

# 'PLANES SEARCH FOR LOST AIRCRAFT

## No Trace Seen: Fears Grow

THOUSANDS of square miles of land and ocean have been covered by 18 sea and land-based 'planes on Friday and yesterday, in an unsuccessful search for the R.A.A.F. machine which disappeared last Thursday afternoon in bad weather over Cape York Peninsula.

The 'plane, a single-engine Norseman, carried a crew of three and was engaged on a ration run from Cooktown to Iron Range aerodrome, which is about 150 miles north of Coen and 15 miles from the coast.

THE Norseman actually reached its destination, but was prevented from landing by bad weather.

The 'plane, reports show, took off from Cooktown at 12.15 on Thursday afternoon, and 90 minutes later was in communication by wireless with the Iron Range 'drome.

Weather conditions at the time were bad, and the pilot told Iron Range that he was going to take his aircraft to seaward and try and come in under the bad weather. That was the last heard from the 'plane.

On Friday morning six Catalina flying boats, two Martin Mariners and two Beauforts carried out an extensive search over sea and land, but

were hampered by bad weather conditions and no trace of the missing 'plane was seen.

Eight 'planes were engaged in another extensive search yesterday. With Iron Range as the central point, they searched east and west of the Great Barrier Reef between Cooktown, Cape Grenville and Cape York and ten miles inland from the coast to Higgins Field in the far north. In all, 5620 square miles were covered without any trace of the Norseman or its crew.

Messages are being broadcast from Townsville and Cairns requesting anyone who heard or saw anything of the missing 'plane to report to the R.A.A.F.

## 3 Qld. Airmen Missing

THE three men in the R.A.A.F. Norseman, which was lost in North Queensland last Thursday, are all Queenslanders. They are:—

Flying-Officer C. W. Law, of Blackall, pilot.

Flight-Sergeant J. B. Crawford, of Redcliffe, navigator.

Flight-Sergeant G. M. Geisel, of Dalby, passenger.

The plane was last reported over Iron Range aerodrome after a flight from Cooktown. Bad weather prevented a landing.

The steamer Mangola which was passing along the coast yesterday sighted what appeared to be two men standing on the top of a rocky cliff face near Cape Melville, about 100 miles north of Cooktown.

A wireless message suggesting that a search be made was immediately sent from the ship to Air Force headquarters at Townsville.

A Catalina was sent at once to search the area. No trace of the reported men could be found.

### Launch Sets Out

A launch set out at 1 a.m. yesterday for the spot where the men were reported to have been sighted.

A Martin Mariner, flown by S/Ldr. Mason, sighted a crashed aircraft in the Cape Melville area near where the two men were reported sighted.

Descending to investigate, it found that the crashed aircraft was one of many which failed to return during the Coral Sea Battle in 1942.

The whole of the Cape York area has been thoroughly searched from the air. Planes flying over sea maintain an altitude of 500 feet, and over land they fly at 800 feet.

### Fly On "Beams"

Seaplanes in the search are based on Cairns. They are experiencing weather difficulties. When they return at dusk the weather is so bad that pilots have to rely on "beams" to bring them safely over the landing area.

Six Catalinas, one Martin Mariner, and a Beaufort will continue the search to-day.

S/Ldr. Robin Grey, in charge of four Catalinas brought from Rathmines for the search, said last night his crews were determined to carry on the search despite the bad weather.

Mr. Macdonald, well-known civilian pilot, yesterday flew as passenger in his DH84, which he loaned to assist in the search. Flying in the Iron Range area, the plane was unable to find any trace of the missing aircraft.

## PLANE AND CREW STILL MISSING

Intensive air search has failed to locate the R.A.A.F. Norseman plane, which has been missing since Thursday afternoon.

With a crew of three, the plane left Cooktown for Iron Range aerodrome on a "ration run" at 12.15 p.m. on Thursday.

It was heard in bad weather over the aerodrome at 2.45 p.m.

A Morse message from the plane said: "Heading seaward to try to come in under storm."

R.A.A.F. north-eastern headquarters was notified, and a search began immediately in bad weather.

Ten aircraft—two Beauforts, two Martin Mariners, and six Catalinas—carried out a search on Friday.

### Wide Area Searched

Eight aircraft continued yesterday. They covered from the coast to the outer Barrier Reef, and from Cooktown to Cape Grenville and Cape York.

Another search took in the 10-mile coastal strip from Cooktown to Higgins Field (Cape York Peninsula).

A square search, with Iron Range as its centre, covered 5620 square miles.

