

Air Search For Lost Plane Is Intensified

An intense air search for the missing R.A.A.F. Mosquito aircraft over the Mt. Elliott ranges was begun from Townsville R.A.A.F. aerodromes as soon as the weather lifted at about 10 a.m. to-day.

When the first machine, an Anson, returned after doing a low-level reconnaissance of the Mt. Elliott (4,000 ft.) area, where the Mosquito is believed to have crashed on Tuesday, the crew reported no sign of wreckage.

Ground parties, which are preparing to engage on a weekend search for the lost aircraft and its crew of two R.A.A.F. officers, stood by to-day hoping that a sighting report from one of the four searching aircraft would direct their climb.

Although flood waters have fallen slightly, they are still high enough to hamper the work of the search party comprising eight Townsville civilians, which proposed to set out on a climb of the north-eastern slope of the hills to-day.

An R.A.A.F. Dakota took off from Garbutt airfield, Townsville, early this afternoon, to search the ranges to the south-east, and to co-operate with the two R.A.A.F. Liberators operating from Cloncurry.

The latter are concentrating on the search for another Mosquito, flown by a New Zealand crew, which is believed to have crashed in the flat country south of Cloncurry.

Widespread Search

The search for the Dutch Navy Dakota, missing on Tuesday on a flight from Longreach to Darwin, continues, with four Dakota and a number of Catalina aircraft operating from Darwin, Brisbane and Cloncurry.

While it is hoped that the New Zealand Mosquito will be found with the pilot and navigator alive, senior Air Force officials at Townsville regard it as almost certain that the crew of the R.A.A.F. survey Mosquito, F/Lts. D. W. Blatsoff and F. Landford, both of New South Wales, have been involved in a fatal crash at high speed in the mountain country south of Townsville.

QUD PAPEL

Planes Go From Amberley To Seek Missing Aircraft

The fate of the three aircraft and 11 men lost in north Queensland is not likely to be learned to-day. Rainy weather has made it impossible for either ground or air searches to be undertaken.

The only air movement this morning was the departure of the two grounded R.A.A.F. Liberators from Amberley. They will attempt to land at Cloncurry, instead of Townsville, and participate in the search from that area.

Impenetrable weather prevents any search being made from Townsville, from which the Liberators had hoped to operate.

Visibility there now is no better than about 200 yards.

Thick rain is falling, and Castle Hill, about 990 ft., the main topographical feature at Townsville, is not visible from the adjacent 'drome of Garbutt, which it overlooks.

Longreach is weather-bound, and Cloncurry is fast becoming so.

The Netherlands Naval Office in Brisbane has heard nothing so far of its missing Dakota.

Nor has anything been found of the New Zealand Air Force Mosquito, which also disappeared in the north.

Searchers Return Exhausted

TOWNSVILLE: After a two-day search for the R.A.A.F. plane at Mount Elliott, near Townsville, the first ground party of eight civilians, Police Constable Weiers, and eight Air Force men reached Killimoon in a very exhausted state yesterday.

A rail motor taking Wing Commander Gibson and carrying hot drinks and food was sent from Townsville and returned last night with Flying Officer Buchan, who said it was practically useless continuing the search until the weather cleared.

Rain throughout yesterday reduced visibility to about 25 yards. The cold rain which fell throughout Wednesday night prevented the party from keeping a fire going and they were unable to sleep.

They started off at daybreak yesterday, combed the mountain top, then searched ridges, gullies, and gorges for a long distance around where light flashes were seen on Tuesday night, but they found no signs of the plane or its two occupants.

One-Man Search

Two other parties, working independently from the main party, and Mr. J. Joyce, a resident of Cromarty, who made a one-man search, also failed to find the plane or the flyers.

One R.A.A.F. party, with Constable J. Ryan, of Stuart, and a black tracker, is still searching, but in view of the dangerous ground and bad visibility, Wing-Commander Gibson said today that while he had search parties standing by at Cromarty, no further search was being made on ground or by air until the weather moderated.

