

# PROTEST TO CHINA ON SKYMASTER SHOOTING

LONDON, July 24.—Britain will protest to China against the shooting down, by two unidentified planes, of a British Cathay Pacific Airways Skymaster, off Hainan Island yesterday, a Foreign Office spokesman said today.

**T**HE spokesman said that instructions were sent today to the British Charge d'Affaires in Peking to deliver a formal Note of protest concerning the incident.

There were 18 people aboard the plane, which was ditched in the sea. Eight survivors and one body have been picked up.

He said Britain drew the conclusion that the fighters must have been based on Chinese Communist-controlled Hainan Island.

Asked whether there was any suggestion that the Skymaster was off course, the spokesman said, "No. We are satisfied that the plane was a considerable distance from Hainan Island. The Skymaster was on a normal flight from Singapore to Hong Kong."

## PASSENGER'S STORY

HONG KONG, July 24.—Mr Peter Thatcher, 27-year-old

American passenger on the Skymaster which ditched off Hainan Island yesterday, said in Kowloon Hospital tonight that there was no doubt whatever that the Skymaster was shot down by planes firing incendiary machinegun bullets.

Mr Thatcher said: "I saw one of the planes myself, after we hit the water."

He said he believed some of the passengers were hit by bullets and killed before the plane hit the water.

**A message from Washington says the State Department announced today that two United States aircraft-carriers have been dispatched to protect search operations for the missing Skymaster passengers.**

The announcement declared that the United States took a "grave view of this act of further barbarity for which the Chinese Communist regime must be held responsible."

It added that action to be taken by the United States in connexion with this "wanton attack on a civilian aircraft" would be announced later.

### **WARNED OF DISASTER**

Mr Thatcher said today it was Captain Parrish, an ex-

was Captain Parrish, an experienced American pilot travelling in the plane, who first warned the passengers of the impending disaster.

Captain Parrish, believed wounded by machinegun fire, went down with the plane. His two small boys were also lost. Mrs Parrish and her six-year-old daughter, Valerie, are among the survivors in Kowloon Hospital.

Mr Thatcher said that Mr and Mrs Parrish put their three children on the floor of the plane and lay on top of them to protect them from machinegun bullets that ripped through the Skymaster.

Mr Thatcher said that Mrs Helen Findlay, wife of the British Consul at Medan (Sumatra) was near him in the

water. She was suffering severe head injuries.

"I swam across and kept one hand under Mrs Findlay's head to keep it above water," he said. "When I was exhausted I managed to get a Mae West, but by the time I got it on I had separated from Mrs Findlay. I believed she was then dead."

Mr Thatcher said he had also seen a Chinese girl in the water suffering great pain from a broken leg. She was got

from a broken leg. She was got aboard the dinghy, but died later.

### **SPEEDING TO AREA**

**WASHINGTON, July 25. —** Two United States aircraft-carriers, the Hornet and the Philippines (each 27,000 tons) were ordered yesterday to speed to the area where a British airliner was shot down by Communist Chinese fighter planes near Hainan Island, "to cover and protect further rescue and search operations."

Six Americans were among the passengers on the airliner belonging to Cathay Pacific Airways.

The dispatch of the carriers was announced after the United States had been informed by its representatives at Hong Kong that the airliner had been "deliberately shot down by two Chinese Communist-based aircraft."

### **CAPTAIN'S STORY**

**HONG KONG, July 25.—** Captain Philip Blown, in an interview today, said that the Skymaster had been shot down by two foreign type mono-planes bearing as an insignia a large red ring. He said he was unable to say definitely that they were Communist planes, but they were certainly not American or British

... THE AMERICAN OR BRITISH  
made. He believed they came  
from the Chinese Communist  
air base at Sanya, on the south  
of Hainan Island.

"Without a shadow of doubt  
they were shooting to kill," he  
said.

He said the attack lasted for  
about three minutes.

