

Beat: Miscellaneous

Search ends for historic sailing vessel missing in the South Pacific

-, 05.07.2013, 14:45 Time

USPA News - Rescue teams on Friday called off the search for a historic American sailing vessel that disappeared in the South Pacific between New Zealand and Australia in early June, officials said, leaving the seven occupants presumed dead. The 21-meter (70 feet) American schooner called Nina left Opuia in the Bay of Islands on May 29 and was en-route to Newcastle in Australia when it was last heard from on June 4, when the 1928-built vessel was about 370 nautical miles (685 kilometers) west-northwest of Cape Reinga.

But despite more than 10 days of extensive aerial searches, there has been no sign of the vessel, which was equipped with a satellite phone, a spot device and an emergency beacon that was never activated. The schooner was carrying a total of seven people, including 3 American men, 3 American women, and a 35-year-old British man. Last week it became known that the vessel's last transmission, a text message on June 4, had not been delivered to its intended recipient by satellite communications company Iridium. The undelivered text message contents were obtained by New Zealand's Rescue Coordination Center on Wednesday. The message showed that the vessel was being affected by a storm at that time, but gave no indication of immediate distress. "THANKS STORM SAILS SHREDDED LAST NIGHT, NOW BARE POLES. GOING 4KT 310DEG WILL UPDATE COURSE INFO @ 6PM," the undelivered text message said. "While it shows that Nina had survived the storm up to that point, very poor weather continued in the area for many hours and has been followed by other storms," Nigel Clifford, Maritime New Zealand's General Manager for Safety and Response Services, said on Thursday. "The text message, in isolation, does not indicate what might have happened subsequently." Records show that conditions at the vessel's last known position were very rough, with winds of 80 kilometers (49.7 miles) per hour gusting to 110 kilometers (68 miles) per hour, and swells of up to 8 meters. This would have been similar to tropical storm conditions, with gusts near hurricane-strength. As of Thursday, rescue workers had carried out a number of aerial searches with an RNZAF P3K2 Orion aircraft that covered a combined area of more than 615,000 square nautical miles (1,138,980 kilometers). Two aerial shoreline searches were also conducted last week but ended with no result.

Article online:

<https://www.uspa24.com/bericht-1222/search-ends-for-historic-sailing-vessel-missing-in-the-south-pacific.html>

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Official Federal Reg. No. 7442619