



## The Plan For Niku III

The departure of TIGHAR's third expedition to Nikumaroro has been set for September 1, 1993. The longest and best-equipped Earhart Project field operation yet, Niku III will spend a full month working both on land and underwater to capitalize on TIGHAR's 1991 discoveries and put together the remaining pieces of the Earhart puzzle.


Fortunately, new developments in the Phoenix Islands mean that bigger and better does not mean more expensive. A Seattle Washington-based company has concluded an agreement with the government of Kiribati to permanently station a research vessel at Canton Island (200 nautical miles northeast of Nikumaroro) where the old U.S. Army/Pan American airfield is being renovated to accept regular jet service from Hawaii. The ability to fly the team to within a one day voyage of Niku (as opposed to nine days each way from Honolulu in 1991) will make for a far more economical and efficient operation than has ever before been possible. As part of a complete rebuild, the ship is being outfitted with a 3-D Phase Array sonar for underwater searching and a sonar-cable winch with a capacity of 10,000 meters. For checking out suspicious targets she'll deploy a Remote Operated Vehicle and hold precise position with bow and stern thrusters. The ship's owners and marine architect have solicited TIGHAR's advice on how best to outfit the vessel for research support in the central Pacific environment (after all, we're sort of experts on the subject by now) and we, of course, welcome the opportunity. Negotiations for TIGHAR's charter of the vessel should be completed soon. She's to be called *Resolution* (we couldn't have thought of a better name).

At Niku, the onshore search operations will focus on three specific areas:

1. The site on the northern shoreline where unexplained structures have been identified in early photographs (see *TIGHAR Tracks*, Vol. 8, No. 4).
2. The inland area on the southern shore where shoe fragments and other personal effects were found in 1991.

3. The western beachfront where aircraft wreckage was found in 1991.

An undersea sonar/ROV search for aircraft wreckage, far more focused and detailed than was possible in 1991, will be coordinated with the on-shore operations to maximize the chances of finding a conclusively identifiable piece of the aircraft.

Although departure isn't until September, the long journey back to Nikumaroro begins now. We have the evidence. We have the expertise. But just as in 1989 and 1991, this expedition will only happen if all of us want it to badly enough. Do your part. Buy a patch or pin (\$8.50 donation), subscribe to the Earhart Project Bulletins (\$25 donation), get a videotape of the two-hour documentary *The Search For Amelia Earhart* (\$50 donation), order a copy of the soon-to-be-published Seventh Edition of the Earhart Project book (\$100 donation or get the Project Book/Companion set for \$135), get the hand-carved mahogany Electra model (\$250 donation or \$1,000 for the individualized limited edition) or just send a check. It's here, not out there, that the battle is won. 

TIGHAR is proud to announce the selection of the expedition team for Niku III. The need to choose a small group from among so many good people is always the second-most difficult part of preparing an Earhart Project expedition (only the fund-raising is tougher). The qualification process is rigorous and everyone who earned an "E" (Expedition-qualified) suffix for their membership number deserves to go. But, as always, selections were made with one consideration only in mind – to assemble the team best able to do the work.

John Clauss, TIGHAR #0142CE  
 Veryl Fenlason, TIGHAR #0053CE  
 Richard Gillespie, Executive Director  
 Van Hunn, TIGHAR #1459CE  
 Leroy Knoll, TIGHAR #0750CEL  
 Dr. Tommy Love, TIGHAR #0457CE  
 Russell Matthews, TIGHAR #0509CE  
 Gary Quigg, TIGHAR #1025CE  
 Douglas Shriner, TIGHAR #1487CE  
 Kenton Spading, TIGHAR #1382CE  
 Kristin Tague, TIGHAR #0905CE  
 Patricia Thrasher, President

