp. incl. 15 pp. of photographs. Not priced. Paper. Available directly from the publisher, 17111 Camelot Circle, Huntington Beach, CA 92649.**

This book is a simple listing, in chronological order by date of crash, of various wrecks in various regions of California. It includes both military and civilian wreck sites, and where known the primary cause of the crash, the casualties if any, and the current status of the wreckage. Mr. Macha has visited a good many of the wreck sites; some of his photographs are reproduced in a section in the back of the book. One page is devoted to guidelines for wreck-hunting and visiting; his suggestions are sensible and responsible. This book is an excellent resource, especially for anyone who flies a good deal over this territory and wonders if anyone else knows about that airplane down there.

Proofreading and punctuation problems are distracting. See final paragraphs of two reviews above.



MIDNIGHT GHOST STORY



It has happened again. Everytime TIGHAR's marathon search for the lost French transatlantic flight, described by Lindbergh as having "vanished like a midnight ghost," reaches what seems to be a dead end (see "Drawing a L'Oiseau Blanc," *TIGHAR Tracks* Vol. 7, No. 4), the ghost materializes to beckon us on. This time the apparition appeared in the form of yet another witness to a television documentary which supposedly detailed the discovery and removal of the plane's 450 H.P. Lorraine-Dietrich engine from the Maine woods.

The spectre first spoke through one Robert Gunou who, in 1987, said he had seen the show at his home near Detroit, Michigan "sometime in the early seventies." We turned the broadcast industry upside down and shook it, but nothing fell out. Faulty memory, a hoax, a fluke, dead end. Then, in 1990, we were working on The Earhart Project with Dirk Ballendorf, Professor of Micronesian Studies at the University of Guam. It was over pizza at a little Italian place not far from the National Archives that the phantom next appeared.

"Yeah, I saw that show."

"Sure, Dirk."

"No, I'm serious. It was when I was still living here in D.C. Had to be sometime before '77 when I moved to Guam. I remember sitting right there in the apartment watching a show about how these guys had found an airplane wreck in the Maine woods and it turned out to be The White Bird of Nungesser and Coli. The point of the show was that it proved that they had crossed the Atlantic before Lindbergh, but that's about all I remember."

More research. Bill Alexander (TIGHAR #0403E) and Don Ward (TIGHAR #1134CE) tried every source they could think of and came up with zilch. Well, even a professional historian can have a distorted recollection. There's just no record of any such show. Wild goose chase. Forget it.

Time for another appearance by you-know-who. It's November 16, 1991 and World War One aviation devotees are in Washington for the opening of a new gallery at the National Air & Space Museum. At a dinner that evening Bill Nungesser (TIGHAR #0759CE) is holding forth, as he has been known to do from time to time, about TIGHAR's search for his illustrious ancestor's airplane. Sitting beside him is a man who, at the appropriate point in the narrative, chimes in with, "Yup, I remember that show. Must have been – oh – 1972." But in the heat of the moment, Bill forgets to get the

man's name. Who was that guy? (Cue theme music from *The Twilight Zone*.) Under threat of bodily harm from several TIGHAR researchers, Bill is now tracking down the identity of this latest witness.

AND THE SEARCH GOES ON

Jay Veith (TIGHAR #0767CE) has undertaken to assemble all the known printed articles and documents on the Nungesser/Coli disappearance into a bibliography of sources. It's a daunting task but Jay has become as much at home among the research resources of Washington, D.C. as he is among the wild woodlands of Washington County, Maine. He could use a hand, though, especially from anyone who has access to computerized magazine index services (CompuServ, Dialog, BRS, etc.). If you'd like to help, he's in the TIGHAR Directory or just call TIGHAR headquarters.

And in yet another branch of Project Midnight Ghost, Oscar Blue (TIGHAR #0820) of Hancock, Maine is looking for anyone who served at the Army Air Field in Bangor, Maine during August of 1942. Oscar is running down a lead concerning an unidentified airplane wreck allegedly seen during an aerial search at that time. If you were there then he'd like to hear from you.

Project Midnight Ghost is TIGHAR's oldest, and in many ways most challenging investigation. Over the past seven years there have been 20 expeditions supported by countless hours of archival research in the U.S. and in France, and yet we still don't know what became of The White Bird. At times we've backed away from the project, frustrated and convinced that it's a dead end street, that whatever became of the two brave fliers is not only unknown but unknowable after all these years. But whenever our resolve has weakened, or circumstances have dictated that our attention turn to other projects or issues, TIGHAR members have taken up the torch and moved the investigation forward (helped by an occasional nudge from the ghost). Like Ahab and the white whale, TIGHAR seems destined to hunt the White Bird, and who are we to argue with destiny?



