

CIVIL AERONAUTICS AUTHORITY

WASHINGTON, D. C.

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The Air Safety Board made a preliminary report to the Civil Aeronautics Authority today on the disappearance of the Hawaii Clipper with six passengers and a crew of nine aboard last July 29 between Guam and Manila on a regularly scheduled flight across the Pacific.

The document reveals that no authentic trace of the airplane ever has been found and that, as a result, those who investigated its disappearance are unable to describe any probable cause for the disaster that is presumed to have overtaken the big flying boat. Pending the discovery of some concrete evidence as to the fate of the Hawaii Clipper, the investigation remains in an open status.

In transmitting the report, the Safety Board which consists of Colonel Sumner Smith, Chairman, and Thomas O. Harkin, sets forth that it was prepared and submitted by a Board of Investigation originally constituted by the Secretary of Commerce, prior to the creation of the Civil Aeronautics Authority and the Air Safety Board. The Secretary of Commerce directed that this board be relieved of its obligation to report to him, continuing its investigation by turning over the results thereof to the Air Safety Board of the Civil Aeronautics Authority. Members of the board were R. D. Hoyt, Aeronautics Inspector, Phil C. Salzman, Airline Maintenance Inspector, and J. T. Miller, Army Superintendent, International Section.

The report discloses that an oil slick discovered by the United States Army Transport on a near the last reported position of the Hawaii Clipper the day after its disappearance was proved by chemical analysis and other tests to have no connection whatever with the airplane though at the time of its discovery this was generally regarded as a link in the line to the flying boat's fate. It refuses to dismiss, however, as without possible bearing on the disappearance of the airplane, a report from the island of Luzon that a large airplane was heard flying above the clouds about 3 P. M., Manila Time, on July 29. Luzon is a small island lying east and close to the south eastern tip of Luzon, and is exactly on the course from the Clipper's last reported position to Manila. The report points out that at normal cruising speed the flying boat should have reached that vicinity at approximately 2:46 P. M., Manila Time. Luzon is the largest island of the Philippine group and what its southern position, and the other large islands in the vicinity, are moderately well settled, the very large areas of tropical jungle and mountainous terrain rise to an altitude exceeding 7000 feet.

A careful aerial search was made of Luzon and other islands after it had been ascertained that no military, Navy, or private aircraft were in that vicinity the day the clipper disappeared, but with negative results. In its summation, the report says, however, that "the Board is not prepared to say that the aerial search of Luzon and other islands in that island can be considered as conclusive".

Attached is a copy of the full report.