Two military police who left Giru yesterday with food for the party missed them and returned to Giru last night.

LOST PLANES LOCATED

Dakota Crew May Be Unhurt

BRISBANE, Sunday.—The partly burned wreckage of the R.A.A.F. Mosquito, which has been missing since last Tuesday, was located to-day by the pilot of a search plane. Another aircraft sighted the Dutch Dakota, which was lost on Tuesday on a flight from Longreach to Darwin.

The wreckage of the Mosquito lay about 100 feet below the peak of Saddle Mountain, some 20 miles south of Townsville. The pilot of the search plane reported that he saw no signs of life near the wreckage.

An Air Force search party left Townsville immediately the report was received, and it will commence its climb up Saddle Mountain from Cromarty at dawn to-morrow. The party is in charge of the officer who led a previous search. He believes that on his first climb he must have passed within a quarter of a mile of the wreck.

He said last night the mountain was so rugged that it would be possible for searchers to pass within 50 yards of the plane without seeing it.

Dakota Landed on Clearing

During a telephone conversation from Darwin last night Captain Myers, the pilot of a Qant plane, which sighted the Dutch Dakota, said the Dutchmen had landed their plane in the clearing to be seen for miles. From the air the ground appeared to be swampy, and the plane appeared to be undamaged.

to have made a successful "belly landing," he considered it would be very surprising if anyone on board had been seriously injured.

31-3-47: MELB. PAPER

PARTY OUT AT DAWN FOR PLANE WRECK ON MOUNTAIN

Barred Plane Near Peak

A SEARCH party will set out at dawn today for the top of Saddle Mountain, south of Townsville, where the burnt-out wreckage of the Mosquito bomber which crashed last Tuesday was sighted yesterday morning.

The wreckage was seen from an Avro Anson search plane at 9 a.m., during a temporary break in the weather, on the southern side of the 2800ft. mountain, about 100ft. from the peak.

Observers in the plane saw no sign of life or attempts at signalling.

The party which will leave this morning for the scene will consist of Air Force personnel from Townsville and civilians. They expect to reach the plane about noon.

The Avro Anson will make a series of runs from Cromarty to direct the ground party to the spot. Cromarty, 20 miles south of Townsville, is at the foot of Saddle Mountain.

The pilot of the Anson, Flight Lieutenant A. Clark, circled the area for some minutes yesterday before identifying the wreckage.

Crew of the crashed plane were Flight Lieutenant F. Langford, of Sydney, and G. W. Batzloff, of Biddeston, near Toowoomba.

Within 30 Yards

A party of civilians from Cromarty again searched the mountain yesterday, and were on the slopes when the wreck was sighted from the air.

As no system of signals between air and ground had been arranged, they could not be directed to the spot, and they returned yesterday afternoon without having located the plane.

One searcher said he must have been within 30 yards of the wreckage during the day.

When the discovery of the wreckage was reported to the Townsville R.A.A.F. station yesterday a ground search party, under Flying Officer Buchan, who had led an earlier search, left Townsville by rail motor for Cromarty.

Roads to Cromarty are still blocked by flood waters.

Forced Back

On arrival at Cromarty, the R.A.A.F. party began to climb the mountain, but were forced to return when heavy rain and low cloud again closed on the mountain. They plan to start out again at daybreak to-day.

Mr. A. Joyce, of Cromarty, said last night, after his return from the all-day search of the mountain, that one of the air-men had told him the Mosquito had cut a swathe about 50 yards long through the tops of the trees before it finally crashed.

"At one time to-day I must have been within 30 yards of the plane, but could not see it because of the dense jungle," said Mr. Joyce. "The lawyer vines are so thick that we could not see more than a few yards."

