

# AID GIVEN TO BRITONS' KIDNAPPERS

By IAN MILLS in Harare

**V**ILLAGERS sympathetic to the armed Zimbabwe dissidents holding captive two Britons and four other foreigners have been giving them food and water.

But although military spokesmen bitterly complain that this is hampering a search through difficult scrub in the southern Tjolotjo black tribal area troops and police are said to be closing in.

"We are not far behind the kidnappers," a military source said. "and we are becoming more and more hopeful. We are quite confident we will find them soon."

## Women released

The hostages—two Britons, two Americans and two Australians—were seized at a road block on Friday. Three women fellow-tourists seized with them were soon released with a note from the dissidents.

The note demanded release of several political detainees loyal to the sacked Cabinet Minister, Mr Joshua Nkomo, one-time guerrilla ally of Mr Robert Mugabe, Prime Minister of Zimbabwe.

Like the dissidents the Tjolotjo villagers are pro-Nkomo. The note contained a threat to kill the hostages if the dissidents' demands were not met.

Meanwhile the Minister of State for Defence, Mr Sydney Sekeramayi, has refused to comment on a sabotage attack on Sunday at the Thornhill Air Force base near the Midlands city of Gweru.

Unconfirmed reports say at least 15 warplanes were destroyed or badly damaged in a series of explosions.

Among them are said to be four new British-made Hawk jet ground-attack planes, the first of eight Hawks bought by Zimbabwe at a cost of £40 million to boost her air strike capability.

## JUST LEFT ETON

### Adventure holiday

The two Britons held are James Greenwell, 18, who left Eton last summer, and Mr Martyn Hodgson, 35, a civil engineer.

James Greenwell's family has a 700-acre farm at Tregeiriog, near Llangollen, Wales, and he is due to start studying for a geography degree at Bristol in October. He and Mr Hodgson, from Lancashire, were on a four-month adventure holiday organised by Encounter Overland, Earls Court.

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