

Floods Slow Plane Search

Rescuers Hampered in West in Hunt for Missing Marine Transport

Seattle, Dec. 12 — (AP) — Flooded streams and washed out bridges hampered coast guard and army search parties today in their efforts to comb a 50-square-mile area immediately south of lofty Mount Rainier, believed to hold the fate of 32 men missing since Tuesday aboard a marine corps transport plane.

The National Park service office at Longmire, reported goal of the rapidly shifting hunt, said none of the searchers had arrived there during the night although they were expected momentarily. Longmire is near the foot of the 14,408-foot mountain, where an unidentified plane was reported to have been heard late Tuesday about the time the missing plane would have been in the area.

Coast guard spokesmen in Seattle said their communications car at Eatonville, midway between Tacoma and the mountain, reported the advance party was having difficulty moving into the area because of flooded streams and washed out bridges.

Return of the hunt to Mount Rainier today followed apparent collapse of several earlier leads, including a report that a "green flare" was sighted by a farmer last night in the mountainous area east of Toledo in southwest Washington. Searchers later said the report was "just a rumor."

A proposed search at Mount Purcell, a 5,000-foot peak south of Mount Rainier, was dropped in favor of the Longmire area toward which the plane was reported headed.

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