Captain Blown, an English  
man born in Tientsin, who  
served as a flying instructor  
for the Royal Australian Air  
Force mainly in Canada dur-  
ing World War Two, said he  
was 10 miles east of the nor-  
mal international air corridor  
and east of Chinese Commun-  
ist Hainan Island when he was  
attacked by two fighters at  
9000 ft.

He said the attack was con-  
tinuous through his evasive  
zigzag dive down to 1000 ft.

"They used machine gun,  
tracer and incendiary bullets  
and I think they also fired  
50 m.m. cannon," he said.

**Captain Blown estimated  
that half of the passengers  
and crew of 18 aboard the  
plane had been killed by  
the attack by the two  
planes before he hit the  
water or were drowned  
after the plane was  
ditched.**

Captain Blown said he

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(Continued on Page Four.)

## **PROTEST TO CHINA**

(Continued from Page One.)

altered course for Hong Kong on the international air corridor around Hainan Island. seven minutes late of his flight plan, to give the Communist island a wide berth. He had been heading for Hong Kong for eight minutes when his copilot, Cedric Carlton, saw a fighter on the starboard side.

"I then looked out the port side and saw another fighter," he said. "The fighters looked like they were closing in on us so I thought fit to turn 45 degrees, but before I had a chance to complete the turn the fighters opened fire.

"They both registered hits on the aircraft. The first sign of this was a fire in my No. 1 port engine.

"Carlton went back to help the stewardesses to issue Mae Wests to the passengers.

"When Carlton came back he said there was a fire in No. 4 starboard engine and No. 4 auxiliary and main gas tanks were aflame from incendiary

were aflame from incendiary bullets.

### **EVASIVE ACTION**

"I began evasive action, zig-zagging all the way down from 9000 ft where the attack began to 5000 ft. At 5000 ft I noticed my rudder controls were shot away. All the way down the attack continued.

"At 2000 ft the right aileron was shot away.

"The first part of the plane that hit the water was the starboard wing tip and it broke off between Nos 3 and 4 engines.

"When we were in the water, the two fighters made one turn around the wreckage at about 1000 ft and headed off in the direction of Sanya, Southern Hainan.

"We ditched at 11.47 p.m. (G.M.T.). I know that because my watch stopped when we hit. The attack began about 11.44 p.m."

Captain Blown paid a tribute to his missing British-Chinese radio officer, Steve Wong.

"Steve was giving ditching advice and calling out distress messages right down to the water," he said. "Apparently the radio must have been shot away, because I believe

**away, because I believe Hong Kong only got two messages and they did not say we were attacked. He did a wonderful job. So did our Australian flight engineer, Cattanache. He had not been with us long and would not have been on the flight except that he wanted to discuss some technical things in Hong Kong."**

Captain Blown said the survivors must have been swimming for fully an hour in the water before Carlton recognised that the object one of the passengers was using to help keep afloat was a 20-man rubber dinghy.

#### **"SAVED OUR LIVES"**

"It took Carlton about 20 minutes to get it inflated," Captain Blown said. "That. I am sure, saved our lives. I had by then seen three corpses."

Captain Blown said when they were all aboard the dinghy, he threw out a sea anchor because the wind was carrying the dinghy toward an island, 12 to 15 miles off Hainan Island.

"We estimated it would be roughly two hours before we could expect to see rescue air-

could expect to see rescue aircraft and sure enough, two R.A.F. fighters were overhead in that time." Captain Blown said.

He paid a tribute to his American rescuers. He said that two Grumman Goose amphibian planes were the last to arrive. He said: "A Grumman Goose went right over toward a little Communist island off Hainan and landed in the sheltered bay. It taxied out toward us through that incredibly rough water. It was one of the most courageous things I have ever seen. No average pilot would have attempted it. Captain Tom Woodyear, I think that is his name, deserves all the credit.

"They threw us a line after about half an hour. Eventually we got all the survivors aboard."

He said they were five hours on the water before they were picked up