

TIGHAR NEWS

September 2011

Coming in October



TIGHAR Journal 2011

The past year has seen a tremendous amount of research and there is much to report. After twenty-three years of investigation by TIGHAR, the Earhart disappearance jigsaw puzzle is nearly complete. In this year's edition of the organization's journal we'll lay out the picture as it now appears.

Forensic imaging of historical photos, analysis of reported radio distress calls from the missing

plane, and correlation of both with data collected on the morphology and tidal dynamics of the reef at Nikumaroro have enabled us to reconstruct a what-really-happened scenario for the last hours of the flight, the landing on the reef, and the frantic week that followed.

cont.



Analysis of material and data collected during the 2010 Niku VI Expedition plus three research expeditions in 2011 to Fiji, Tarawa, and the Solomon Islands have provided a much clearer, if still not complete, chronicle of what happened at the remote spot on the island's southeast end where we think Amelia Earhart lived – and died.

The all-important final pieces remain to be found but the rest of the puzzle has become so large and diffuse as to be difficult to grasp from the more than four hundred documents, research papers and reports in the on-line TIGHAR archive. The *TIGHAR Journal 2011* will pull together what we know and how we know it as well as what we think and why we think it.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TIGHAR JOURNAL 2011

“Crashed & Sank” has Crashed and Sunk

Disproving the theory that the Earhart flight went down at sea.

The Last Week of NR16020

A reconstruction of events from the time of the last in-flight radio transmission heard by USCG *Itasca* on July 2, 1937 until the overflight of Gardner Island by U.S. Navy aircraft on July 9, 1937.

The Legend of the Downed Plane

Hard and soft evidence of an aircraft wreck at Gardner Island.

A Place Called Karaka

Sorting out the Seven Site through archival records, anecdotes, and artifacts.

The DNA Dilemma

Current efforts to solve the case through DNA.

The Castaway of Gardner Island

What the archaeological results tell us about the castaway who lived and died on Nikumaroro.

Be sure your membership is up to date so you receive this important record of the progress of The Earhart Project.



Important News

ABOUT YOUR TIGHAR MEMBERSHIP

We've made some changes to the TIGHAR Membership categories and we've added an important new benefit.

TIGHAR members at or above the new **TIGHAR Researcher** level will receive, free of charge, research materials that are not otherwise available, such as a DVD of the Discovery Channel "Finding Amelia" documentary. Other examples of materials that are of value to researchers but are not generally available to the public are:

- The July, 8, 1937 "March of Time" radio show dramatizing the search for Earhart. This was the broadcast that some listeners mistook for actual calls from the plane.
- Digital copies of scientific and forensic reports on artifacts and faunal materials, including DNA analysis.
- The NBC News Productions documentary about TIGHAR's 1991 expedition.
- The ABC News documentary about TIGHAR's storm-tossed 1997 expedition.
- "Flight For Freedom," the 1943 Hollywood film which was largely responsible for the speculation that Earhart was on a secret spy mission.
- Out-takes from 1937 newsreels that show details of Earhart's Electra and her preparations for the world flight.

These and other hard-to-get materials will be provided to TIGHAR Researchers quarterly at no additional cost. We're able to do this because TIGHAR is a research organization and our members are our researchers. The research materials you receive as a TIGHAR Researcher may not be copied or distributed.

SPECIAL UPGRADE OFFER

Use the form enclosed or go to the TIGHAR Store on the TIGHAR website (www.tighar.org) to upgrade your TIGHAR membership to the new TIGHAR Researcher level at a special reduced rate. You'll keep your same renewal date but you'll start receiving the free research materials immediately.

- If you are currently a member at the Sponsor (\$100) level – send \$15 (\$10 savings).
- If you are currently a member at the Associate (\$55) level – send \$55 (\$15 savings).

BE A SHOW OFF

Enclosed with this mailing is your free TIGHAR magnetic sticker. Show off your membership in TIGHAR by sticking it on your car, truck, refrigerator – anywhere people will see it and say, “Cool! How can I get one of those?”

(Note: Not a good idea to stick it on your computer.)

More are available in the TIGHAR Store for \$5 each.



Treasuring Your Trust

It's no secret that identity theft has become a major concern and TIGHAR is in the forefront in protecting its members. TIGHAR no longer stores credit card information. All transactions in the secure on-line TIGHAR Store are now via PayPal. Not everyone prefers to use PayPal so we'll soon have a system in place that will permit you to use your credit card but we'll never see the number. When we receive a credit card order by mail we process the payment and immediately shred the paper.

We have also recently upgraded our credit card processing system to one with much greater security, and more capability, too. We now accept Discover as well as VISA and MasterCard.

We treasure your trust and constantly work to make sure we deserve it.

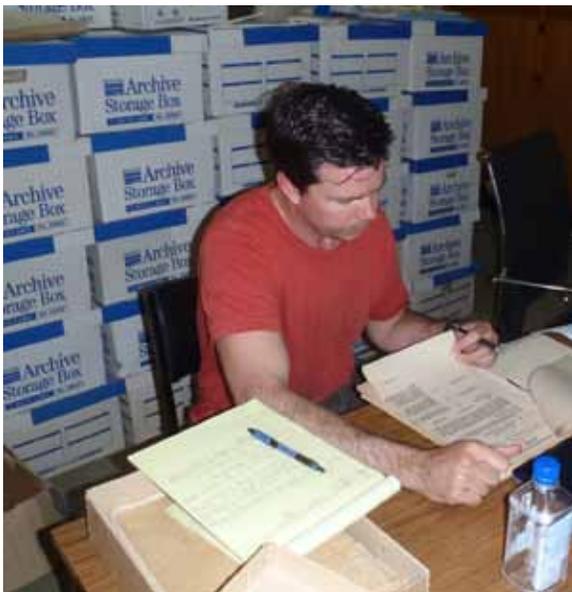


- If you are currently a member at the Senior/Student (\$45) level – send \$60 (\$20 savings).

