

Pratt Airman Among Heli' Crash Victims

WIESBADEN, West Germany (AP) — U.S. Air Force Headquarters in Europe released the names Saturday of the 16 crew and passengers aboard the American helicopter that crashed and burned Friday in a meadow near the north German towns of Paderborn and Guetersloh.

The craft was reported enroute from Lindsay Air Base in Wiesbaden via USAFE headquarters in Ramstein to a north German maneuver area.

An Air Force spokesman said the crash was still under investigation and declined comment on local police reports that several witnesses claimed the Sikorsky CH53's rotor was ripped away during a simulated attack by two Dutch Starfighters.

The West German Defense Ministry confirmed Friday that two Dutch jets were flying over the area at the time but said their pilots reported seeing the American helicopter plunge past while they were at an altitude of 800 feet.

An Air Force spokeswoman said the helicopter was flown by four crew members from the 601st Tactical Air Support Squadron. She identified them and the 12 passengers as follows:

Capt. John C. Merrill, 29, of Albuquerque, N.M., the pilot.

1st Lt. Frederick S. Kerry, 28, of Pratt, W.Va., the co-pilot.

S. Sgts. Larry R. Leaming, 30, Geneva, Neb., and Jeffrey A. Dawson, 23, of San Jose, Calif., the flight mechanics.

Passengers who boarded the helicopter in Wiesbaden were:

Maj. Hank L. Donaldson, 37, from Eugene, Ore., deputy commander of operations at the Tactical Control Wing.

Capt. Frank J. Sindoni Jr., 30, from Hollywood, Fla.,

SM. Sgt. Ronald C. Elder, 39, Iowa City, Iowa.

S. Sgt. Horrace A. Weaver Jr., 55, of Little Rock, Ark., 601st Tactical Control Group.

Airman I.C. David K. Russell, 21, of Warner Robins, Ga., from the 601st Tactical Control Group.

Air Force civilian James C. Driscoll, 45, of Satellite Beach, Fla., also from the 601st Tactical Control Group.

Passengers who boarded during the stop-over at Ramstein Air Base were:

Lt. Col. Robert Waldbillig, 42, of Peekskill, N.Y., of the Air Force's European Headquarters Directorate of Plans.

Capt. Paul L. Hoke, 33, of New Carlisle, Ohio, who was with the European Communications Area.

Capt. John H. Dinneen Jr., 29, of Saint Falls, Va., who was from the Headquarters Directorate of Personnel.

M. Sgt. James R. Elliot, 32, of Houston, Tex., who was with the Headquarters Surgeon General's Office.

T. Sgt. Darold G. Tentico, 40, of Lexington, Neb., of the Headquarters Civilian Engineering department.

Air Force civilian Johannes H. Browns, 38, address not available, also from Civil Engineering.