

TIGHAR TRACKS

July 2009

NIKU AGAIN IN 2010



Yes, we're going back. TIGHAR has committed to mounting another expedition to Nikumaroro in May/June of 2010. Niku VI will be our tenth trip (see page 3) to the remote Phoenix Islands to test the hypothesis that Amelia Earhart and Fred Noonan landed and eventually died on the uninhabited, waterless atoll then known as Gardner Island. If we're successful in raising the needed funds, this expedition will be equipped with unprecedented search capability.

While our archaeological team continues the excavation of the Seven Site, a Sub Aviator Systems manned submersible will search for the wreckage of the Earhart Electra in the deep water off the island's western reef.

The expedition vessel will be our old friend *Nai'a*, the 120-foot motor-sailer we've used on three previous trips.

Staging out of Apia, Samoa, we'll conduct this expedition in two segments.

Segment One

May 18 – 31, 2010

Segment Two

June 1 – 14, 2010

Midway through the expedition the ship will make a run to Apia and back so that no team member has to be away from home for more than two weeks. While the ship is away, a Castaway Corps of experienced volunteers will remain on the island to continue the archaeological work.

As currently envisioned, the team for each segment will consist of 15 people:

- Five will be the support team for the submarine.

- Ten members of each segment's team will be TIGHAR Project Team Members (PTMs) and Sponsor Team Members (STMs). PTMs are selected from among qualified TIGHAR members. Their expenses, Los Angeles-to-Los Angeles, are covered by TIGHAR. STMs are selected from among individuals who are willing to contribute \$50,000 for a berth on the team.



Here's the itinerary:

Niku VI First Segment

May 19, 2010

Team One arrives in Apia, Samoa on Air New Zealand nonstop from Los Angeles and embarks for Nikumaroro aboard *Nai'a*.

May 22 to 28

Team One conducts archaeological operations at Nikumaroro.

May 28

Team One departs for Samoa minus the Castaway Corps who remain on the island to continue working.

May 31

Nai'a arrives in Apia and Team One members who are returning to the U.S. depart nonstop for Los Angeles on Air New Zealand.

June 1

Nai'a reprovisions in Apia.

Niku VI Second Segment

June 2

New team members arrive on Air New Zealand nonstop from Los Angeles and Team Two embarks for Nikumaroro aboard *Nai'a*.

June 5 to 11

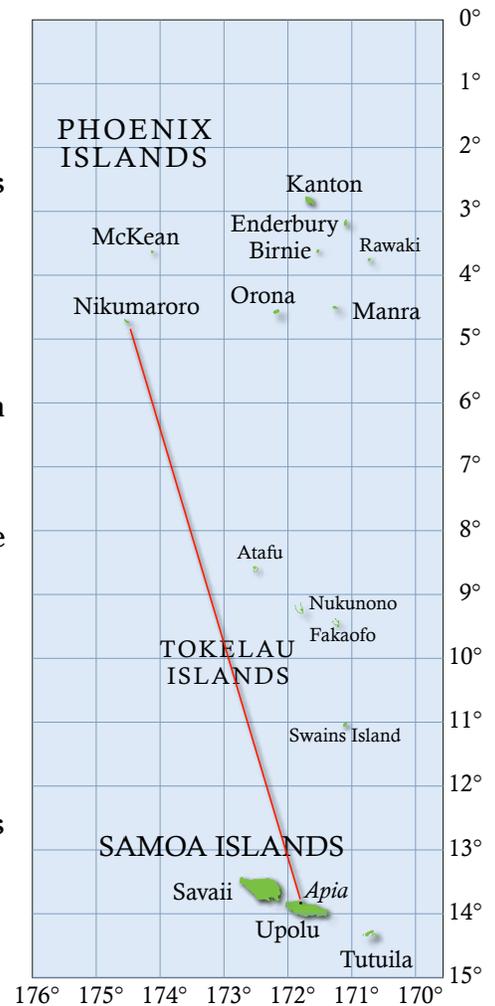
Team Two conducts archaeological operations at Nikumaroro.

June 11

Team Two departs for Samoa

June 14

Nai'a arrives in Apia and Team Two returns nonstop to Los Angeles on Air New Zealand.



AMPHIBIOUS AIR SUPPORT



We'd like to find a way to support the expedition with an amphibious aircraft capable of making the 650 nautical mile flight from Apia, Samoa and landing in the lagoon at Nikumaroro. That would allow *Nai'a* to remain on station to support on-going operations while providing an efficient way to rotate team members in and out, bring in media for short visits, and have medevac capability if needed. Several aircraft and alternatives are under consideration.



HOW YOU CAN PARTICIPATE

To fund the basic expedition – a year of preparation, the expedition itself, and the post-expedition analysis of results – we'll need to raise \$500,000. To fund the expanded version of the expedition that would include a manned submersible to search for the airplane and amphibious aircraft support between Nikumaroro and Samoa will probably be that much again. We do not for one minute think it will be easy to fund a million-dollar expedition in the midst of the Great Recession but, with your help, we're confident we can do it.

Become a Friend of the Expedition

We're asking you, as a TIGHAR member, to pick an amount you're willing to donate each month from August 2009 to July 2010. Whether it's \$100, \$50 or \$5, it's a year of monthly support we can count on as we put this expedition together – and that's very important to us. Please use the enclosed form or go to Friends of the Expedition on the TIGHAR website to make your pledge. We'll list you (but not your pledge amount) on the TIGHAR website as a Friend of the Expedition and send you a Niku VI Friend of the Expedition T-shirt as a thank you.

Volunteer to go on the Expedition as a Project Team Member (PTM)

PTMs donate their time. TIGHAR covers all other expenses. Most of the PTMs on Niku VI will, necessarily, be skilled veterans of previous trips, but we always try to include a few first-timers. To qualify for consideration as a PTM you need to be:

- a TIGHAR member
- in good health and good physical condition
- a graduate of a TIGHAR Field School in Aviation Archaeology.

We're now accepting registrations for a Field School in Idaho in September. See the enclosed flyer for details.

Volunteer to go on the Expedition as a Sponsor Team Member (STM)

Sponsor Team Members have been an essential and successful part of TIGHAR's many expeditions to Nikumaroro. STM's make a \$50,000 contribution to help fund the expedition in exchange for one of the berths on either the first or second segment.

In the past, the greatest obstacle to recruiting Sponsor Team Members has been the month-long duration of the expeditions. Many people who can financially afford to be an STM can't afford the time. By doing Niku VI in two segments we've shortened the time commitment to two weeks and doubled the number of STMs we can accommodate.

If you're in a position to consider becoming a Sponsor Team Member on the Niku VI expedition, please contact Gillespie at ric@tighar.org 

The TIGHAR Earhart Expeditions (to date)

Niku I – 1989



Niku II – 1991

Niku III Preliminary – 1996



Niku III – 1997

Kanton Mission – 1998

**Niku IV Preliminary
– 1999**



Niku III – 2001

**Niku V Preliminary –
2003**



Niku V – 2007

Niku VI

2010

