1. The lack of a part number is consistent with what we see in existing Lockheed 10s. Electras generally have part numbers only on major castings (i.e. landing gear legs). Part numbers on other components, when they appear at all, are handwritten in marker. Military aircraft, on the other hand, consistently feature stamped-in part numbers on each component.

2. The flooring in Earhart’s aircraft, like that in all Model 10s and Model 12s, was 5-ply wood with a balsa core. We have a wooden access panel from the floor of a Model 12. The metal strips around its edge are attached with nails which also fit the holes in the right angle bend of 2-18.

3. Although it was not uncommon for dados to be used along the cabin wall in Lockheed 10s, the few existing photos of the interior of NR16020 show no such feature. However, we know that NR16020 had a bulkhead installed at Fuselage Station 294.5 where, in the airframe version of the Electra, the main cabin was separated from the lavatory. If, perchance, this bulkhead did include a dado (anybody got a photo?) then 2-18 would fit very nicely between the wall and the door as a stand-alone item.

4. Pursuing this hypothesis, Lockheed specifications call for the “partition enclosing the lavatory compartment” to be insulated with a material known as “seapak” (1/4 inch kapok covered with woven fabric, often blue in color). The unusual elongated rivet would fall in the correct position to anchor a rod or bungee for holding the lavatory door open.

In summary, Artifact 2-18, the dado, is an aircraft component which was used for local purposes by the villagers on Nikumaroro. At this time we have no way of knowing for certain where it came from except to say that it does not appear to be from a military aircraft; that it is consistent with features found on aircraft of the size and type of Earhart’s Electra; and that it is possible to construct a reasonable hypothesis which places the object aboard the aircraft.

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**The Any-Idiot Artifact**

What does it take to end the mystery of Amelia Earhart’s disappearance? That, of course, depends upon who you’re trying to convince. The complex body of independent, yet mutually supportive, archival and physical evidence TIGHAR has already assembled has proven sufficient to persuade almost anyone who takes the time and trouble to become familiar with our work. If our only goal was to satisfy our own curiosity, or to convince the academic community, we could stop now. Artifacts such as the dado clearly meet the “preponderance of the evidence” standard set for cases in civil law, and even the “beyond reasonable doubt” standard of criminal law. So why go back?

We’ve always acknowledged that, in a strictly historical sense, it really doesn’t much matter what happened to Amelia Earhart. Had she completed her flight the world today would not be noticeably different. But if Earhart’s disappearance seems to have meant little to history, it’s also clear that her loss meant, and still means, a great deal to a great many people. It is the public, not the scholars, who ask what really happened to Amelia Earhart. Any meaningful answer must, therefore, satisfy a general public which has little interest and less time for academic solutions to anything. If we are really going to alter sixty years of public perception about what happened to Amelia Earhart we’ll have to come up with something that is instantly and intuitively conclusive. Whether it is a pair of Pratt & Whitney R1340 S3H1 Wasps (serial numbers 6149 and 6150), or Pioneer Bubble Octant serial number 12-36, or any of the unique features of NR16020 which can be directly matched to historical photographs, the physical object will have to qualify as what we have come to call the Any-Idiot Artifact.

Is there reason to think that such an object still exists on Nikumaroro after nearly sixty years? Yes. If we discover and recover it, will everyone accept it as proof? Probably not. But if most reasonable people are satisfied that TIGHAR has solved the mystery, that should be enough.