



A special double issue of *TIGHAR Tracks* is in the works and should be out by early April, but in the meantime we want to give everyone a quick update on the projects, expeditions and research developments that have kept us hopping since the issue that was published last September. Watch for additional News Alerts in the coming weeks.

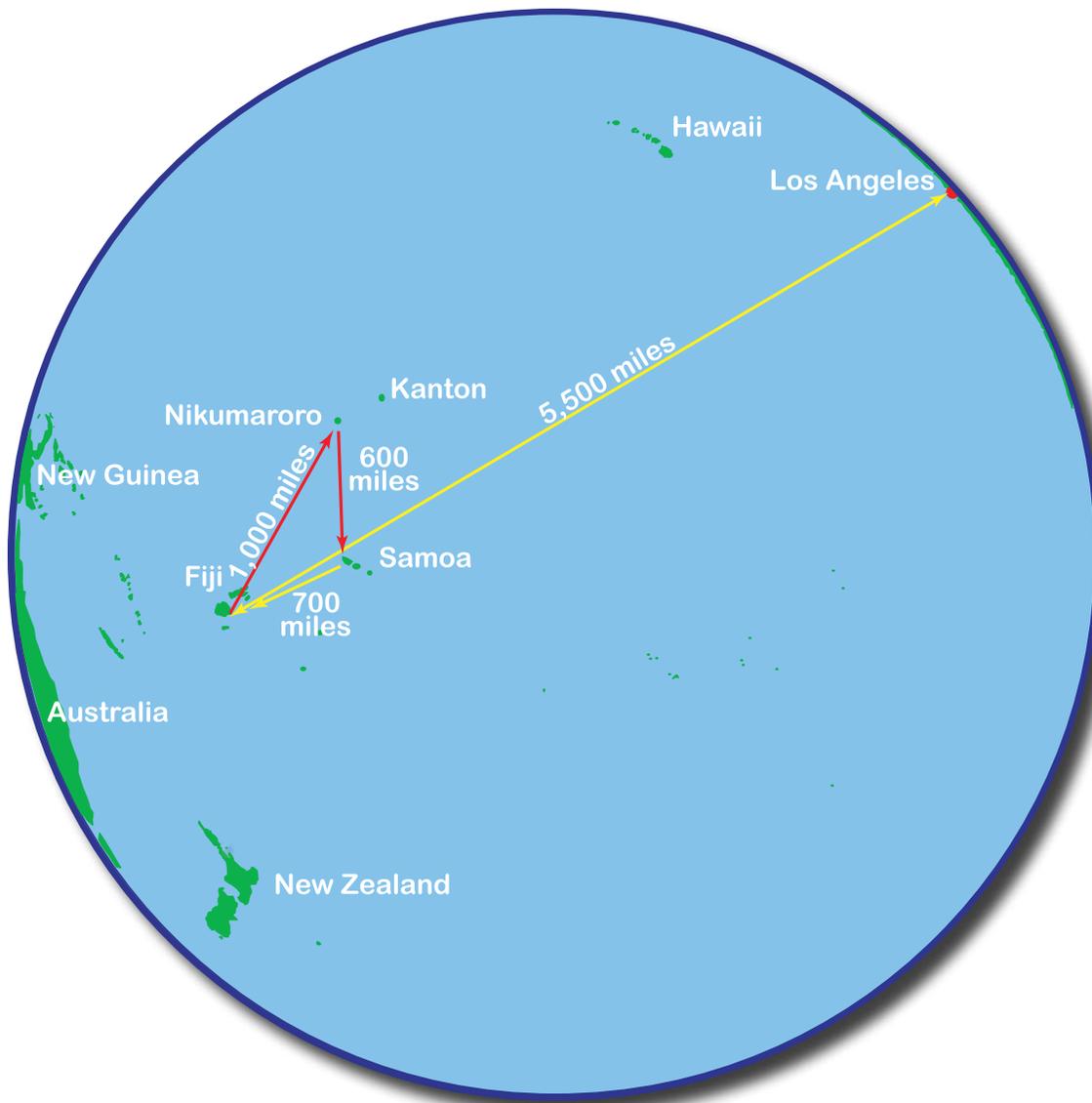
NIKU V – the 70th Anniversary Expedition

Our original plan was for a mission aboard *Nai'a*, the Fiji-based 120-foot ship we've used on three previous trips to Nikumaroro. The funding required for that expedition, which would have given us twenty-one days at the island, proved to be more than we could raise in time to meet the January payment deadline. After exploring a number of different options, we've now worked out an agreement with our friends at *Nai'a* Cruises for a somewhat shorter, more economical voyage that still gives us 17 days at Nikumaroro – **but the \$162,000 balance of the ship charter must be paid by April 3rd**. Of course, we'll need to raise additional funding to cover airfares, equipment, and so on, but the priority right now is to meet the \$162,000 goal by April 3rd.