Charles Eugene
Jules Marie
Nungesser, pilot of
l'Oiseau Blanc.



Photo courtesy Musée de l'Air

STRICTLY BUSINESS

ALL IN THE FAMILY

A mailing will be sent to all TIGHAR members soon containing details of the TIGHAR calendar for 1992 and (surprise, surprise) your opportunity to correct your listing for the 1992 TIGHAR Membership Directory. We're going to try something a little bit different this year. We get a lot of calls here in Delaware to the tune of, "Do you know of any TIGHAR members out my way who are a.) Certified Flight Instructors? b.) underwater search specialists? c.) plumbers? d.)" — well, you get the picture. And sometimes we can help, but sometimes we don't know if the CFI, search specialist, or plumber would just as soon be left alone. So — beginning with the 1992 Directory, if you would like to have your business card in a special section of the Directory as an ad, we will be accepting cards until January 20, 1992 for that purpose. Please! cards only! No art copy or unusual sizes (standard size is roughly 3 1/2 x 2 inches). The charge will be \$25.00, and will include a copy of the Directory. If you have sent us your card in the past, please don't assume we can find it — send a new one. This is intended to be a convenience for those of our members who would like to keep it all in the family. We'll try it for a year and see how it works out. Watch for the mailing of the calendar and Directory listing preference sheet.



TIGHAR (pronounced "tiger") is the acronym for The International Group for Historic Aircraft Recovery, a non-profit foundation dedicated to promoting responsible aviation archeology and historic preservation. TIGHAR's activities include:

- Compiling and verifying reports of rare and historic aircraft surviving in remote areas.
- Conducting investigations and recovery expeditions in co-operation with museums and collections worldwide.
- Serving as a voice for integrity, responsibility, and professionalism in the field of aviation historic preservation.

TIGHAR maintains no collection of its own, nor does it engage in the restoration or buying and selling of artifacts. The foundation devotes its resources to the saving of endangered historic aircraft wherever they may be found, and to the education of the international public in the need to preserve the relics of the history of flight.

TIGHAR Tracks, published six times each year, is the official publication of The International Group for Historic Aircraft Recovery. A subscription to *TIGHAR Tracks* is included as part of membership in the foundation (minimum donation \$35.00 per year). The editors welcome contributions of written material and artwork. Materials should be addressed to: Editors, *TIGHAR Tracks*, 1121 Arundel Drive, Wilmington, DE 19808 USA, Telephone 302/994-4410, Fax (302) 994-7945.



MEMBERSHIP FORM

I would like to join TIGHAR. Enclosed is my donation of

\$35 for a one year membership

\$60 for a two year membership

\$125 for a five year membership

\$1,000 for a life membership

Please send me —

TIGHAR Tracks six times a year, and a membership patch and decals
Invitations to participate in expeditions, courses, seminars, and Gatherings
Opportunities to subscribe to special internal TIGHAR project publications
Opportunities to do research, interviews, and reports for aviation historical projects

