Beat: Miscellaneous

Vintage biplane with 6 onboard goes missing in Australia

-, 02.10.2012, 18:06 Time

USPA News - A search-and-rescue operation continued Tuesday for a vintage 1930s biplane carrying six people which went missing in a huge stretch of bushland in the southeastern region of the Australian state of Queensland, police and rescue workers said. The red 1934 De Havilland biplane had left the town of Monto, about 345 kilometers (214 miles) northwest of Brisbane, shortly after 11 a.m. local time on Monday and was en-route to an airport in Caboolture near Brisbane where it was due to land at around 3:15 p.m. local time.

The Australian Maritime Safety Authority`s (AMSA) Rescue Coordination Center (RCC) said the aircraft`s emergency beacon was briefly activated at approximately 1:30 p.m. local time on Monday but it was not possible to determine where the signal came from because it was not equipped with GPS. A Dornier aircraft and seven helicopters conducted an initial search on Monday afternoon but found no trace of the missing aircraft. A full-scale aerial search resumed at approximately 8 a.m. local time on Tuesday when eight additional helicopters joined the search-and-rescue operation. "Weather conditions in the area have not been favorable but a forecast indicates they are likely to improve throughout the day," an AMSA spokesperson said. The spokesperson said the search area covers approximately 540 square nautical miles (1,854 square kilometers) in a bushland region west of Gympie and south of Nambour. Queensland Police said the aircraft was carrying three men and three women who are all from southeast Queensland. The pilot was identified as 68-year-old Des Porter who had earlier on Monday given scenic flights in his prized biplane at an airshow known as the Monto Fly-In. It is believed that Porter, who is an experienced pilot, was just 10 years old when he survived a crash in the same plane. The accident in 1954 killed his father and brother but Porter later found the aircraft disassembled in a hangar, after which he put it back together, according to Australian media reports.

Article online:
https://www.uspa24.com/bericht-17/vintage-biplane-with-6-onboard-goes-missing-in-australia.html

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Official Federal Reg. No. 7442619