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U.S. Army Helicopter Crashes In Panama

by Deborah Tyroler

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According to US Embassy spokesperson Terrence Kneebone, on June 14, a US military helicopter crashed near the Panama Canal, killing three US soldiers. Kneebone said, "We don't know why or how" the accident occurred, adding that it "apparently was an accident" and did not involve any hostile action. The OH-58 helicopter went down about 2 p.m. local time, Kneebone said. The helicopter and those aboard belonged to the 7th Light Infantry Division from Fort Ord, Calif. The division was among about 1,900 troops sent to Panama following the government's annulment of the May 7 elections and post-election violence. When the helicopter crashed, it was serving as an escort for a military convoy transporting troops between Fort Clayton, on the Pacific side of the Canal, to Fort Sherman, on the Atlantic, Kneebone said. He said the accident caused the temporary suspension of traffic linking Panama City with the nearby city of Colon. (Basic data from AP, 06/14/89)

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