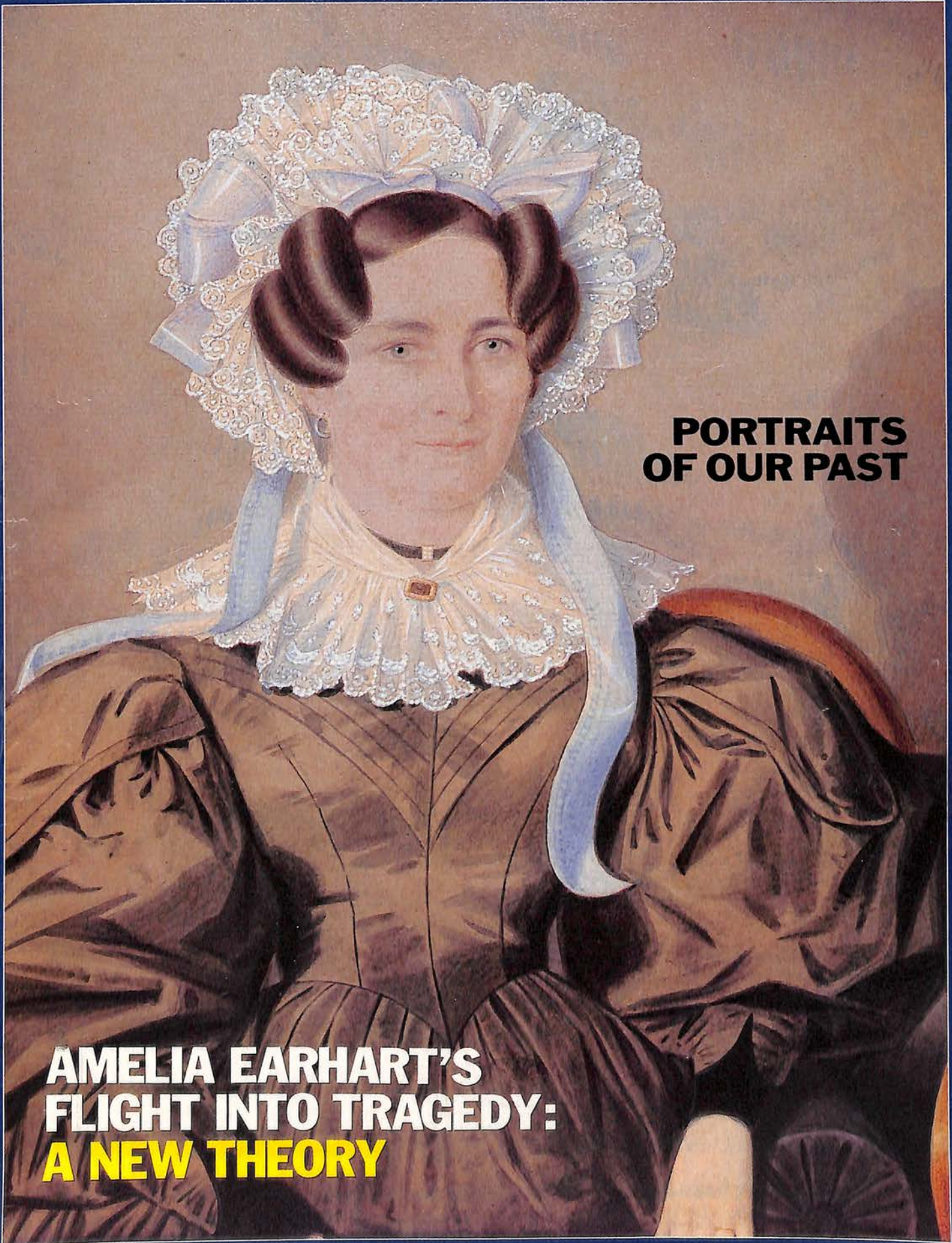
Name _____

Address _____

Telephone _____

Please return this form with your membership dues in U.S. funds only, to TIGHAR, 1121 Arundel Drive, Wilmington, DE 19808 USA; Telephone (302) 994-4410, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. EST/EDT, M-F. ALL DONATIONS TAX-DEDUCTIBLE WITHIN THE LIMITS OF THE LAW.





**PORTRAITS
OF OUR PAST**

**AMELIA EARHART'S
FLIGHT INTO TRAGEDY:
A NEW THEORY**

IS THIS WHAT HAPPENED TO Amelia Earhart?



Is a fragment of metal found on Nikumaroro Island, in the mid-Pacific, from the belly of Amelia Earhart's Lockheed Electra?

Fifty-five years ago, the world's most famous woman aviator vanished in the vastness of the Pacific. Did the Japanese capture and execute her? Did she crash into the sea? For years, the questions have been a matter of intense speculation. American investigator Richard Gillespie believes he has solved the mystery.

A gleaming silver Lockheed Electra crouches on an airstrip in the New Guinea jungle. In the cockpit sits a boyishly lanky woman with bright bold eyes, a tousle of short curls and a startling facial resemblance to the young Charles Lindbergh. With a nod to her navigator, a lean, dark-haired man in his 40s, she edges the twin throttles forward. As the engines crescendo to a scream, tropical birds burst from the bordering trees in screeching clots of colour. Loaded with more than three tonnes of gasoline, the Electra trundles down the runway toward a cliff that falls sheer into the sea. With only metres to spare, it lurches off the ground, sails over the brink, then swoops almost to the sea before easing into a slow climb. The navigator notes the time in his logbook: 10am, July 2, 1937. At 39, Amelia Earhart has begun her final flight. Within 24 hours, she will vanish into silence and mystery, a mystery that has haunted the world's imagination for more than half a century, a mystery that is now solved.

Earhart is the most famous female avi-▷

GANNON SUPPLIED *a stunning piece of information. During the navy's hunt for Earhart, no search party ever landed on Nikumaroro Island, and only a brief inspection was made from the air.*

ator of all time. She was the second person after Lindbergh to fly the Atlantic solo, first to fly from Hawaii to the US mainland, she set speed and altitude records, wrote books, co-founded an airline, lent her name to a line of luggage and designed practical fashions for women. In a profession dominated by men, Earhart inaugurated a struggle that eventually opened aerospace careers to women.

