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Coast Guard suspends search for three missing near Cedar Key; *One body recovered*



United States Coast Guard crews aboard an HC-130 Hercules airplane and a MH-60 Jayhawk helicopter (seen above) from Air Station Clearwater, Florida, taxi the runway Tuesday (Feb. 14) in preparation to search for three people who were aboard a missing aircraft seven miles south of Cedar Key.



Coast Guard crews began searching Feb. 12 after the plane failed to arrive in Cedar Key en route from Brooksville.

These photographs are still shots taken from a USCG video by Petty Officer 1st Class Michael De Nyse.

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ST. PETERSBURG -- The United States Coast Guard suspended its search Tuesday (Feb. 14) at sunset for a missing Brooksville family near Cedar Key, according to a USCG press release.

Jasper Jerrels, 65, his fiancé Hue Singletary, and Jerrels' 17-year-old son were aboard a single-engine plane en route from Brooksville to Cedar Key Sunday when they went missing.

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As of noon Tuesday, the Coast Guard and partner agencies conducted more than 30 searches, covering more than 2,016 square nautical miles and more than 50 hours for the missing individuals.

"It is with a heavy heart and our deepest condolences that we make the decision to suspend the search this evening," said Capt. Holly Najarian, Sector St. Petersburg commander. "We keep the family and friends of these three individuals in our thoughts and prayers as they go through this difficult time."

At 5:21 p.m. Sunday, watch standers from Sector St. Petersburg received a report from the Flight Service Station Gainesville, stating a white with red and blue stripes, single-engine aircraft failed to arrive in Cedar Key by noon.

An MH-60 Jayhawk helicopter air crew from Air Station Clearwater and **a 27-foot Special Purpose Craft-Shallow Water boat crew from Station Yankeetown** launched and commenced the search, and watch standers at Sector St. Petersburg issued an Urgent Marine Information Broadcast.

At 9:06 a.m. Monday, a Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission marine unit located an aircraft seat matching the description of the interior of the missing plane, and search and rescue crews located a small debris field.

At 8:51 a.m. Tuesday, an MH-60 Jayhawk helicopter air crew located a deceased individual approximately six miles southwest of Cedar Key in the vicinity of the debris field. A 29-foot Response Boat-Small II boat crew from Station Yankeetown recovered and transferred the remains to local authorities for identification.

Crews from Air Station Clearwater, Station Yankeetown, Sector St. Petersburg, the Coast Guard Cutter Seahawk, Citrus County, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, Levy County Department of Public Safety, and Cedar Key Fire and Rescue, alongside commercial salvage companies and multiple good Samaritans aided in the search.

"We want to thank all of our local and state partners for providing professional support throughout our search efforts," Najarian said.