(Note: If you received a DVD of the “Finding Amelia” Discovery documentary with this mailing you are already a TIGHAR Researcher.)

TIGHAR's new membership categories are:

- Senior/Student, \$45.00. For those on limited budgets, receive TIGHAR publications and a member card. For full-time students and those over 65. (Museum/Library rate is also \$45.)
- Associate, \$55.00. Receive TIGHAR publications, a membership card, discounts on TIGHAR Stuff, and membership stickers.
- **TIGHAR Researcher**, \$125.00. Receive TIGHAR publications, card, discounts, stickers AND **free research materials** on CD and DVD, such as the Discovery Channel documentary.
- Sponsor, \$250.00. Receive TIGHAR publications, card, discounts, stickers, **free research materials**, and a TIGHAR T-shirt.
- Donor, \$500.00. Receive TIGHAR publications, card, discounts, stickers, **free research materials**, a TIGHAR T-shirt, and a TIGHAR cap.
- Patron, \$1,000.00. Receive TIGHAR publications, card, discounts, stickers, **free research materials**, a TIGHAR polo shirt, a TIGHAR cap, and a logo lapel pin.
- Sustaining, \$5,000.00. Receive TIGHAR publications, card, discounts, stickers, **free research materials**, a TIGHAR polo shirt, a TIGHAR cap, a logo lapel pin; prominent mention on our web site and in our journal if desired.



Bill Carter, TIGHAR Researcher, hard at work in the archives of the Republic of Kiribati.

Finding Amelia

The True Story of the Search for Amelia Earhart

DRAFT
26 Aug 2011

INTRODUCTION

“Lexington Group ordered discontinue search evening eighteenth ...”¹

The U.S. Government search for Amelia Earhart had come to an end. For sixteen frantic days a small flotilla of ships and planes had swept numerous islands and vast stretches of the South Central Pacific for some sign of the aviation celebrity’s lost Lockheed Electra. On July 18, 1937, when the last aircraft lurched to a stop on the deck of USS *Lexington*, the ships turned for home. They had found exactly nothing.

The after-action reports written by the various commanders concluded that the missing Lockheed must have gone down at sea and vanished beneath the waves, leaving no trace of floating debris to mark its passing. The men who manned the ships and planes, it was said, had done all that could be done but, in the end, Amelia Earhart and navigator Fred Noonan were presumed to have joined the long list of brave flyers who set out to cross wide oceans, never to be seen again.

Nature, and especially human nature, abhors a vacuum. Earhart’s adoring public did not accept the government’s self-exonerating conclusion that because nothing had been found, there was nothing to find. Curiosity and speculation about the flyers’ fate did not recede with the passage of time, but rather grew over the ensuing decades, fed by a variety of theories and counter-theories, each with its coterie of passionate advocates. Publishers and the media were quick to accommodate the controversy and the search for a satisfying answer to the Earhart riddle became a national pastime.

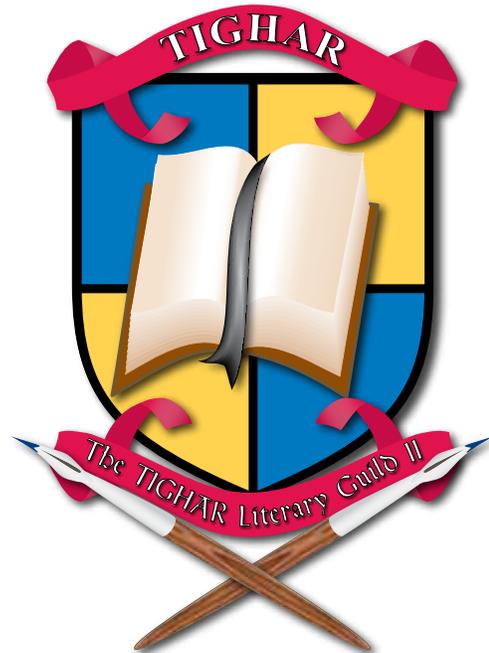
In *Finding Amelia, The True Story of the Earhart Disappearance* (Naval Institute Press, 2006), I chronicled the preparations for Amelia Earhart’s world flight, the circumstances surrounding her disappearance, and the conduct of the U.S. Coast Guard and Navy search that failed to find her. These pages continue the story of the search for Amelia Earhart. Like the first volume it is a narrative of historical events drawn from the best available

primary sources but, unlike that book, it is also a story in which I am unavoidably one of the characters.

Since 1988, as Executive Director of The International Group for Historic Aircraft Recovery (TIGHAR, pronounced tiger), I have led The Earhart Project, the most in-depth scientific investigation of the Earhart disappearance ever undertaken. This book is therefore in some respects a memoir, but it is not about me. It is the stranger-than-fiction tale of how various dedicated, some would say obsessed, researchers have gone about trying to solve the great American mystery. The extent to which any has been successful is for the reader to decide.

The TIGHAR Literary Guild II

Please use the enclosed form to join the TIGHAR Literary Guild and help support the researching and writing of Finding Amelia Volume II.



¹ Commandant, 14th Naval District, Pearl Harbor to Chief of Naval Operations, Washington DC, July 17, 1937.