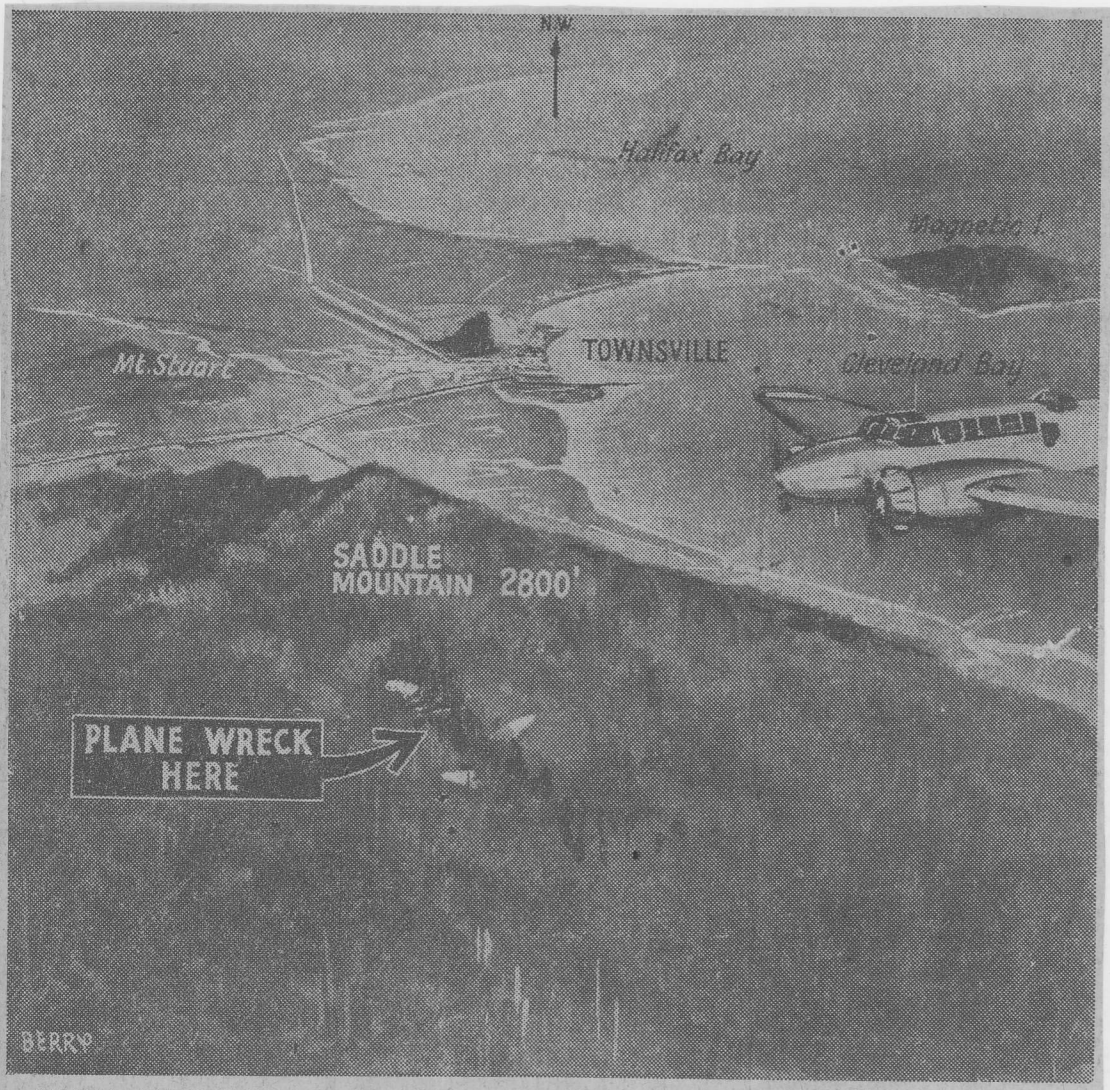
A search party made up of local residents searched the mountain until 9 p.m. last night. The party, which consisted of Pat and Bernie Meehan, and Tom Marron and his son, have searched every day since the plane crashed.

"We saw the search plane overhead," said Pat Meehan last night, "but did not know that they had found the Mosquito."
"When the plane did not return in the afternoon, we thought that something may have been sighted, so we came down."