As presently planned, the expedition team will depart Los Angeles on July 12, arriving at Nadi International Airport, Fiji on July 14. Transferring to the nearby port of Lautoka, we'll board *Nai'a* for the 1,000-mile, 5-day voyage to Nikumaroro. Archaeological operations on Niku will focus on the Seven Site – the “castaways’ campsite” location we began excavating in 2001. The goal there will be to determine whether objects or remains are present which reveal the identity of the castaway(s) who died there. On July 24 we'll celebrate Amelia's 110th birthday at the very spot where she may have passed her 40th. Further excavations in the abandoned village will look for more airplane parts in the same area where artifacts were found by the 2003 team which we suspect are “heat shields” from the Electra's cabin (see *TIGHAR Tracks* Vol. 22, No. 2, “Detective Story”).

On August 4 the expedition will depart Niku for the 3-day, 600-mile trip to Apia, Samoa where the team will board a commercial flight back to Fiji and from there, home to the U.S., arriving back in Los Angeles on August 9 (see map of entire expedition, next page).





Depart LAX, travel non-stop to Nadi, Fiji. By bus to Lautoka, where Nai'a is berthed. Five days to Nikumaroro; 14 days at the island. Three days to Apia, Western Samoa; catch a flight back to Fiji and then back to LAX.

To fund this expedition we need to raise \$200,000 between now and April 1, 2007. As an incentive,

**we are making four of the fifteen berths
aboard *Nai'a* available for Sponsor Team Members**

– individuals who will make a pledge of at least \$50,000 to TIGHAR for the privilege of participating in this historic expedition. Sponsor Team Members must be at least 21 years of age (no maximum age limit), in good health, and be approved by TIGHAR executive director and expedition leader, Ric Gillespie. TIGHAR members will, of course, be given first consideration.

We're well aware that not everyone can donate \$50,000. We wish you could as much as you wish you could. But every dollar you are able to contribute lightens the load. Please use the enclosed flyer to make your donation.

If you are interested in becoming a Sponsor Team Member please contact Ric by email at ric@tighar.org or by phone at (302) 994-4410.

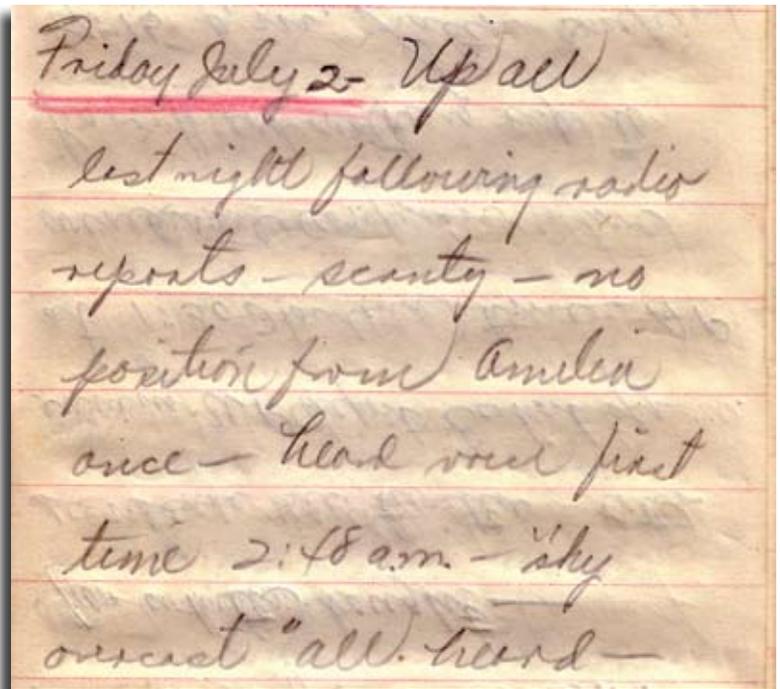


NEW DISCOVERY

A combination of vigilance, persistence, and good luck has resulted in TIGHAR's discovery of the largest single collection primary source documents relating to the Earhart disappearance ever made. The Associated Press wire service reporter aboard the Coast Guard cutter *Itasca* during the Earhart cruise was James W. Carey, and the news stories he filed are a well-known part of the historical record. What has not been known by Earhart researchers, until now, is that Jim Carey kept a detailed personal journal and took numerous photographs during *Itasca's* 37-day odyssey. Two days after his return to Honolulu, he wrote a ten-page article describing his experiences.

