

Media Advisory
For Immediate Release



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“Finding Amelia – the True Story of the Earhart Disappearance”

Restored L-10 Electra aircraft unveiling, Amelia Earhart presentation & book signing

Pensacola, Fla.—June 18, 2009—The riddle of what really happened to Amelia Earhart has made her America’s favorite missing person. Why did a massive U.S. Navy and Coast Guard search fail to find her? Did her Lockheed *Electra* go down at sea and vanish without a trace? Was she a spy, captured by the Japanese? Or did she and her navigator, Fred Noonan, die as castaways on a desert island? Now, hard evidence is starting to emerge that could soon lead to a conclusive solution to the mystery.

The National Naval Aviation Museum will unveil a restored Lockheed *Electra*, the type of aircraft flown by Amelia Earhart, at **3 p.m. on Thursday, July 2** in the Blue Angel Atrium as part of a special program on the 72nd anniversary of Amelia Earhart’s disappearance. The aircraft restoration was sponsored by the Emil Buehler Trust and will be on permanent display at the Museum. Following the aircraft rollout, Ric Gillespie, executive director of The International Group for Historic Aircraft Recovery (TIGHAR), will give an illustrated presentation on TIGHAR’s findings and exhibit some of the recovered artifacts believed to have belonged to Earhart. At the conclusion of his lecture, Gillespie will hold a book signing for his publication, "Finding Amelia – the True Story of the Earhart Disappearance."

Gillespie has led a team of historians, archaeologists and forensic scientists on a 20-year investigation of the Earhart/Noonan disappearance. Nine expeditions to a remote uninhabited South Pacific atoll have uncovered compelling evidence of Earhart’s presence.

The son of a decorated WWII pilot, Ric Gillespie, grew up around airplanes and learned to fly while he was still in high school. Graduating from the State University of New York in 1969, Gillespie enlisted in the U.S. Army and served as an officer with the First Cavalry Division. In 1973, he began a 12-year career as an aviation accident investigator and risk manager in the aviation insurance industry. In 1985, Gillespie founded The International Group for Historic Aircraft Recovery (TIGHAR, pronounced “tiger”). The nonprofit foundation has an international membership of several hundred scholars, scientists and enthusiasts whose volunteer expertise and financial contributions support the organization's mission to promote responsible aviation archaeology and historic preservation.

In addition to its on-going investigation of the Earhart disappearance, TIGHAR is working with Naval History and Heritage Command, the National Naval Aviation Museum and the Republic of the Marshall Islands to raise a rare Douglas TBD-1 *Devastator* torpedo bomber from Jaluit lagoon to join the Museum’s collection.

The National Naval Aviation Museum features FREE admission and a full slate of events throughout the year. For a complete list of Museum events, exhibits and attractions, visit NavalAviationMuseum.org or call the Naval Aviation Museum Foundation at (850) 453-2389 or (800) 327-5002.

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About the National Naval Aviation Museum

The National Naval Aviation Museum features nearly 300,000 square feet of displays and is one of the world’s largest aviation museums. Located aboard Pensacola Naval Air Station, the facility boasts more than 150 beautifully restored aircraft representing Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard aviation and is Florida’s most-visited museum. Among the countless things to touch, see and experience are thrilling Top Gun Air Combat flight simulators, a variety of special exhibits as well as the drama and power of amazing IMAX® films. The Cubi Bar Café offers a unique dining experience, and the Flight Deck Store is the perfect place to find a memento of the spirit of Naval aviation. Museum admission is free. The National Naval Aviation Museum is open daily from 9 a.m.–5 p.m., except Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day and New Year’s Day. For more information, visit NavalAviationMuseum.org.

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