

On April 28, 1947, a TCA Lockheed airplane, Flight 3, on its way from Lethbridge, Alberta, to Vancouver BC, with 15 people aboard, disappeared. The last words the pilot uttered were, "God, I wish I could do something." All efforts to find the plane were to no avail. I recall the incident as a child, and although I was too young at the time to know anything about "dimension traveling," I am sure some people considered such as a possible explanation.

In 1994, forest workers stumbled on the wreckage of a plane and it was identified as the ill-fated Flight 3. The plane went down in the Mount Seymour Range watershed. This mountain range is one that forms the backdrop of Vancouver.

Further investigation yielded that the wreckage had actually be found two years earlier by hikers. They did not give it much thought, but took photos of it, and about 22 months later showed them to an official at the Canadian Museum of Flight and Transportation. The museum staff searched the area, but failed to locate the wreck.

These incidents serves as a good indication of just how dense the forest areas are in the Pacific Northwest. Think about it; we took some 45 years to find the wreckage of a plane that certainly did not move after it crashed. Can you imagine trying to find something in the same area very small by comparison that could move and did not want to be found?

Plane downed in 1947 found in dense bush

Victim's relatives relieved at discovery of TCA Flight 3 wreck

By Stuart Hunter
Staff Reporter

Forty-seven years of heartache and frustration ended yesterday for Hugh and Millie Trerise.

The Maple Ridge couple were "relieved and surprised" to learn a plane, which went missing and sparked what was B.C.'s greatest air and sea search in 1947, has been found in the Mount Seymour watershed.

Hugh's cousin, Margaret, was a passenger on Trans-Canada Airlines Flight 3, which disappeared during a trip from Lethbridge, Alta., to Vancouver, killing all 15 aboard.

"Every day since the plane disappeared we've been wondering," said an emotional Hugh Trerise, 72. "Now we know, and maybe we'll get some mementoes to remember her by from the wreckage and can put this whole thing to rest."

Margaret Trerise, 22, a "well-loved and special" TCA stewardess/nurse, was on her way home for a family visit when the twin-engine Lockheed Lodestar vanished with three crew and a dozen passengers on board.

Eight of the dead were from B.C., including six from Vancouver. The passenger list included a honeymoon couple (one of them a direct descendant of famed British Gen. James Wolfe, who stormed Quebec in 1759) and four nurses.

North Vancouver RCMP Staff-Sgt. Pete Eakins said Seymour Demonstration Forest workers stumbled upon the wreckage Tuesday afternoon. The plane was identified using its registration plate — CF-TDF.

"It was identified as the TCA Lockheed which went missing on April 28, 1947," confirmed Eakins. "Nothing was ever found until (Tuesday)."

A massive search after the crash scoured B.C.'s south coast but came up empty.

Nearby residents reported hearing over their ham radios the pilot of the plane, Capt. W.G. Pike, a wartime fighter hero, say into his radio "God, I wish I could do something" before the plane vanished.

RCMP, transportation safety board investigators and officials from the coroner's office will fly into the watershed today and then hike 30 minutes to the wreckage strewn over the rugged terrain.

Tom Storey, the board's regional manager of air investigations, said the wreck was tough to spot because it's discolored and trees have grown up around it.

"It's amazing that after 47 years this aircraft would even be found," Storey added.

"The length of time is going to make the investigation very tough going."

Jerry Vernon, of the Canadian Museum of Flight and Transportation in Surrey, said the plane was actually found two years ago by hikers who took photographs of the wreckage.

"They figured it was just another plane wreck in the B.C. woods and forgot about it until about two months ago, when they showed the photos to a fellow at the museum," said Vernon.

A search by museum staff in early August failed to locate the plane.

'It's amazing . . . this aircraft would ever be found'
— Tom Storey



The Mount Seymour Range in a particularly warm summer.