Flight Lieutenant Batzloff, observer of the Mosquito, on Saddle Mountain.

503-57A



STAFF ARTIST Horace Berry's impression of the sighting of the wrecked Mosquito by an Air Force Avro Anson near the peak of Saddle Mountain, south of Townsville, yesterday. The plane crashed last Tuesday.

31.3.47

WHAT OUR STAFF ARTIST'S IMPRESSION OF THE SIGHTING OF THE WRECKED MOSQUITO BY AN AIR FORCE AVRO ANSON NEAR THE PEAK OF SADDLE MOUNTAIN, SOUTH OF TOWNSVILLE, YESTERDAY. THE PLANE CRASHED LAST TUESDAY.

PARTY OUT AT DAWN AIR WRECK ON MOUNTAIN

Charred Plane Near Peak



QUEENSLAND-BORN Flight Lieutenant D. W. Batzloff, observer in the Mosquito which crashed on Saddle Mountain.

A SEARCH party will set out at dawn today for the top of Saddle Mountain, south of Townsville, where the burnt-out wreckage of the Mosquito bomber which crashed last Tuesday was sighted yesterday morning.

The wreckage was seen from an Avro Anson search plane at 9 a.m., during a temporary break in the weather, on the southern side of the 2800ft. mountain, about 100ft. from the peak.

Observers in the plane saw no sign of life or attempts at signalling.

The party which will leave this morning for the scene will consist of Air Force personnel from Townsville and civilians.

They expect to reach the plane about noon.

The Avro Anson will make a series of runs from Cromarty to direct the ground party to the spot. Cromarty, 20 miles south of Townsville, is at the foot of Saddle Mountain.

The pilot of the Anson, Flight Lieutenant A. Clark, circled the area for some minutes yesterday before identifying the wreckage.

Crew of the crashed plane were Flight Lieutenants F. Langford, of Sydney, and G. W. Batzloff, of Biddeston, near Toowoomba.

Within 30 Yards

A party of civilians from Cromarty again searched the mountain yesterday, and were on the slopes when the wreck was sighted from the air.

As no system of signals between air and ground had been arranged, they could not be directed to the spot, and they returned yesterday afternoon without having located the plane.

One searcher said he must have been within 30 yards of the wreckage during the day.

When the discovery of the wreckage was reported to the Townsville R.A.A.F. station yesterday a ground search party, under Flying Officer Buchan, who had led an earlier search, left Townsville by rail motor for Cromarty.

Roads to Cromarty are still blocked by flood waters.

BRISBANE, MONDAY, MARCH 31, 1947.

T AT DAWN FOR K ON MOUNTAIN

ane eak

out at dawn to-
dle Mountain,
the burnt-out
bomber which
sighted yester-

n from an Avro
a.m., during a
weather, on the
00ft. mountain,
k.

no sign of life

The Avro Anson will make a series of runs from Cromarty to direct the ground party to the spot. Cromarty, 20 miles south of Townsville, is at the foot of Saddle Mountain.

The pilot of the Anson, Flight Lieutenant A. Clark, circled the area for some minutes yesterday before identifying the wreckage.

Crew of the crashed plane were Flight Lieutenants F. Langford, of Sydney, and G. W. Batzloff, of Biddeston, near Toowoomba.

Within 30 Yards

A party of civilians from Cromarty again searched the mountain yesterday, and were on the slopes when the wreck was sighted from the air.

As no system of signals between air and ground had been arranged, they could not be directed to the spot, and they returned yesterday afternoon without having located the plane.

One searcher said he must have been within 30 yards of the wreckage during the day.

When the discovery of the wreckage was reported to the Townsville R.A.A.F. station yesterday a ground search party, under Flying Officer Buchan, who had led an earlier search, left Townsville by rail motor for Cromarty.

Roads to Cromarty are still blocked by flood waters.

