

SAN DIEGO, Oct. 31, 2009

# Coast Guard ID's 9 Missing In Midair Crash

## Search Continues for Survivors of Collision Between Military Aircraft Off S. California Coast



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A U.S. Coast Guard MH-60 Jayhawk helicopter lifts off at the San Diego Coast Guard Station during a search effort Friday, Oct. 30, 2009, in San Diego. **(AP Photo/Denis Poroy)**



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David Martin reports on the overnight midair collision of a Coast Guard search plane and a Marine Corps helicopter gunship off the coast of Southern California. No survivors have been

**(CBS/AP)** A flotilla of rescue vessels continued its search Saturday for nine people feared dead at sea following an air collision between a Coast Guard aircraft and a Marine Corps helicopter.

Six Coast Guard cutters, three Navy ships and multiple helicopters searched the ocean off Southern California. Rescuers had found several pieces of debris from both aircraft but there was no sign of the victims.

No bodies have been found in the debris field, and the mission is still considered search and rescue, not search and recovery, Coast Guard Petty Officer 2nd Class Jetta Disco said Saturday morning.

Thursday's crash involved a Coast Guard C-130 with a seven-member crew and a Marine Corps AH-1W Super Cobra with two aboard as it flew in formation near the Navy's San Clemente Island, a site with training ranges for amphibious, air, surface and undersea warfare.

The collision occurred as the Coast Guard airplane was itself carrying out a search for a missing boatman.

Officials were collecting evidence and reviewing recordings of transmissions by the aircraft to try to determine how the collision occurred.

The Coast Guard on Saturday identified the nine missing crew members.

found.

The missing crew members from the Coast Guard C-130 are all stationed in Sacramento, Calif., where their aircraft was based. They are:

- Lt. Cmdr. Che J. Barnes, 35, Capay, Calif., aircraft commander.
- Lt. Adam W. Bryant, 28, Crewe, Va., co-pilot.
- Chief Petty Officer John F. Seidman, 43, Stockton, Calif., flight engineer.
- Petty Officer 2nd Class Carl P. Grigonis, 35, Mayfield Heights, Ohio, navigator.
- Petty Officer 2nd Class Monica L. Beacham, 29, Decaturville, Tenn., radio operator.
- Petty Officer 2nd Class Jason S. Moletzsky, 26, Norristown, Pa., air crew.
- Petty Officer 3rd Class Danny R. Kreder II, 22, Elm Mott, Texas, drop master.

The missing crew members from the Marine Corps helicopter are:

- Maj. Samuel Leigh, 35, Kennebec, Maine.
- 1st Lt. Thomas Claiborne, 26, Douglas, Colo.

Connie Seidman of Carmichael, Calif., whose 43-year-old son was aboard the plane, said he had been in the Coast Guard since he was 20 and loved to fly. Chief Petty Officer John Seidman last visited his family in February after returning from a posting in Hawaii, and they talked on the phone often.

Seidman said Saturday she was thinking about "all the things that we wanted to tell him that we can't."

"He was flying, just like he liked to," she said.

The accident happened at 7:10 p.m. in airspace uncontrolled by the FAA and inside a so-called military warning area, which is at times open to civilian aircraft and at times closed for military use, Federal Aviation Administration spokesman Ian Gregor said. He did not know the status of the airspace at the time.

Capt. Tom Farris, commander of the Coast Guard's San Diego sector, said it's not unusual to have a high volume of military traffic working in training areas and pilots in the area are responsible for seeing other aircraft around them under a so-called "see-and-avoid principle."

Minutes before the collision, the FAA told the C-130 pilot to begin communicating with military controllers at Naval Air Station North Island in San Diego Bay, but it was not known if the pilot did so, Gregor said.

The search covered 644 square miles of ocean but rescuers were concentrating on a debris field 50 miles off the San Diego coast.

The Sacramento-based C-130 crew was looking for 50-year-old David Jines, who was reported missing after leaving Avalon Harbor on Santa Catalina Island in a 12-foot motorized skiff to reach a friend in high winds Tuesday, authorities said.

The four-engine plane was conducting its search from an altitude of 900 to 1,000 feet and visibility was 15 miles.

Jines' friend, Linda Jones, told The Associated Press that Jines boarded her disabled yacht and helped her maneuver to an area where they thought they had made anchor. After helping her, he set off to return to his sailboat, which was anchored at the Avalon harbor.

She reported Jines missing the next day when she returned to the harbor and couldn't find him.

"I didn't know Dave was in any kind of peril," she said.

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