



## Hawai'i Volcanoes News Release

January 18, 2009

### Rangers Locate Human Remains near Glider Wreckage on Mauna Loa

Late yesterday afternoon, park rangers received word from Hawai'i Fire Department officials that possible wreckage of the glider missing since Friday was spotted at the 9,800 foot elevation on Mauna Loa, about three miles south of Red Hill Cabin.

At first light this morning, rangers flew to the site in a contract helicopter and confirmed the wreckage was that of the missing glider. They also located human remains near the wreckage.

Today, park rangers plan to recover the human remains, document the scene, and begin their investigation of the incident in conjunction with the National Transportation Safety Board.

Located in park Wilderness, the wreckage is strewn over a barren 'a'a lava flow. According to Chief Ranger Talmadge Magno, "This morning's clear weather is to our advantage, but a high elevation search and rescue in a remote area is risky."

In the air, pilots and rangers face the possibility of strong unpredictable wind gusts and obscured visibility. On the ground, rangers must find their way over loose sharp rocks and watch out for signs of acute altitude sickness—headache, nausea, and fatigue.

The victim's remains will be transported to Hilo Medical Center. Positive identification has not been confirmed; an autopsy is pending. No other information is available at this time

Other air accidents within the park on Mauna Loa volcano include:

- On September 25, 1999, a fixed-wing aircraft on a scenic tour crashed on the northeast slope of Mauna Loa at about the 10,000 foot elevation; the pilot and all nine passengers were killed.
- On September 9, 2003, a tour helicopter maneuvered a hard landing on the northeast slope of Mauna Loa at about the 8,500 foot elevation; the pilot and all six passengers survived.

#### Update

Park rangers located and removed victim's remains from Mauna Loa Sunday morning. The victim of the glider crash was identified as David Lyman Bigelow, (69) of Waimea, Hawai'i



**Park ranger surveys glider wreckage on Mauna Loa.  
Photo by John Anderson**

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