Forced Back

On arrival at Cromarty, the R.A.A.F. party began to climb the mountain, but were forced to return when heavy rain and low cloud again closed on the mountain. They plan to start out again at daybreak to-day.

Mr. A. Joyce, of Cromarty, said last night, after his return from the all-day search of the mountain, that one of the air-men had told him the Mosquito had cut a swathe about 50 yards long through the tops of the trees before it finally crashed.

"At one time to-day I must have been within 30 yards of the plane, but could not see it because of the dense jungle," said Mr. Joyce. "The lawyer vines are so thick that we could not see more than a few yards."

A search party made up of local residents searched the mountain until 9 p.m. last night. The party, which consisted of Pat and Bernie Meehan, and Tom Marron and his son, have searched every day since the plane crashed.

"We saw the search plane overhead," said Pat Meehan last night, "but did not know that they had found the Mosquito."

"When the plane did not return in the afternoon, we thought that something may have been sighted, so we came down."

AS2-607

N.Q. MOUNTAIN

Search For Crew To-day

A R.A.A.F. Mosquito bomber, carrying a crew of two, crashed into 2800-ft. high Saddle Mountain, about 20 miles south-east of Townsville, shortly before 5 p.m. yesterday.

The area where the plane crashed is just below the mountain peak, where the terrain is rocky and in parts precipitous.

One of a squadron which had been engaged on a photographic survey of the Burdekin River basin, the plane was flying from Rockhampton to Townsville.

It crashed near the peak of the mountain while heavy rain obscured visibility.

Police and air force authorities believe that the crew may still be alive.

Residents of the small village of Cromarty, near the foot of the mountain, saw what they thought were distress signals from near the top of the mountain between 7.30 and 8 o'clock last night.

A R.A.A.F. search party of 12, including ambulance men, a medical officer, and a trained rescue squad, left Townsville for Cromarty just before midnight.

With four Cromarty residents who saw the flares from the mountain-top, they will attempt to scale the mountain at day-break.

SEARCH BY AIR

If the weather clears sufficiently a R.A.A.F. Catalina from Townsville will fly over the area at sunrise looking for wreckage.

Late last night heavy rain, which had been falling all day in the Townsville-Ayr district, shrouded the mountain top, and no signs of life could be seen.

The leader of the search party will be 21-year-old Terence Duckworth, of Cromarty, who has lived for many years about one and a half miles from the foot of the mountain.

Duckworth, who was in the R.A.A.F. during the war, saw the Mosquito fly low over the township about 4.45 p.m. It came from the direction of Ayr, and was flying fast towards Townsville.

GLOW AND FLASH

About an hour later, most of Cromarty's 30 residents saw a sudden glow through the mist and clouds covering the mountain peak.

About 7.30 p.m., they saw flashes from near the same spot, as though flares were being fired.

Then a light flashed what residents thought was a Morse message, although rain made it hard to see.

A Cromarty resident, Mr. Pat Meehan, told The Courier-Mail by telephone last night that Saddle Mountain was a rugged razor-back, covered mostly with dense scrub. He said that he thought the search party of which he

Mountain Search Party Away

TOWNSVILLE: In fine clear weather a large ground party of searchers, comprising air force personnel with a medical orderly, stretcher equipment, Constable Weiers, of Giru, and civilian residents, left Cromarty at daybreak this morning to ascend to Saddle Back ridge running off Mt. Elliott.

It was here that a searching Anson aircraft yesterday located signs of the wrecked and partly-burned photographic survey Mosquito plane, which crashed on Tuesday night.

The party is faced with a slow, hazardous climb up the slippery mountain, and will have to hack a track through heavy lawyer vine and

"It seems practically inaccessible," he said. "So far as the people in Cromarty know, no one has ever climbed up there before."

A railway officer at Cromarty said that he noticed the plane flying at a very low altitude.

"It was raining at the time, and heavy clouds hung about a third of the way down the mountain-side," he continued.

