

SUMMARY OF THE SEARCH FOR THE MISSING BOAT LONG SHOT

On Friday evening, December 30, six people were reported missing enroute by motorboat from Mayreau in the Grenadine Islands to Kingstown, St. Vincent. They were later identified as five Canadians: Jonathan Deitcher of Montreal and Toronto; Frances Eger, her son Acron and daughter Vija of Vancouver; Bill O'Brien also of Vancouver; and one American, Danny Soren, captain of the open nine meter motorboat Long Shot. The weather in the area at the time of the disappearance was blustery with seas running 1½ to 3 metres and winds gusting from 25 to 65 kms per hour.

A privately organized search was begun on Saturday, December 31, but the missing craft could not be located.

On January 1, the United States Coast Guard, the St. Vincent Coast Guard and the Trinidad Coast Guard were alerted and began to take part in the search. Under the United Nations-sponsored Convention on the Safety and Life at Sea, administered by the International Maritime Organization, the search was co-ordinated through the U.S. Coast Guard search-and-rescue centre in Puerto Rico which has international responsibility for providing such services in the area.

On Monday, January 2, the Canadian government learned for the first time that Canadians were involved and that a search was underway. The Canadian High Commissioner in Barbados accredited to St. Vincent and the Grenadines was authorized to underwrite fuel and oil costs for private aircraft participating in the official co-ordinated search. This search continued until January 8.

Throughout the search, the Canadian Government maintained direct contact with the families of the missing persons and with the coast guards of the United States, St. Vincent, Venezuela, Grenada, Trinidad and Tobago, St. Lucia, and the Netherland Antilles. There was also periodic contact with Colombia and Martinique and with the regional security services in Barbados.

Some 47,494 square nautical miles of ocean and island territory were searched. Shore searches and port checks were made throughout the Grenadines, Grenada and Venezuela. Aircraft were provided at various times by private operators based in St. Vincent and St. Lucia and by government agencies in the United States, Trinidad and Tobago, Curacao and Venezuela.