Jim Carey was a meticulous record keeper and he carefully saved his collection of materials from his great adventure as a 23 year-old reporter aboard *Itasca*. Now, after seventy years, Carey's original hand-written notebooks, a transcript of the notebooks that he typed before his death in 1988, his photographs, his ten-page article, an extensive file of original *Itasca* message forms with his wire service reports and messages, and a large collection of original newspaper clippings relating to the Earhart search have come to light. The Carey Collection fleshes out the human aspects of what happened aboard *Itasca* and provides important new information. The amazing story of how this treasure trove of historical information surfaced will be told in a major Associated Press article to be released soon (maybe even before you receive this). The

upcoming special issue of *TIGHAR Tracks* will feature an analysis of the new information and how it enhances our understanding of the Earhart disappearance. As soon as the AP story is released we'll have the Carey journal, photos, and article up on the TIGHAR website.



An excerpt from Carey's journal. Courtesy the Carey Collection.

Finding Amelia Sales

TIGHAR's history of the known facts in the Earhart case, *Finding Amelia – the True Story of the Earhart Disappearance* was officially released by the Naval Institute Press on September 19, 2006. The book was the top seller in the publisher's Fall 2006 line up and is now in its second printing, having sold well over 5,000 copies. Sales in 2007 continue to be brisk and we're hoping that the publicity from the AP story will further boost sales. The royalties are still whittling away at the advance provided by the publisher so there's not yet a positive financial return for TIGHAR, but the attention and recognition the book is bringing to the organization is a big plus.



Ric has been doing numerous lectures/book signings around the country. Scheduled upcoming events include:

- 📅 March 15 - U.S. Navy Museum , Navy Yard, Washington, DC
- 📅 April 21 – NASM Udvar Hazy Center, Dulles Airport, Washington DC
- 📅 April 23 – American Airlines C.R. Smith Museum, Dallas, Texas
- 📅 May 7 – Explorers Club, New York, New York

Contact Ric@tighar.org for details if you'd like to attend one of these events or if you'd like to host an event in your area.

To Save a Devastator: The Devastator Project Evaluation Expedition

In October 2006, a joint TIGHAR/U.S. Navy expedition performed a detailed inspection of the two Douglas TBD “Devastator” aircraft on the bottom of Jaluit lagoon in the Marshall Islands. TIGHAR divers worked side-by-side with Navy divers from USS *Safeguard* to evaluate the aircraft as candidates for recovery and preservation at the National Museum of Naval Aviation in Pensacola, FL. The expedition was conducted under permits issued by the Naval Historical Center in Washington, DC and the Historic Preservation Office of the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI)

In Majuro, capital of the RMI, Dr. Robert Neyland, head of the Naval Historical Center’s Underwater Archaeology Branch, and TIGHAR executive director Ric Gillespie, met with U.S State Dept. and senior RMI government officials, including President Kessai Note, to discuss the eventual recovery and export of one of the aircraft. At Jaluit, LCDR Charles “Chuck” Ehnes coordinated with TIGHAR Dive Team Leader Col. Van Hunn USAF (ret.) to conduct an engineering survey of the two aircraft. The collection of sample material for scientific testing was supervised by Peter Fix of Texas A&M University’s Center for Marine Archaeology & Conservation.



A dive support launch leaves the salvage ship USS Safeguard (ARS-50) standing off Jaluit Atoll in the Marshall Islands. Photo courtesy R. Neyland.



Over the TBD site in Jaluit lagoon, the TIGHAR and USN support boats are rafted together as divers prepare for the next dive. TIGHAR photo by R. Matthews.

In terms of international cooperation and joint military/civilian operations, all in the interest of aviation historic preservation, the Devastator Project Evaluation Expedition was a landmark event. The upcoming special issue of *TIGHAR Tracks* will have a full report and an update on progress toward recovery of a TBD.

