

Navy Shifts to Recovery of 5 Sailors in Helicopter Crash



Aviation Boatswain's Mate (Handling) Airman Nathan Lopez observes an MH-60S Sea Hawk helicopter, assigned to the "Chargers" of Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron (HSC) 14, land on the flight deck of the aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln (CVN 72). A similar helicopter crashed Aug. 31, killing five of the six crewmembers. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist Seaman Lake Fultz*

SAN DIEGO – The U.S. Navy has declared the five missing crewmembers of an MH-60S helicopter crash deceased. U.S. 3rd Fleet has shifted from search and rescue efforts to recovery operations as of Sept. 4, the U.S. 3rd Fleet said in a release.

Assigned to Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron (HSC) 8, the helicopter was conducting routine flight operations from USS Abraham Lincoln (CVN 72) when it crashed into the sea approximately 60 nautical miles off the coast of San Diego at 4:30 p.m. (PST), Aug. 31. One Sailor was recovered.

The transition from search and rescue efforts to recovery operations comes after more than 72 hours of coordinated rescue efforts encompassing 34 search and rescue flights, over 170 hours of flight time, with five search helicopters and constant surface vessel search.

Units involved in the effort included assets from Coast Guard District 11, Abraham Lincoln, USS Cincinnati (LCS 20), and helicopter squadrons from the U.S. Pacific Fleet Helicopter Sea Combat Wing and Helicopter Maritime Strike Wing.

On Sept. 5, the U.S. Navy released the names of the five Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron (HSC) 8 crewmembers who died,

Aug. 31.

Names of the deceased are:

Lt. Bradley A. Foster, 29, a pilot from Oakhurst, California; Lt. Paul R. Fridley, 28, a pilot from Annandale, Virginia; Naval Air Crewman (Helicopter) 2nd Class James P. Buriak, 31, from Salem, Virginia; Hospital Corpsman 2nd Class Sarah F. Burns, 31, from Severna Park, Maryland; and Hospital Corpsman 3rd Class Bailey J. Tucker, 21, from St. Louis, Missouri.

"We are deeply saddened by the loss of five Sailors and those injured following the MH-60S helicopter tragedy off the coast of Southern California. We stand alongside their families, loved ones, and shipmates who grieve," said Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Michael Gilday.

An investigation into the incident is underway.