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LOST YACHTSMAN DIED A HERO, CLAIMS WIFE

LONDON. — Searchers have closed the books on lone round-the-world voyager, Donald Crowhurst, with the theory that he fell overboard. His wife insists in the belief that he died a hero trying to rescue another sailor at sea.

But Mrs. Clare Crowhurst said at her west-England home her husband was too careful to have been on the deck of his boat, Teignmouth Electron, without safety equipment.

"I believe he was going to the assistance of another sailor in trouble and somehow got in trouble himself," she said.

Mrs. Crowhurst, whose four children are between 6 and 11 years old, said the last radio message she had received from her husband was on June 23: "Taking life easy. Looking forward to seeing you all soon."

"He was extremely alert after that long time at sea," she said. "The challenge of this voyage was vital to him. I have no regrets. I'm glad he had a chance to do it."

ABANDONED

Crowhurst's 41ft. trimaran yacht was found abandoned in mid-Atlantic on Thursday when he was within 2,000 miles—two weeks' sailing—of completing a nine-month, 29,000-mile voyage that would have made him the second man to circumnavigate the globe alone without stopping.

In the past 12 days three other boats have been found drifting deserted in the same part of the Atlantic—an area 250 to 700 miles around the Azores Islands—with no word of what happened to the men on them.

"The only sensible idea is that Crowhurst fell overboard without a safety line or life jacket," said a spokesman for the London "Sunday Times," organiser of the race in which the 36-year-old electronics industrialist was taking part.

REMINDER

Crowhurst's disappearance in apparent calm weather came as a tragic reminder of the tremendous odds against the nine men who entered the nonstop around-the-world competition announced in March, 1968. Only one finished—the Briton, Robin Knox-Johnston (29), who brought his 32ft. ketch Suhaili

into Falmouth on April 22 after 312 days at sea.

The race organisers rejected suggestions that they had set the competitors too dangerous and difficult a goal.

The "Sunday Times" said the R8,568 prize for the fastest voyage would go to Mrs. Crowhurst on the basis that her husband had, after 252 days at sea, crossed the line of his outward route and thus sailed around the world.

The newspaper said it was also contributing R8,568 to a public fund for Mrs. Crowhurst.—(Sapa-Reuter-A.P.)

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