

## More on the Lighter

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Work is continuing in an attempt to find out all we can about the cigarette lighter found on Nikumaroro's southwest beach (see *TIGHAR Tracks* Vol. 5 No. 5). So far we can find no unique markings or features which might allow us to connect the artifact to a particular source but W.T. Chase, Head Conservator at the Smithsonian Freer Gallery of Art, has performed a laboratory examination of the lighter and has offered his opinion that the accumulation of cuprite crystals (a product of oxidation) visible under magnification indicates that the lighter had been in the highly corrosive sands of Nikumaroro for "fifty to sixty years." That puts it within the time frame of the Earhart disappearance in 1937 and the USS *Bushnell* survey in 1939 rather than the World War II and postwar period. That corresponds with Miami lighter expert Jack Seiderman's opinion that the lighter was sold in the U.S. sometime in the early 1930s. What is clear is that an expanded metal detector survey needs to be done along the island's beach front and that work will be incorporated in next year's return to Nikumaroro.

