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San Francisco, California 94118

April 9, 1989

Mr. Rob Gerth
TOTAL TV
1349 Michaels Lane
Norristown, Pa. 19401

Dear Mr. Gerth:

As I was working with some material today for my book, I came across a couple of items which deal with Gardner Island.

These are considerations you should weigh and share with TIGHAR.

In late 1944 and early 1945, the U.S. Coast Guard constructed a LORAN station on Gardner Island. At the same time, a similar station was constructed on Baker Island, which is some 40 miles south of Howland Island.

I do not know how long the Loran station on Gardner was manned, but it was at least until the end of WWII in the Pacific.

This information of course is not supportive of statements made by TIGHAR with respect to Gardner Island.

Another item involves a story about Gardner Island which appears on Page 177 of my book THE SEARCH FOR AMELIA EARHART. You have indicated that you have the book; therefore, I am enclosing a copy of the original Associated Press wire service story from 1961.

As several people have attempted to use the story to support a theory that Earhart was on Gardner Island and because Fred Hooven placed Gardner within range of his possible landing places for the Earhart plane, I did considerable additional research on the Floyd Kilts story.

It is a perfect lesson on how how information can become corrupted through retelling, difficulties of interpretation and the passage of time.

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 Gardner 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.

When I gave Fred Hooven the information, he focused much more attention upon McKean Island as the most probable landing place.

On Pages 24 and 25 of the TIGHAR prospectus, the following appears: "And, the final clincher: it appears highly likely that Amelia and Fred were looking for Howland Island in the wrong place. Its location had recently been corrected, moving it essentially five minutes of longitude or 5 nautical miles farther east."

This theory has been trumpeted by Grace McGuire (who has gotten extraordinary publicity without accomplishing ANYTHING) and others, but it is totally incorrect.

Admiral Harry Manning, who was with AE at the time of the crackup in Honolulu, became a fascinating friend in the late 1960's. He had been alerted to the new positioning of Howland Island at the time he arrived in Honolulu with Amelia and Fred Noonan. He was given a blueprint of the runway layouts of Howland and the latest survey of the island. He and Noonan worked out their Honolulu/Howland projected flight plan based on the new information. Admiral Manning was good enough to give me the copy of the blueprint and the new coordinates which he had kept as a souvenir over the years. The original flight plan had been prepared by Clarence Williams, a U.S. Navy Reserve officer, and IT had used the old coordinates. Amelia and Fred were NOT lost because they did not have the latest information about the real location of Howland Island.

As Harry Manning said to me, "I never relied on anyone else's work. I always wanted to do it myself to be certain."

There are at least a dozen other things promulgated by TIGHAR which are incorrect, including their reliance upon the work of Mark Peattie and Thomas Wilds. Neither of the gentlemen were able to avail themselves of the latest declassified records.

If I find time in the next few days, I will address some of these matters.

With all good wishes, I am,

Cordially Yours,



Frederick Allan Goerner
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AP90EX

AMELIA

AP 1961

(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.

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