On March 17, 1937, Earhart took off from Oakland, California, on her greatest adventure: a 45,600km flight that would make her the first pilot to circle the globe near the equator. But on take-off from Hawaii for the second leg of the trip, her landing gear collapsed and the plane belly-flopped in a shower of sparks. Back at the Lockheed factory in California, where the Electra was repaired, new aluminium was riveted to the mangled underside. These changes, which made Earhart's aircraft subtly different from every other Electra, would ultimately help unravel the riddle of her disappearance.

Earhart started off again 62 days after the accident. But this time, still accompanied by navigator Fred Noonan, she flew east instead of west — across the US, the South Atlantic, Africa and India, then through the Dutch East Indies (now Indonesia) to Australia and on to Lae, New Guinea, where she took off across 4000km of trackless ocean toward a speck of coral in the Pacific called Howland Island.



Earhart with navigator Fred Noonan.

At Howland, the US Coast Guard cutter Itasca was standing by to guide in the Electra. At 6.15am, Earhart reported that she was about 320km out and asked the cutter to take a bearing on her signal. The Itasca explained that she was using too high a frequency and requested a Morse code signal on a lower frequency. No reply. The Itasca did not know that Earhart had removed her low-frequency antenna to save weight and that, incredibly, neither she nor Noonan knew Morse code. At 7.41am, Earhart's voice came through loud and clear: "We must be on you but cannot see you but gas is running low. Been unable to reach you by radio." At 7.50am, Earhart called again: "We are circling but cannot hear you." She then asked for a signal on a very high frequency. The Itasca sent the signal. She received it, but her radio was unable to home in on high frequency emissions. Her last message came at 8.45am: "We are on the line 157/337... We are running on line." The Itasca called and called. Silence.

What happened to Earhart and Noonan? In the 55 years since that grim morning, their disappearance has spawned an industry of speculation. Hundreds of articles, a feature film, several television specials and more than 30 books have looked at the mystery and offered solutions. Many assume Earhart ran out of fuel and crashed at sea. Others claim she was a US spy who was captured by the Japanese and died on Saipan in the Philippine Sea.

The public was fascinated. I wasn't. As an aviation risk manager, and later as executive director of The International Group for Historic Aircraft Recovery (TIGHAR), a non-profit foundation, I had investigated hundreds of airplane accidents and was well aware of the difference between anecdote and evidence. I told Pat Thrasher, my wife and partner in TIGHAR, that "the Earhart thing is a sensationalised circus and we should stay out of it". And then, on July 17, 1988, two retired military aviators, Tom Gannon and Tom Willi, walked into my office in Wilmington, Delaware.

Instead of anecdotes they presented evidence. Step by step they re-created the exact navigational situation faced by Noonan as fuel ran low, radio navigation proved useless and no island appeared ahead. On a chart of the central Pacific they showed how, even without radio bearings,

he could follow a standard procedure: aim his octant at the rising sun and plot a "line of position". Using celestial tables, Gannon pointed out that on the morning of July 2, 1937, the rising sun would have provided the precise line of position Earhart said she was running. By flying southeast along that line, Noonan could be sure that, even if he missed Howland, he would reach an island in the Phoenix group in about two hours. Clearly, it was the safest, sanest course to follow. I traced the line on the chart and read the name of the island: Nikumaroro.

Gannon supplied a stunning piece of information. During the navy's hunt for Earhart, no search party ever landed on Nikumaroro (then known as Gardner Island), and only a brief inspection was made from the air — a full week after Earhart vanished. The planes were launched from the battleship Colorado, the only large US warship in the central Pacific, which had to steam 3200km before the search could begin.

"You mean nobody really looked in the most likely place?" I asked. Gannon's silence spoke volumes. I knew then that we'd have to go after Earhart. We checked Gannon's story against official reports from the 1937 search and what we found floored us. The navy had even stronger reasons than Gannon and Willi to believe that Earhart had landed on an island in the Phoenix group. Almost 24 hours after her last message to the Itasca, a navy flying boat re-established radio contact. Earhart's signal, barely audible but persistent, was also picked up by HMS Achilles and by stations all over the Pacific. Lockheed advised the navy that, given the continuing signals, the plane must be on land and able to operate an engine to recharge its batteries. Pan Am stations at Hawaii, Midway and Wake island also took radio bearings and told the navy that triangulation "places plane [in] Phoenix group". After three days, Earhart's signal stopped.

Four days later, on July 9, three biplanes from the Colorado flew over Nikumaroro. They saw no airplane on the atoll, but Lieutenant John Lambrecht's report noted that "signs of recent habitation were clearly visible". However, "repeated circling and zooming failed to elicit any answering wave from possible inhabitants". Lambrecht decided "none were there" and flew off, unaware that those signs of recent habitation were hugely significant. Before 1937, Nikumaroro's last known inhabitants were a work party of islanders who had departed in 1892. The searchers had gone