

POSTAL NEWS

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1. Mail Plane Crashes in Hawaiian Seas

Jan 15, 2008.

HONOLULU (AP) — Crews searched in rough seas Monday for the pilot of a twin-engine plane carrying U.S. mail that crashed into the ocean.

Debris from the Beechcraft 1900, with only the pilot aboard, was spotted in the water by the crew of a boat from Coast Guard Station Kauai nearly four hours after the Beechcraft 1900 was last seen on radar, the Coast Guard said.

"We have narrowed down the search area to a compact debris field and will work as quickly as possible," said Kevin Conroy, a search and rescue controller with the Coast Guard's Joint Rescue Coordination Center.

Coast Guard crews reported winds of nearly 30 mph and 15-foot seas.

The cause of the crash was being investigated. Federal Aviation Administration spokesman Ian Gregor said no distress call was received before the crash.

The plane, carrying about 4,200 pounds of mail, was owned by Alpine Air, which released no information about the pilot. Alpine Air is subcontracted by Postal Service contractor Corporate Air to fly mail to several destinations within the state.

Some of the mail — likely a mix from Hawaii, the mainland and international points — was recovered and will be delivered, Postal Service spokesman Duke Gonzales said.

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2. Union calls for Australia Post inquiry

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The Postal and Telecommunications Union has called for a government inquiry into Australia Post following revelations that a NSW Central Coast post office is being run out of a pub.

News Limited reports that the Kariong local post office on the Central Coast is being run out of the Kariong Tavern, with reduced services for customers.

NSW Branch Secretary of the CEPU Postal and Telecommunications Union Jim Metcher said an inquiry should be held to examine the impact on Australian postal services after the sell-off of post offices.

"Appalling examples like Kariong highlight the need for something to be done to stop Australia Post from selling off publicly owned post offices," Mr Metcher said.

"It is unacceptable that residents in Kariong have had their post office downgraded to a hotel group selling stamps behind the bar of one of its local taverns."

The union is before the Australian Industrial Relations Commission on Tuesday, attempting to halt the sale of Northbridge post office in Sydney's north.

Mr Metcher said he feared Northbridge would suffer a similar reduction in postal services.

"Northbridge is the latest community likely to lose out as postal services are sold off without proper consultation with the workforce or the community," he said.

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