The Jacobson Database.

The Jacobson Database is a monumental compilation of thousands of official radio messages, ships' logs, and radio log entries relating to the Earhart world flight attempts, disappearance and U.S. Government search. It is the product of several years of meticulous research by TIGHAR member Dr. Randy Jacobson and is reproduced here in its entirety.

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Read Me First

When one first gets involved with the disappearance of Amelia Earhart and Fred Noonan, her navigator, one of the most valuable sources of information comes from a compilation of raido messages by the Captain of the US Coast Guard vessel Itasca. Captain Warner K. Thompson ordered this compilation, along with comments made by him, in a report to the Commanding Officer, San Francisco Division of the US Coast Guard. This report, was classified according to CG Regulations, since it contained personal messages sent by individuals to and from the Itasca, and these messages could not be released to the public without permission. In 1972, this report was finally released to the general public, and provides a fairly good overview of what transpired before, during, and after Earhart's last flight. Curiously, some of the messages are not quite in chronological order. Further research indicated that additional radio messages survived the years in various archives and museums. Trying to keep relying upon memory to reconstruct the entire radio message traffic proved too daunting. The solution turned out to transcribe each radio message into a database, where they could then be sorted into chronological order. To do so requires knowing what time zone each message originates from. The only way to determine time zones at particular times for ships at sea is to access their bridge logs, typically residing at the National Archives. The bridge logs contain a wealth of information relating to ship positions, speeds, activities, weather, and general comments. Surprisingly, no one has yet to date fully compiled all information now available that might shed some light onto what transpired in the Central Pacific in 1937.

The information presented falls into four main categories: radio messages or telegrams, radio logs, navigation, and weather. The following sections are organized into chapters. Below are the "Table of Contents" for the information in these four sections. Finally, the author, R. Jacobson, takes full blame for any typographic errors, mistakes in translations, etc. If you find any errors, please bring them to the author's attention by contacting TIGHAR directly.

RADIO MESSAGES

The main portion of this section contains the radio message traffic in chronological order for all radio messages relating to Earhart. Occasionally, other radio messages, unrelated to Earhart appear in the Earhart files, and are included. The total number of radio messages in the database is 3239 messages, of which only 1552 messages are duplicates in some way or another. Because of the great length of the entire database output (well over 600 pages at 6 point type), the database is broken up into several files for ease of printing and access. The reader is advised to also read the explanatory files to better understand how to read the database output.

RADIO LOGS
        A few critical raw radio logs have been saved over the years, and represent the real-time recordings of the radio operators during and after the Earhart disappearance. These logs provide critical insights into what transpired, and the possible confusions that resulted in the various radio rooms. Together with the radio message database, this information is the heart of any serious researcher's inventory of material to understand what happened.

NAVIGATION
        All ships involved in the Earhart final flight and the search have been recomputed and smoothed for current set and drift. In addition, two additional navigational studies are included: Earhart's flight from Oakland to Honolulu in March, 1937 and the aborted PBY flight from Honolulu to Howland Island. Each ship has its own navigational file as described below.

WEATHER
        While a lot has been said about weather affecting Earhart's flight, there has been no compilation of weather reports from the ships involved in her last flight that might help constrain what happened and/or where she may have drifted, should she have survived a downing into the ocean. The following files have been used by the author to provide some reasonable constraints on the weather in the area.