



FIFTY years of anguish over . . . Kathleen Healy yesterday with a photograph of her brother Jack, who went missing when his plane vanished over Indonesia in 1944. Picture: chief photographer JIM FENWICK

# War mystery solved after 50 years

WHEN Air Gunner Jack Sorter's plane vanished over the jungles of Indonesia in 1944, half a century of anguish began for his Queensland family and friends.

The plane — a Catalina flying boat — was never found. Jack's death was not confirmed, although the 29-year-old Brisbane public servant was officially listed as killed in action.

For Jack's sister Kathleen Healy, of Scarborough, on the Redcliffe peninsula, the mystery of whether Jack died during the July 20 flight has finally been solved — nearly 50 years to the day after it began.

The RAAF Catalina No 24-45, which had been carrying eight crew, was this month found on the east Indonesian island of Buru by the Indone-



A CATALINA flying boat . . . Air Gunner Jack Sorter's plane went missing.

sian military. "I was absolutely amazed after all this time to finally discover what happened," Mrs Healy, 73, said yesterday. "We had always thought they had gone down in the sea and we never heard anything again. "At the time, I knew of a young fellow who had been

shot down over the islands and he had been rescued by the natives. I thought that could have happened to Jack. "But after the war they went into the jungles to search for them but never found anything and listed him as officially killed in action. "I think my mother always thought there was still hope

that he was alive. I just regret she died not knowing the outcome." Mrs Healy said she and her sister Phyllis were Jack's closest living relatives. Mrs Healy and her sister are hoping to fly to Indonesia next month to attend the military burial of the remains of Jack and the other crewmen.