

PLANS & EXPECTATIONS

NIKU III EXPEDITION PLANS

Expedition Vessel



The Fiji-based 120 ft motor/sailer Nai'a—pronounced NIGHya, which is Hawaiian for “dolphin” (see www.naia.com.fj). Nai'a supported the Niku III (1997) and Niku IIIIP (1999) expeditions.

TIGHAR Team

Archeological Team

Leader—Tom King
John Clauss
Skeet Gifford
Chris Kennedy

Grave Investigation Team

Leader—Kar Burns
Gary Quigg
Bill Carter

Dive Team

Leader—Van Hunn
Walt Holm
Andrew McKenna

Expedition Leader—Ric Gillespie

Primary Objectives of the Expedition

To test the following:

- 1. Hypothesis:** Identifiable components of NR16020 survive on or near the edge of the reef north of the wreck of S.S. *Norwich City*.

Investigators: Dive Team

Methodology: Visual and metal detector examination of reef surface, reef edge, spur and groove features, and submerged areas down to a maximum depth of 60 feet.

- 2. Hypothesis:** Aluminum and other light-weight structures of NR16020 were washed through the main lagoon passage and survive on the lagoon floor.

Investigators: Dive Team

Methodology: Visual and metal detector examination of lagoon floor at and near the

base of the sandbar that marks the inner extremity of the main passage. Excavation of metal detector “hits” in deep silt will be accomplished with the aid of a suction dredge.

- 3. Hypothesis:** One or both of two erect coral slabs near the western beach are graves in which are interred bones said to have been found by the island’s early settlers.

Investigators: Grave Investigation Team supported by Archaeological Team.

Methodology: Clearing of surrounding vegetation and inspection of area for indications of alternative explanations for the presence of the slabs. If none are found, ask Kiribati government representative for permission to excavate. If granted, perform a controlled excavation to determine if remains are present.

If remains are found, determine whether there is sufficient reason to suspect that they may be Earhart's or Noonan's to seek permission to recover and export all or a portion for further research.

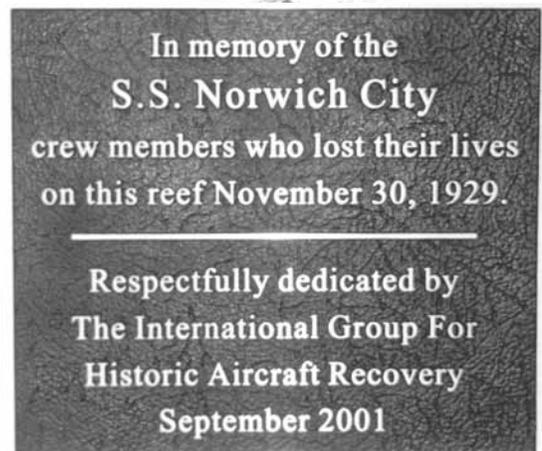
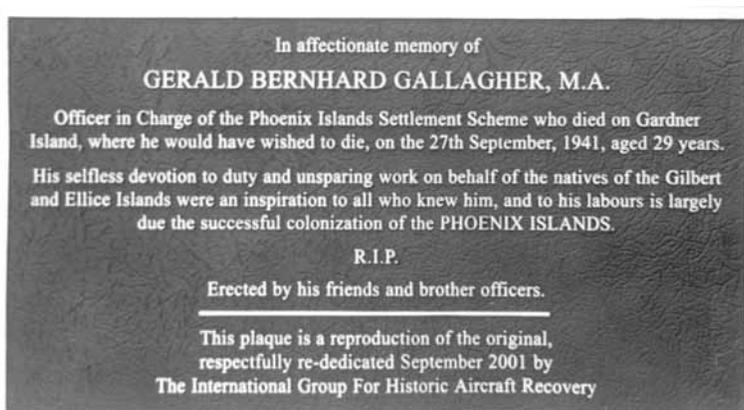
4. **Hypothesis:** The area near the southeast end of the island known to TIGHAR as the "Seven Site" is where the remains of a castaway were found in 1940.

Investigators: Archaeological Team supported by Grave Investigation Team.

Methodology: Clear and search the area for artifacts and human remains using visual, metal detector, and ultra violet light (bone glows under UV). If the Seven Site survey proves negative the search will shift to other possible sites.

Ancillary Objectives of the Expedition

1. Collect environmental data that will be useful in post-expedition research and analysis.
2. Install and dedicate a reproduction of the missing memorial plaque on the grave monument of Gerald B. Gallagher.
3. Install and dedicate a memorial plaque on the engine of S.S. *Norwich City*.



Communications During the Expedition

Expedition Leader Ric Gillespie will make a daily verbal report via satellite phone to TIGHAR President Pat Thrasher at TIGHAR's office in Wilmington, Delaware. Pat will compose a written synopsis which she will post on the TIGHAR website (www.tighar.org), and write up in *TIGHAR Tracks* for September. Location

descriptions in the reports will be keyed to alpha-numeric coordinates on a special poster-size (18x24 inches) grid map of Nikumaroro available only to TIGHAR members. The locations descriptions in the Schedule below refer to the grid map. Please use the order form on page eight to get your own copy.

Schedule

- August 24** TIGHAR Team travels from Los Angeles, California to Pago Pago. American Samoa. *Nai'a* is scheduled to arrive Pago Pago on or about this date to begin fueling and provisioning for the expedition.
- August 25** Last minute prep in American Samoa.
- August 26** Expedition departs Pago Pago for Nikumaroro.
- August 27**
- August 28**
- August 29**
- August 30** Expedition arrives Nikumaroro. Logistical preparations—moving launch into lagoon, building a trail from the landing (Sector WG21) to the lagoon shore base (Sector WI18), moving gear ashore, checking dive gear and procedures, etc.
- August 31**
- September 1** Archaeological Team assists Grave Investigation Team in clearing and
- September 2** evaluating putative grave sites (Sectors WD10 & WD7). Recon and logistical set-up at Seven Site (Sector EV29). Sea conditions permitting, Dive Team begins reef search (Sectors WB6, 7 & 8).
- September 3** Grave Investigation Team excavates features if warranted and approved.
- September 4** Archeological Team begins examination of Seven Site. Dive Team concludes reef inspection and begins lagoon search.
- September 5**
- September 6**
- September 7**
- September 8**
- September 9** Day off.
- September 10** Archeological Team continues survey of Seven Site assisted by Grave
- September 11** Investigation Team. Recon of other locations if negative results at Seven Site
- September 12** and possible shift of search activities. Dive Team continues lagoon search.
- September 13**
- September 14**
- September 15**
- September 16** Possible day off depending on how everyone is holding up.
- September 17** Wrap up of operations and preparations for departure.
- September 18**
- September 19**
- September 20**
- September 21** Expedition departs Nikumaroro.
- September 22**
- September 23**
- September 24** Expedition arrives Pago Pago. TIGHAR Team departs for Los Angeles. *Nai'a* departs for Fiji.
- September 25** TIGHAR Team arrives Los Angeles.