



For Immediate Release

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Alleged Amelia Earhart Photo Dated to 1935

History Channel documentary centerpiece cannot be Earhart.

Oxford, Pennsylvania, USA – July 11, 2017 – The photo at the center of the History Channel show “Amelia Earhart – The Lost Evidence” was taken before October, 1935 – nearly two years before Amelia Earhart and navigator Fred Noonan disappeared on July 2, 1937. Despite the breathless assurances of the show’s experts, the people in the photo cannot possibly be the lost fliers.

The picture is one of many in a travel book titled “Umino Seimeisen Wagananyou no sugata: (Nanyo gunto shashincho)” translated as “The Life Line of the Sea, my South Sea Memoir (South Sea archipelago photo book).” It is by Notoaki Nishino of Palau and published by Fumio Almano in Tokyo on October 10, 1935. The book may be viewed on line at <http://dl.ndl.go.jp/info:ndljp/pid/1223403/99?platform=hootsuite>. The photo is on book page 44 (Web Reader Frame 99).



The caption reads:

Jaluit island, Jabor port. (at left of the photo)

Jabor is a rare great port. Once a month when a big ship enters the port and brings many rare materials, a Big Chief schooner and a Small Chief schooner gather the port and make Jabor so lively. (under the photo)

It is the same photo found by Earhart researcher Les Kinney in National Archives Records of the Office of Naval Intelligence, Record Group 38, among intelligence material

assembled in preparation for the invasion of the Marshalls in 1944. TIGHAR was among those who were incredulous that the photo showed Earhart and Noonan in Japanese custody. The picture was undated; there were no Japanese, no guards, the figure alleged to be Amelia had hair that was much too long; the identification of a man as Fred Noonan depended upon a photo of Noonan that had been reversed to make the hairline match; their clothes were wrong; an indistinct blob behind a ship was proclaimed to be Earhart's Electra on a barge – and yet, to dozens of media outlets, the photo was heralded as “proof” of Earhart's fate.

TIGHAR determined early on that the photo was not misfiled as Mr. Kinney believed but was exactly where it should have been. The caption on the Office of Naval Intelligence photo reads:

“PL – Marshall Islands, Jaluit Atoll, Jaluit Island. ONI #14381 Jaluit Harbor”

The pasted-on caption made us suspect that this was a photo found in a pre-war commercial publication, but finding the original source seemed like a nearly impossible task. Never underestimate the power of a skeptical public empowered by social media.

Exactly who first discovered the photo in the book is not clear, but “@baron-yameneko” may have been the first to sound the alarm. On July 9 “@SamuraiK7 (Kiyo Marco T) put it out on Yahoo Japan (https://headlines.yahoo.co.jp/hl?a=20170709-00000031-jjj_afp-int) and @MsSamAdams (Samantha Adams) quickly put it out on Twitter. The cat was out of the bag and Gator 99.5, a country music station in Lake Charles, Louisiana was perhaps the first to break the story on its website. <http://gator995.com/new-amelia-earhart-photo-discovered-in-a-book-published-two-years-before-she-disappeared/>

The centerpiece of the History Channel show has collapsed, but what about all that other evidence? In fact, the other evidence presented in the show is factually inaccurate information and a re-hash of old, thoroughly debunked folklore.

- The show mis-states the amount of fuel aboard the Electra (https://tighar.org/Projects/Earhart/Archives/Documents/Chater_Report.html). The plane did not have enough fuel to reach the Marshall Islands.
- The Japanese survey ship *Koshu* cooperated in the search for Earhart. The logs of the ship survive. It was never at Mili Atoll and it found no trace of Earhart. (*Ameria o sagase, Searching for Amelia*, Fukiko Aoki, Tankobon, 1983.)
- Construction of the first Japanese military installations in the Marshalls were begun in 1940. (“How Japan Fortified the Mandated Islands” by Thomas Wilds in *United States Naval Institute Proceedings*, April 1955, Vol. 81, No. 4); (*Nanyo – The Rise and Fall of the Japanese in Micronesia 1885 – 1945*, Mark R. Peattie, Ph.D., Naval Institute Press, 1988).
- There are dozens of mutually-conflicting “eye witness accounts” of Earhart and Noonan in Japanese custody in the Marshalls and on Saipan. The History Channel show cherry-picked a handful to construct their narrative.
- It is true that some senior American officers were later of the opinion that Earhart had been captured but there is no evidence to support their belief. Other senior officers were adamant that it was not true.
- The piece of metal found on Mili Atoll and supposedly matched to a Lockheed Electra was matched to a Model 12A “Electra Junior” – a completely different type from Earhart's Model 10E (photos available from TIGHAR).
- The transmitter on Earhart's Electra was not in the nose of the plane. The Western Electric 13C was in the cabin behind the fuel tanks (photo available from TIGHAR).
- The History Channel show completely ignored the elephant in the room – the abundance of solid evidence TIGHAR has uncovered in twelve expeditions and over 28 years of scientific research. The evidence supports the hypothesis that Earhart and Noonan landed and died as castaways on Nikumaroro (formerly Gardner Island) in the Republic of Kiribati. END.