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August 11, 1992

Frederick Goerner
24 Presidio Terrace
San Francisco, CA 94118

Dear Mr. Goerner,

I'm truly sorry that you were unable to attend the August 8th meeting of the Northern California Chapter of the American Aviation Historical Society, and I know I speak for all of us at TIGHAR when I wish you a full and speedy recovery.

The allegations you made to Kris Tague during your recent lunch with her, and which you planned to repeat at the AAHS meeting, are what prompted me to come out to the meeting. It was also expected that Carol Osborne would be there, as well as Bill Prymak of the Amelia Earhart Society. But, as it turned out, you were unable to be there and the others failed to show. Kris presented an excellent slide-show reviewing TIGHAR's work and Elgen Long showed a videotape explaining his own opinions regarding Earhart's fate and his objections to TIGHAR's findings. There followed a lively and lengthy question and answer session during which various aspects of the evidence were discussed and debated. However, the audience's questions focused on the substantive issues and if anyone present had doubts about my ethics or TIGHAR's motives they didn't voice them, despite a specific invitation from me to do so.

Two days before the meeting I learned, for the first time, that you had written a letter on March 1, 1990 replying to mine of February 8, 1990. I didn't see a copy of the letter until the night before the meeting when Kris Tague showed me the one you had given her. That that letter was never delivered is indeed unfortunate because it left each of us thinking that the other had cut off communication. Had correspondence between us continued, I do not for a moment think that we would have necessarily reached the same conclusions about Earhart or Nikumaroro, but you may have formed a different opinion of TIGHAR than you did.

Whether or not any kind of meaningful exchange between us at this point is possible, I don't know. The things you've said and written to TIGHAR members and to the press about me and about the organization I represent are difficult to put aside. You've repeatedly described the "Gardner and McKean Islands theory" as originating with Fred Hooven in 1982 and said that it was passed to us "via Hooven to NASM to Wade to Willi to Gillespie." But both Friedell's and Thompson's reports clearly show that that theory dates from July 6, 1937 (if not

earlier) and the original 14th Naval District chart of the central Pacific used to coordinate the search (now on file in San Bruno) has the PanAm DF lines and the 157/337 LOP drawn in and intersecting in the region of Gardner Island just as they are in Hooven's paper. And Hooven's work did not come to our attention in the way you say it did. Neither Willi nor his associate Gannon ever once mentioned post-loss radio signals or DF bearings to us. We first came across Hooven's paper right where you put it - in the NASM library. As for not crediting Hooven's work, as I said in my first letter to you on May 22, 1989, to the extent that we did quote his work we did credit him and have continued to credit him wherever appropriate.

Also - no survey of Nikumaroro was done on Harry Maude's three day visit in October 1937. Harry didn't even come ashore the first day due to severe back trouble. Eric Bevington did the only walk around the island and, in fact, saw things that shouldn't have been there. Just as did John Lambrecht, whose recollections you mis-remembered and repeatedly mis-stated.

You have misrepresented my actions and then labeled them as shameful - yet it was you who freely distributed copies of comments written to you by Harry Maude in strictest confidence. Your phone calls to *LIFE* magazine to urge then not to carry our story, your name-calling in the press, and, ultimately, your attempt to subvert a dedicated TIGHAR volunteer and personal friend of mine, are not easy to forget.

Still, I am willing to write it all off to an unfortunate failure of the postal service two years ago and I'm willing to resume a free exchange of information, but not with someone who maintains a public position that TIGHAR is a scam and that I am some kind of con-artist.

I'll meet you half-way Mr. Goerner. I don't ask you to accept TIGHAR's solution of the Earhart mystery. I will ask you to acknowledge that TIGHAR is a sincere and honest attempt to solve that mystery. Wrong we may be. We don't think so, but we're willing to let history be the judge of that. Dishonest we are not, and I think you owe TIGHAR an apology.

Very truly yours,

Richard E. Gillespie
Executive Director

REG/am