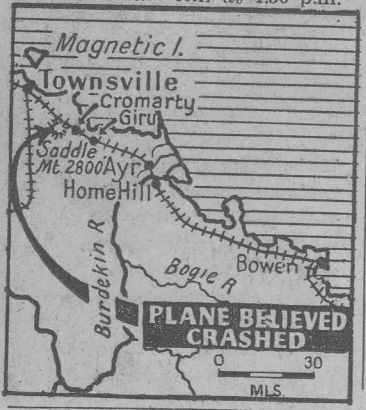
"The plane appeared to be heading straight into them, and I did not see it again."

"At 7.30 p.m. I looked in the direction of the mountain and saw distinct flashes, several of which I made out to be S.O.S."

"We obtained a light, and tried to answer the signals, but apparently they could not pick them up."

"The flashing was continued for about an hour, then, after 8.30, it ceased."

The missing plane left Rockhampton at 3.30 p.m. yesterday, and was due at Townsville at 4.45 p.m. The last message the R.A.A.F. station at Townsville received from the plane was that it was over Home Hill at 4.50 p.m.



Search Goes On

A BREAK in the weather yesterday enabled the land-air search to be resumed for the two Mosquito bombers missing in the north.

Four planes took off from Townsville and two from Cloncurry.

One Mosquito is believed to have crashed on Mount Elliott, near Townsville on Tuesday, and the other, a New Zealand Air Force machine, has been lost between Townsville and Darwin since Wednesday.

One of the six search planes, an Avro Anson, concentrated on the Mt. Elliott area, while the remainder, consisting of two Catalinas, two Liberators, and a Douglas commenced to follow the track of the New Zealand Mosquito from Townsville to the Northern Territory border.

Hope Given Up

Responsible Air Force authorities have given up hope of finding alive the two members of the Mosquito which is believed to have crashed on Mt. Elliott.

They believe the machine crashed head-on into the precipitous 4000ft. high range at 300 miles an hour.

Its crew of two consisted of Flight-Lieutenant F. Langford, of Sydney, and Flight Lieutenant D. W. Batzloff, 21, eldest son of Mr. W. Batzloff, of Biddeston, via Toowoomba.

There is still a fair chance that two members of a New Zealand Mosquito lost between Darwin and Townsville since Wednesday, will be found alive.

Cloud Still Low

A Cromarty message yesterday said that the weather had broken, and that no rain had fallen during the day in the township.

The area in which the plane is believed to have crashed, however, was still obscured by low cloud.

The post mistress (Mrs. Meehan) said that rail traffic between Cromarty and Townsville was still delayed because of washouts, while water was still over the line between Cromarty and Ayr.

Two search parties which had been marooned in the Cromarty railway station by waist-deep water on Friday night were still in the township.

RESCUE PARTY SCALING PEAK TO SEEK AIRMEN

One of the highest peaks in Queensland is being scaled to-day for the first time in history by seekers of the two R.A.A.F. airmen who late yesterday crashed with their Mosquito survey bomber 30 miles from Townsville.

The search party expects to reach the site of the crashed plane by evening and hopes to find at least one of the two airmen alive.

The missing airmen are: FLIGHT LIEUTENANTS LANGFORD and BATZLOFF, both of New South Wales.

Twelve men set out at 7 a.m. to-day from the small village of Cromarty on a four-mile journey to the foot of the Great Dividing Range, a 4,100 ft. precipitous spur of which they will attempt to scale.

A R.A.A.F. Catalina also is on an air search today, hoping for a weather break over the peak to enable it to pin-point the crash for the ground party.

The Mosquito, on a photographic survey of the Burdekin River basin, crashed when over the peak in heavy rain just before night-fall.

It was en route from Rockhampton to Townsville, its base.

Last night Cromarty Village residents for 60 minutes saw what they took to be signal flashes from the locality of the crash.

Ambulance Bogged

An R.A.A.F. search party, with an ambulance and medical officer, under Flying Officer F. Buchan, left Townsville last night when they heard that distress signal lights had been observed by railway officer Roy Guspard and other residents of Cromarty farming and grazing settlement, some 30 miles south of Townsville on the South Coast line, from high up on the mountainside of Mt. Elliott.

