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Three bodies recovered in U.S. chopper crash

February 22, 2002 Posted: 10:44 PM EST (0344 GMT)



COURTESY ARMY TIMES

An Army Chinook helicopter takes part in a night deployment on Basilan Island

MANILA, Philippines (CNN) -- Three bodies have been recovered from a U.S. military helicopter that crashed in the southern Philippines, killing all 10 people aboard, Pentagon officials said Friday.

The helicopter was carrying eight Army personnel as crew members and two Air Force members who were passengers when it crashed in the sea on a routine mission, the Pentagon said Friday. Reports of survivors being picked up by Philippine fishing boats were false, it said.

during a joint U.S.-Philippine search-and-recovery mission, arrived at Kadena Air Base in Okinawa, Japan, at 11:40 p.m. (9:40 a.m. EST) Friday.

The MH-47 Chinook went down around 2:30 a.m. Friday (1:30 p.m. EST Thursday) just off the coast of the south-central city of Dumaguete, about 150 miles (240 kilometers) northeast of the southern Philippine city of Zamboanga.

The three bodies, found

Casualty list

The Defense Department Friday released the names of the 10 U.S. servicemembers believed to have been killed in the crash.

U.S. Army 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment, Fort Campbell, Kentucky:

- Maj. Curtis D. Feistner
- Capt. Bartt D. Owens

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The helicopter was flying in tandem with another U.S. Army Chinook at the time of the crash, U.S. and Philippine military officials said. The second helicopter reported the crash and remained on the scene to coordinate the search effort.

The Pentagon said the helicopter crashed while it was on a routine transit from the southern island of Basilan -- a stronghold of Muslim rebels battling Philippine government troops -- to a base on the islet of Mactan, where U.S. forces are providing air logistics support. It crashed about 30 minutes before it was scheduled to arrive.

About 660 U.S. military personnel have been working in the southern Philippines as part of a joint terrorism-training program. About 200 of them are based on Mactan.

Witnesses said they heard an explosion on the chopper before it burst into flames and crashed into the sea. But there was no indication the helicopter was brought down by hostile fire, the Pentagon and Philippine military officials said.

The soldiers and airmen on board were assigned to the 353rd Special Operations Group at Kadena. The helicopter itself was based at Fort Campbell, Kentucky, as part of the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment.

About 160 U.S. special operations troops were just deployed this week to Basilan, where their goal is to train and assist the Philippine military in an operation to wipe out the Abu Sayyaf. The U.S. forces plan to be in combat areas.

The military faces a host of armed Muslim groups based in the southern Philippines, including Abu Sayyaf, the target of the military

- Chief Warrant Officer 2 Jody L. Egnor
- Staff Sgt. James P. Dorrity
- Staff Sgt. Kerry W. Frith
- Staff Sgt. Bruce A. Rushforth, Jr.
- Sgt. Jeremy D. Foshee
- Spc. Thomas F. Allison

U.S. Air Force 353rd Special Operations Group, Kadena Air Base, Japan:

- Master Sgt. William L. McDaniel II
- Staff Sgt. Juan M. Ridout

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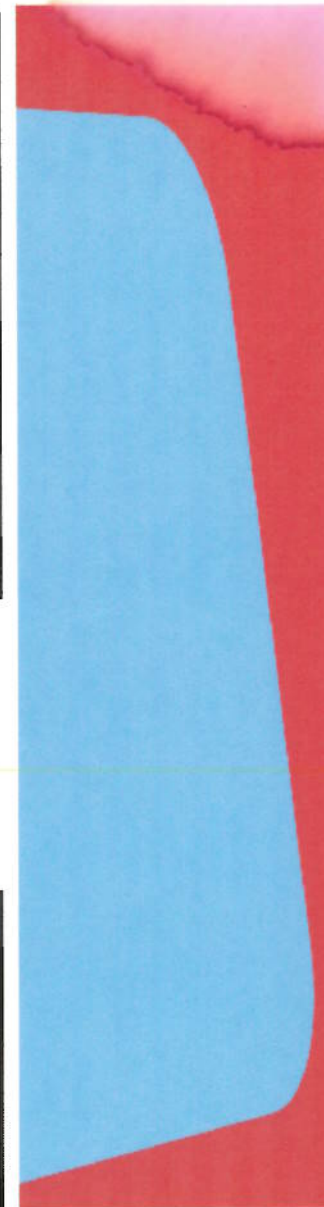
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operation in Basilan. The United States believes Abu Sayyaf -- which is holding an American couple and a Filipino nurse hostage -- has ties to Osama bin Laden's al Qaeda network.

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Also Friday, a U.S. plane involved in the search-and-recovery mission made an emergency landing at Mactan Air Base around noon (11 p.m. EST Thursday) after experiencing engine trouble. There were no injuries.

-- CNN Correspondent [Maria Ressa](#) contributed to this report.

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