

FREDERICK ALLAN GOERNER
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October 1, 1991

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

Dear Dr. King:

Attached please find photocopies of the first two pages of a letter I recently received from Professor Henry E. Maude of Australia.

Dr. Maude refers to some P.B. Laxton material dealing with Nikumaroro that he, Professor Maude sent to you.

Would you be willing to make a copy of the material as Professor Maude suggests and send it along to me?

Of course I will reimburse the costs of copying and mailing.

Mr. Gillespie and his TIGHAR people are once again headed for Nikumaroro (Gardner) Island, and I confess that I am at a complete loss in attempting to comprehend why the enormously expensive effort is being made.

I told Mr. Gillespie several years ago that I saw no harm in his visiting Gardner and McKean if he wanted to he wanted to have an expensive beach party, but I added that there was NO possibility that Earhart and Noonan were ever there. We discarded that theory many years ago when faced with overwhelming evidence that the islands had been searched, surveyed and occupied by British, New Zealanders, Gilbertese and Americans in the years following the loss of the Earhart plane.

I also told him there NEVER was a woman's skeleton with women's high-heeled shoes found on the shore of Gardner. This was supported by the records and reports from Suva, Fiji and Tarawa in the Gilbert Islands. The remains of a male Polynesian were found and interred on Gardner, but the remains were from the late 19th century.

The story of the "woman's skeleton" was generated from San Diego through Associated Press in 1961. It was the story one a gentleman named Floyd Kilts who worked with the California State Department of Veteran's Affairs, and who had been on Gardner at the time the U.S. Coast Guard (1943-1947) had a Loran navigation station there. CBS checked out the story at the time, and it could be classified as nothing else but apocryphal. It was

aboard U.S.S. COLORADO who flew over Gardner in search of Earhart and Noonan just a week after the disappearance.

There is no mystery about that. I knew Captain Lambrecht quite well, and we corresponded at length and spoke many times via telephone. Lambrecht told me there were what appeared to be stone walls on a part of Gardner that appeared to have been part of what were once houses. Gardner had been inhabited in the late 19th and early 20th century.

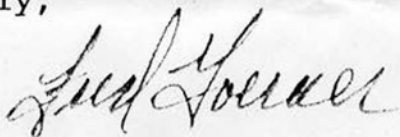
Finally, Dr. King, I wonder if you know that the Gardner theory is not that of Messrs. Willi and Gannon. Mr. Willi got the material from Mr. Hardon McDonald Wade, Jr. of Atlanta, Georgia, who got the material from the work of the late Professor Frederick Hooven of Dartmouth College, who did the computer studies at Dartmouth. I know because I convinced Professor Hooven to write his findings for the National Air & Space Museum in Washington, D.C., and it was placed there in 1982 where Mr. Wade found the information.

Several years ago I told Mr. Gillespie about all of this. I also told him it was improper not to credit Professor Hooven as the researcher and author for and of the theory.

I will be most grateful if you can find the time to send the Laxton material to me.

In the meantime, I will wait to hear what new "lead" Mr. Gillespie will return with this time. Perhaps a fragment of a map, or a pair of men's shoes that were Noonan's size, or another piece of aluminum that "may" have come from the Earhart plane. Better yet, it should not be hard to find some human remains. Polynesians and Gilbertese and even Mr. Gallagher are buried on Nikumaroro. Gallagher died in 1941 of peritonitis. If Gillespie manages to turn up one of those graves, it could take many months to determine their origin. That will require the expenditure of more money for another voyage to Gardner. And so it goes.

Sincerely,



Fred Goerner
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fifth-hand rumor that had initially gone through a translation from Gilbertese to English, and no one knew the original source.

The TIGHAR addition that the "woman's shoes" were the same size as worn by Earhart is truly creative, especially when one considers that Earhart did NOT wear women's shoes when flying. She wore men's shoes. The last photos taken in New Guinea show the style of brogan, and there were no high heels.

Also herewith attached is a copy of a letter Professor Maude wrote to Mr. Gillespie in May, 1990.

Given what Mr. Gillespie has recently told the media and what Ms. Puig has recently written, I am wondering if Professor Maude's information was ever shared with the TIGHAR membership.

Professor Maude arrived at Gardner in October, 1937, a little more than two months after the Earhart loss. He and his people surveyed the island then and NOTHING was found that would indicate Earhart and Noonan had been there.

In 1938, several months after Maude's first visit, a joint British/New Zealand military survey team visited Gardner and did a full survey including blasting of several areas in the lagoon to clear an area for flying boats. Nothing was found that would suggest Earhart and Noonan had ever been there.

Several months after that Maude returned with a colony of Gilbertese who would occupy the island from then until the early 1960's. Nothing about Earhart and Noonan or the wreckage of any plane was ever found.

In 1939, the U.S. Navy surveyed Gardner Island. The survey was conducted by the crew of U.S.S. BUSHNELL. The island was also photographed from the air. Nothing about Earhart and Noonan was found.

In 1943, the U.S. Coast Guard constructed a Loran station on Gardner and brought ashore grading equipment, generators and materials needed to operate such a station over a long period of time. Nothing concerning Earhart and Noonan were ever found.

Dr. King, the theory promulgated by Mr. Gillespie beggars the wildest kind of fiction. As Professor Maude clearly indicates, there was no reason for either Earhart or Noonan to have starved to death or died of thirst had they found themselves on Gardner. There were coconuts for drinking, even brackish potable water. There were abundant fish and birds and even edible plants.

It is stunning that Gillespie and TIGHAR would spend more than \$400,000 given the existing evidence.

Mr. Gillespie makes a huge point of the Lambrecht sighting of "recent habitation" on Gardner. Lambrecht was the senior aviator