

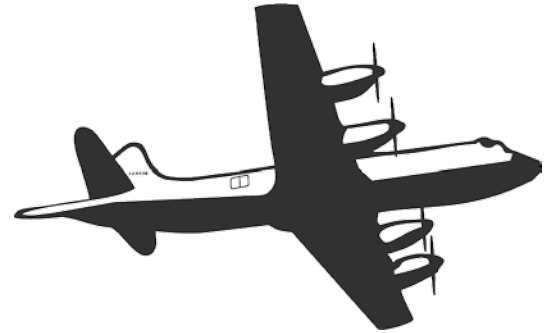
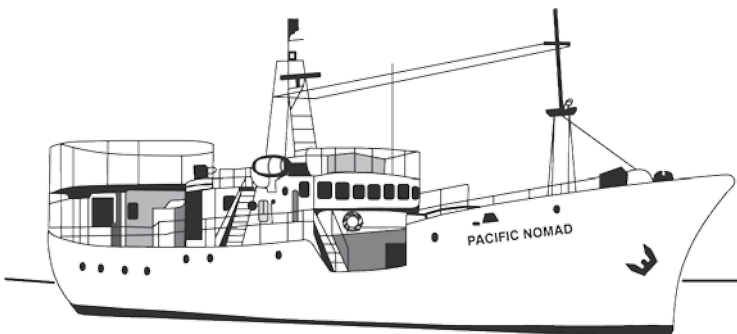
TIGHAR TRACKS

A PUBLICATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL GROUP FOR HISTORIC AIRCRAFT RECOVERY

EARHART PROJECT RECEIVES DIPLOMATIC APPROVAL

The Republic of Kiribati has granted full approval for the Earhart Project's September expedition to proceed. This was an absolutely essential prerequisite to conducting operations in the Phoenix Islands. The research, organization and ethics of the entire project went through U.S. State Department channels to President Ieremia Tabai and were reviewed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Tarawa (the capital of Kiribati). It was a lengthy and, at times, nerve-wracking process, but in the end we received not just permission but a pledge of assistance from the government of Kiribati.

Official endorsement from Tarawa also clears the way for the release to TIGHAR of recent low altitude aerial photography of McKean and Gardner Islands taken by Lockheed Orions of the Royal New Zealand Air Force. These will be of tremendous value in planning our search of the islands and their surrounding waters.



Another key step in mounting the expedition has been accomplished with the chartering of what is without doubt the finest research vessel in that part of the world. *Pacific Nomad* is a 115-foot motor vessel operated by Marine Pacific Ltd. of Fiji. She has supported several U.S. government sponsored scientific projects and has the rare capability of serving as a completely self-sufficient base for our 18 person team during the five weeks we'll be at sea.

Final selection of the expedition team is now nearly complete, and notifications will go out soon to all who have asked to be considered. In some ways this is the toughest part of our job. Assembling the most competent team possible is not necessarily the same as choosing who wants to go the most.

The Earhart Project is on schedule and on budget. Sound research has produced a reasonable hypothesis, and we have assembled the tools and approvals necessary to test it. All that remains is to complete the funding. The support of TIGHAR's members has brought the project this far and will, we're sure, help take it all the way to the Phoenix Islands and back — perhaps with the answer to the fate of Amelia Earhart.