

Army team to probe into helicopter crash

The Associated Press

KILLEEN, Texas — An Army investigating team was en route to Central Texas Wednesday to examine the wreckage of a helicopter crash in which two Fort Hood soldiers were killed.

The OH-58A Kiowa Scout copter crashed during a training mission Tuesday night, said Major Terry O'Rourke, a spokesman for the base. Both pilots were killed.

Officials with the Army Aviation Safety Center in Fort Rucker, Ala., will investigate the cause of the crash, O'Rourke said.

"We don't expect the results for some time," he said. The wreckage was discovered about 8:30 a.m. Wednesday near Evant, about 35 miles northwest of Killeen.

The aircraft was reported missing at 10:50 p.m. Tuesday night by Fort Hood's Robert Gray Army Airfield.

It was one of three Kiowas on a training mission by the Combat Aviation Training Brigade. The other two aircraft returned safely to the base.

The OH-58A Kiowa is an observation helicopter used primarily for reconnaissance. It was unarmed.

Fort Hood officials did not immediately release the pilots' names.

Hutchinson's attorney wants cameras banned from trial

The Associated Press

DALLAS — Arguing that allowing cameras in the courtroom during U.S. Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison's trial would add to "the sensational atmosphere," her attorneys have asked that they be banned.

Dick DeGuerin of Houston, who is leading the Republican senator's defense team, also said he is concerned that election opponents might be able to use her taped testimony to their advantage.

"There is a likelihood that an opponent would isolate some taped snippet of testimony and put it in a televised political advertisement and repeat it out of context, thus further endangering her right to a fair trial," he wrote in a letter to Judge John F. Onion Jr.

Hutchison faces six opponents in the March 8 GOP primary. Hutchison's trial is scheduled for Feb. 7 in Fort Worth.

She is charged with four felony counts of misusing state employees and equipment and of tampering with government records and physical evidence in an attempted cover-up.

She has denied wrongdoing.

Onion has not ruled on DeGuerin's request to ban cameras — still or video — from the courtroom.

A spokesman for the Travis County District Attorney's Office, which is prosecuting the case, was not immediately available for comment.

Gun-toting cult member identified

The Associated Press

SAN ANTONIO — A federal agent who entered David Korsh's compound to help rescue a wounded officer pointed to defendant Jaime Castillo on Wednesday and identified him as the fouth-mouthed, rifle-toting Branch Davidian she encountered.

Agent Bernadette Griffin testified Castillo was holding an AR-15 or M-16 assault-style rifle when she came within 30 feet of him during a cease-fire after a 45-minute gun battle Feb. 28, 1993.

Griffin said she and three other officers of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms entered the compound to rescue agent Kenneth King, who they thought was wounded on the roof.

Griffin testified that with her gun in its holster, she attempted to climb onto a stove to get up to the roof, but Castillo would not let her.

"He said if we wanted to get onto the roof of the compound, we would have to get our own ladder and come back," Ms. Griffin said.

Two agents then left to fetch the ladder and she looked at Castillo for 30 or 40 seconds, she testified.

She and another agent then noticed King writhing in pain on the ground in a compound courtyard and went to help him, she said.

"I heard someone say to bring

my black ass back out so they could see me," Griffin said, adding that she believed the speaker was Castillo.

"I said, 'He (King) is making a lot of noise and he's in pain. We're trying to move him as fast as we can.'"

At first, she said, she just stood there.

"Blood was dripping down on my head from whoever was on the roof at that time. ... I felt they were going to kill us anyway, so I went back (to help King)," the agent testified.

Under cross-examination by Jeff Kearney, Castillo's lawyer, Griffin said she never told Texas Rangers investigators about the "black ass" comment. She also acknowledged telling investigators the Branch Davidian man "allowed" the agents to go get the ladder.

Griffin said she never saw Castillo shoot at anyone and that the Davidians allowed an ambulance onto the premises to transport the wounded agent.

Eleven Branch Davidians are being tried on charges of murdering four federal agents during the gun battle at the religious sect's compound near Waco. Six cult members are believed to have died in the shootout.

An ensuing 51-day armed standoff ended when fire engulfed the compound. Korsh and more than 80 of his followers died



Jaime Castillo (right) has been identified by an ATF agent as one of the Branch Davidians involved in last year's raid on Mt. Carmel.

serve warrants on Korsh weapons possession.

Griffin said she was in the on-d truck and was among the agents out.

"When I got off the back of the trailer, I was being shot at," she said. "There were bullets hitting the ground all around me and I was dodging the bullets."

More than 70 ATF agents, armed and clad in black, arrived at the compound in two cattle trucks that Sunday morning to

Dead woman's body found locked in home

The Associated Press

GALVESTON, Texas — A man despondent over the death of his wife locked his house and lived in his truck for three months before acknowledging to authorities this week that the woman was dead and her body remained in the house.

Police estimated Jeannette Rios, 57, may have been dead since last Halloween. Her husband, John, 76, a retired longshoreman, did not report the death to anyone.

Authorities say there is no evidence of foul play and they were working to find a permanent home for Rios.

"Basically, the way he described it was that he just couldn't face the fact that his wife was dead," Galveston police Sgt. Jim Franks said Tuesday. "He walked outside, locked the door and hasn't been back in since, he says."

Franks said Rios told officers he went out for the day in late October or early November and when he returned home, he found the woman dead on the floor.

Sam Popovich, a Galveston County constable, said neighbors were worried someone was wrong because they hadn't seen Mrs. Rios for some time.

Popovich asked Rios about her wife and the man "broke down" and acknowledged the woman's death, the constable said.

Rios "felt relieved that he'd talked to me and he was ready to do whatever was necessary," Popovich said.

Police were called and found the woman's decomposed body on the floor of the room.

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