

<http://www.MSCNews.net/news/index.cfm?nk=14685>

On Earhart's Birthday, Expedition Results Reveal Little
Today is Atchison native Amelia Earhart's 115th birthday.

Worldwide search engine Google has dedicated one of their famous "Google Doodles" to the famed aviator on their homepage.

Also, a \$2.2 million expedition that hoped to find wreckage from Earhart's final flight is on its way back to Hawaii without the dramatic, conclusive plane images searchers were hoping to attain.

But the group leading the search, The International Group for Historic Aircraft Recovery, still believes Earhart and her navigator crashed onto a reef off a remote island in the Pacific Ocean 75 years ago this month.

TIGHAR president Pat Thrasher said the group collected a significant amount of video and sonar data, which searchers will pore over on the return voyage to Hawaii this week and afterward to look for things that may be tough to see at first glance.

The group is also planning a voyage for next year to scour the land where it's believed Earhart survived a short while after the crash.

Thrasher maintained touch throughout the search with TIGHAR founder Ric Gillespie, her husband, and posted updates about the trip to the group's website.

The updates tell of a search that was cut short because of treacherous underwater terrain and repeated, unexpected equipment mishaps that caused delays and left the group with only five days of search time rather than 10, as originally planned.

Jacque Pregont has been the long-time coordinator of the Amelia Earhart Festival in Atchison.

She gives her perspective on expedition's lack of discovery.

(Play Audio) RT: :20

The expedition group's thesis is based on the idea that Earhart and navigator Fred Noonan landed on a reef near the Kiribati atoll of Nikumaroro, and then survived a short time.

Previous visits to the island have recovered artifacts that could have belonged to Earhart and Noonan, and experts say an October 1937 photo of the shoreline of the island could include a blurry image of the strut and wheel of a Lockheed Electra landing gear.

Many Signals Communications and The Associated Press