



MEDIA ADVISORY

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Navy Continues to Search for Missing Crew Member

NORFOLK, Va. – Mobile Diving and Salvage Unit 2 (MDSU 2) divers entered the water at approximately 5 p.m. in support of the search for the missing service member following yesterday’s crash of a Navy MH-53E helicopter off the coast of Virginia Beach. Additional Navy assets including USS Mesa Verde (LPD 19), USS Jason Dunham (DDG 109), USNS Medgar Evers (T-AKE 13), USNS Grasp (T-ARS 51), and Navy H-60 helicopters continue search operations.

U.S. Coast Guard cutter Shearwater also continues to provide support. Virginia Beach Fire and Rescue small boats are no longer on-scene.

MDSU 2 located the wreckage 15nm east of Cape Henry utilizing side-scanning sonar. Grasp anchored over the wreckage to aid in inspecting the site with a Seabatix Remotely Operated Vehicle (ROV) prior to divers entering the water.

Five crewmembers were on board the MH-53E when it crashed. One crew member is still missing. Two of the four rescued crew members subsequently died of their injuries. One of the surviving crew members was released from the hospital today, and one remains hospitalized at Sentara Norfolk General Hospital.

The Sailors killed were Lieutenant J. Wesley Van Dorn, 29, of Greensboro, N.C. and Naval Aircrewman (Helicopter) (AWS-3) Brian Andrew Collins, 25, of Truckee, Cal.

Van Dorn, a Navy pilot, had been in the Navy for 6 years, 7 months and Collins had served for 2 years, 2 months.

The crew members were all assigned to Helicopter Mine Countermeasures Squadron (HM) 14 based at Norfolk Naval Station Chambers Field. They were flying an MH-53E “Sea Dragon” on a routine mine countermeasure training exercise when the accident happened.

The cause of the crash is being investigated.

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