They reached Cromarty before daylight today after the ambulance truck had been bogged along the road for 40 minutes.

The party left Cromarty with local guides for Mt. Elliott early this morning and ploughed through four files of boggy country before reaching the foot of Mt. Elliott to begin their long and arduous climb over some of the worst mountain country in the north.

Sheer Rock Face

The closest side of Mt. Elliott, much of which is sheer rock face, is unscalable, and it will take much time to get around.

Mrs. Meehan, wife of a Cromarty grazier, who conducts the local exchange from her home, said that this part of Mt. Elliott had never been climbed, and weather conditions of the past two days would make the hillside slippery and dangerous for climbing.

Just before 5 o'clock yesterday Mr. Guspard noticed the bomber flying low and apparently heading straight for the top portion of the Cromarty side of Mt. Elliott, nearly three parts of which were obscured by cloud. Light misty rain was falling.

Nobody at Cromarty heard the crash, which a cloud bank could deaden.

Following a broadcast from Townsville that the plane was overdue at Garbutt the drome

help were seen during the next 65 minutes. The flashes were seen coming through the misty rain.

Cromarty Answers

Lights from railway signal lamps and electric torches were flashed from Cromarty, but no reply was received to the messages sent asking for particulars.

Evidently these signals were not visible on the mountain.

Light, misty, cold rain continued throughout the night.

Mrs. Meehan, when contacted, said that weather conditions this morning had improved and very light rain was falling, but that the Cromarty side of the mountain was still clouded near the top.

From the Townsville side this morning Mt. Elliott had only a light cloud bank on its top.

The commanding officer of the R.A.A.F. at Townsville (Wing Commander Gibson) sent out a searching Catalina flying boat this morning, but its effectiveness early was reduced by bad weather.

It is making another search flight this afternoon.

Other planes are available to participate, but because of weather conditions it would be unsafe to have more than one in the air over the cloud-enshrouded peak at a time.

Plane Crew Was Unlucky

TOWNSVILLE: The crew of the ill-fated R.A.A.F. survey Mosquito, which crashed on Saddle-back Range, overlooking Townsville, last week, missed safety by only a few yards.

Had then been a few yards to the left they would have missed the hill-top and flown safely through the opening gorge to Garbutt airfield, some distance on.

Flying through cloud and misty rain the two aviators, Frank Langford and Douglas William Batzloff, crashed to their death in their high-speed bomber on the edge of a wooded gorge.

The fate of the flyers was cleared up when the civilian party, under Bob Hall, of Cromarty, that went out on Sunday and camped on the mountain that night found the smashed bodies of the two men among the wreckage.

The ground party of 26 left Cromarty yesterday morning and, guided by an Anson plane, reached the wrecked and partly burned plane and joined Hall's party.

The party included Flight Lieutenant Bartlett who, with Flight Lieutenant M:Phaill, representing the Directorate of Flying Safety, and Squadron Leader Kemmis, president of the Court of Inquiry, flew from Sydney to conduct an investigation into the circumstances of the crash.

The party, with the bodies of the ill-fated airmen, reached Cromarty late yesterday afternoon, and the bodies were later brought to Townsville, where they will be buried with military honours tomorrow or Thursday.



FIRST PICTURES of the wrecked R.A.A.F. Mosquito bomber, which crashed near the summit of Saddle Mountain, near Townsville. Left: Wreckage of the machine testifying to the shattering effect of the crash which gave no hope of survival for the crew of two. Right: The swathe cut through the timber by the machine as it rocketed to earth and burst into flames. The crew, Flight Lieut. F. Langford, of Sydney, and Flight Lieut. G. W. Batzloff, of Biddeston, Queensland, will be buried in the war cemetery at Townsville. A R.A.A.F. inquiry will investigate the crash.

Two Died When This Bomber Crashed In North Queensland

PATH CUT
BY PLANE

WRECKAGE

AS2-607