

I truly believed the north of course theory was the most probable at the time I wrote THE SEARCH FOR AE in 1966, and I chose Mili as the most logical landing place. Through the assistance of Dr. Dirk Ballendorf, who was Deputy Director for our U.S. Peace Corps activities in the Pacific, I was able to disabuse myself of that conjecture by 1969. Dr. Ballendorf assigned a fine young American named Eric Sussman to assist me with the people of Mili Atoll. Mr. Sussman spent nearly two years in Mili as a Peace Corps Volunteer, and he interviewed every Marshallese there who was old enough to remember anything about the pre-WWII years, especially 1937. A story existed about a woman pilot being picked up somewhere in or about the Marshalls in 1937, but Mr. Sussman satisfied himself and consequently satisfied me that Mili HAD NOT BEEN the landing place of the Earhart plane. It is more than a little surprising that Vincent Loomis, Oliver Knaggs, Buddy Brennan, Paul Bryce, Jim Slade and all the other people who visited Mili in the late 1970's and early 1980's and made such extravagant, unsupportable claims, did not even attempt to contact me before they made their "expeditions". It is almost as if they did not want to hear ANYTHING which might not support their conclusions and what they were trying to promulgate to their investors. What was amusing but not surprising was that they were calling each other names and threatening lawsuits against one another within months after their returns to The States.