heeled shoes loaned by the daughter of Amelia’s secretary. They were purchased by AE in Ireland in 1932 and were made in France. The Sterling Last Corporation has examined them and thinks they are about a size seven, AA or AAA. Amelia gave them to her secretary because they hurt her feet.

These discussions, while interesting, are not relevant to the question of what size shoe AE was wearing at the time she disappeared. Fortunately, that question is easily answered. An accurate measurement of the blucher-style Oxfords AE was wearing is readily obtainable from a photograph which shows her standing on the wing of the Electra in Bandoeng, Java on June 22, 1937 (see TIGHAR Tracks, Vol. 8, No. 1/2). Features of known dimension in the same plane of perspective with the shoe make it easy to determine its length. That measurement has been done independently by Biltrite Footwear, by Sterling Last, and by TIGHAR. We all come up with 278mm. That’s a size 8½ or 9 (depending on the manufacturer). The sole of the shoe found on Nikumaroro was reassembled before this information became available. It measures 278mm.

**Debunking the Debunkers**

TIGHAR undertook the Earhart Project not only to find Amelia Earhart but to set an example in sound, thorough historical research. The criticisms of TIGHAR’s findings are, predictably, the result of just the kind of speculative and insufficient research that kept Earhart lost for 55 years. Space does not permit, and reason does not merit, a rebuttal of every half-thought-out and often downright screwy objection that has been raised. But if you’ve read something that bothers you, drop us a line. We haven’t seen any criticism yet that stands up to documented fact.

**Onward**

Meanwhile, the work continues. There are some very interesting artifacts from Nikumaroro still under analysis which could turn out to be every bit as significant as those we’ve already identified (see “Help Wanted,” page 6). TIGHAR researchers are also turning up new historical data that are helping to fill in the picture of what happened in 1937. And, as a result of all the publicity, we’re constantly hearing from people who have information, expertise or equipment to contribute. The monumental task of planning, staffing and funding the 1993 expedition is well underway. Some new developments in transportation, technology, and search capability should mean a bigger team, more time on site, and greatly increased ability to uncover the rest of the story.

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**BIASED TOWARDS THE FACTS**

Throughout the month of April the syndicated two-hour television documentary “Untold Stories: The Search for Amelia Earhart” was aired all around the U.S. at various times and on various dates. Whether or not you caught it on a local channel or might want to get the video tape when it comes out, we thought you might like to know how it was made and what we think of it.

The show is a biography of Amelia interlaced with the story of the search for the answer to her disappearance. Although a whole gallery of Earhart authors, researchers and theorists make cameo appearances, the show focuses mainly on TIGHAR. And let’s be fair — that’s mainly because NBC News Productions, who produced the show, paid TIGHAR for the right to send a cameraman with us to Nikumaroro last year. The fee helped fund the expedition. Afterward, we worked closely with the producers to insure that the show would be historically accurate, and the extent to which we succeeded is due largely to Russ Matthews (TIGHAR #509CE). Russ served on both expeditions to Nikumaroro, then signed on as Senior Researcher for NBC’s production. It was Russ who tracked down the rare newsreel footage, photographs, and documents that make the show, by far, the best biography of AE ever made. Throughout the production process TIGHAR headquarters fought Hollywood “Who’s gonna know?” attitudes and was accused of being “biased toward the facts” (we plead guilty).

Of course, it’s not the show we would have made if TIGHAR had been calling the shots. The style is far too gushy for our taste. Besides, there’s too much of Gillespie and not nearly enough of the team and Nikumaroro (both of which are better looking than Ric). And despite Russ’s best efforts, some of the chronology in Amelia’s life got screwed up, some of the airplanes shown in the 1937 search sequence are completely wrong, and poor old Fred Noonan gets the weeny again about his alleged drinking. Then, of course, they had to let Al Bresnick tell his silly story about Amelia being pregnant and then show us excavating what turned out to be an infant’s grave. The phone has been ringing off the hook with people wondering if that could have been AE’s kid (buried in a traditional Gilbertese grave).

So it ain’t The Civil War, but it’s not bad either. The overall impression of who Amelia was and what made her tick is really very good and the story of TIGHAR’s research, expeditions, and results is absolutely accurate (because we wrote that part of the script). As soon as it’s out on video tape we’ll let you know how to get a copy.