Last night broadcasts from Townsville and Cairns urged people to look out for a high-winged, green aircraft, with a high-pitched engine note. The broadcasts will be continued today.

## WIDE AREA IN SEARCH FOR PLANE

Search planes will cover 40,000 square miles in the search for the missing R.A.A.F. Norseman in North Queensland.

The plane, with a crew of three, has been missing since Thursday afternoon.

It was last reported over Iron Range aerodrome after a flight from Cooktown. Bad weather prevented a landing.

Up to yesterday afternoon planes had flown 26,000 miles in 300 hours in the search.

Six planes carried out the search yesterday, and nine will continue it to-day.

A well known civilian pilot, Mr. Macdonald, of Cairns, has volunteered the use of his DH84 bi-plane for the search. Mr. Macdonald has had extensive flying experience and has a good knowledge of the country in which the Norseman is missing.

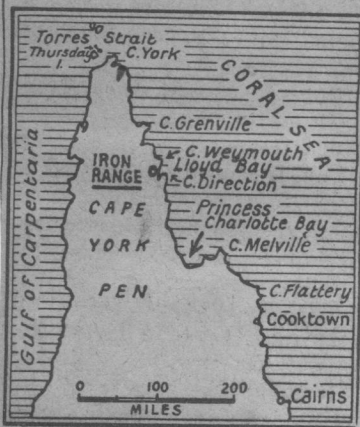
The DH84 will join the search to-day with four Catalinas, two Martin Mariners, and two Beauforts.

The patrol has now been confined to the land.

The Air Force has not announced the names of the missing crew.

CRASH 13.2.46

## LOST PLANE LOCATED



Map shows Iron Range aerodrome, 10 miles south of which the R.A.A.F. Norseman which had been missing since last Thursday was found by a Catalina flying boat yesterday.

## MISSING FLYERS' FATE UNCERTAIN

CAIRNS, Tuesday.—A R.A.A.F. search party, guided by planes, has reached the wreck of the R.A.A.F. Norseman plane, inland about four miles south of Iron Range.

Fate of the occupants of the Norseman is uncertain until official communications have been received from the ground party.

The R.A.A.F. party, with aborigines, reached the scene about 5 p.m.

The Norseman, which had been missing since last Thursday, was carrying rations from Cooktown to an Air Force station at Iron Range when it crashed.

The crashed plane was sighted soon after 7 a.m. to-day by a Catalina captained by Flying Officer Ron Black after more than 50 hours' search.

The plane was sighted first by F/Sgt. Ken Todd, Black's second pilot, who said when the crew returned to-night that it appeared to be in very bad state.

"We were just lucky," he said. "We were right on top of it, flying at about 800 feet, when we noticed it. We had probably flown over it several times in our search."

Black explained that the Norseman was painted in camouflage, so was hard to distinguish in heavily-timbered country.

## MISSING PLANE FOUND

The R.A.A.F. Norseman plane, which has been missing in North Queensland since last Thursday, has been located five miles south of the Iron Range by a searching Catalina.

The Catalina has circled the area several times and will continue to do so until a ground party reaches the spot.

The area in which the lost plane has been located, is in heavily timbered country, it being particularly dense and infested with a large number of swamps.

The crew of the Catalina has seen no signals from the crew of the lost plane, but nothing definite will be known of them until the ground party reaches the area. They should arrive at the place late tonight or early tomorrow morning.

The RAAF plane was lost in North Queensland last Thursday.

It was last reported over Iron Range aerodrome after a flight from Cooktown, but was unable to land owing to bad weather.

Since then an intensive search has been carried out in the area, both by launch and Catalinas.

The plane had an all Queensland crew. They were:

Flying Officer C. W. Law, pilot, of Blackall.

Flight Sergeant J. B. Crawford, navigator, of Redcliffe.

Flight Sergeant G. M. Geisel, passenger, of Dalby.

## Plane Crew Found Dead

The three airmen aboard the Norseman aircraft which crashed near Iron Range have been reported dead by the RAAF search party which reached the scene of the crash late on Tuesday, a Cairns report states.

The men reported dead are: Flying Officer C. W. Law, pilot, of Blackall.

Flight Sergeant J. B. Crawford, navigator, of Redcliffe.

Flight Sergeant C. M. Geisel, passenger, of Dalby.

The aircraft, which was reported missing last Thursday, crashed in heavily timbered country when flying from Cooktown to Iron Range.

The wrecked machine was located yesterday by one of the Catalinas engaged in the search. The Catalina remained circling the spot to guide the land party.

COPIED 13-5-40