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# Four dead in Afghan Black Hawk crash

By Robert Burns  
 THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON (AP) — Four U.S. soldiers were killed when their Black Hawk helicopter crashed during a training mission in eastern Afghanistan on Thursday, U.S. officials said. The cause is being investigated. It was the deadliest day for the American military in Afghanistan since March 4, 2002, when seven soldiers were killed and 11 wounded at the outset of an offensive against Taliban and al-Qaida remnants.

The UH-60 Black Hawk, with two pilots and two crew members aboard, crashed several miles east of Bagram air base in an area known as the East Training Range, said Jim Wilkinson, director of strategic communications at Central Command headquarters in Tampa, Fla.

Wilkinson said there were no indications of hostile fire. He said it appeared to be an accident but no other details were available.

Details on the victims, including their names and Army

unit affiliations, were not immediately released.

An Associated Press reporter in Afghanistan who attempted to reach the scene of the crash was turned back by Afghan security. U.S. military authorities at Bagram referred all questions to Central Command.

Bagram is the main base of U.S. military operations in Afghanistan.

The Black Hawk is a utility transport aircraft designed to carry 11 combat-ready, air assault troops, and it is capable of moving a 105-millimeter howitzer, its crew of six and 30 rounds of ammunition.

It is manufactured by Sikorsky Aircraft Corp., which also makes an export version called the S-70A Black Hawk.

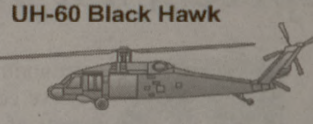
The UH-60 Black Hawk was first fielded in 1978 and made its combat debut in the October 1983 invasion of Grenada. It performs a variety of missions, including air assault, air cavalry and aeromedical evacuations. In addition, modified Black Hawks operate as command and control, electronic warfare, and special operations aircraft.

The last previous American killed in Afghanistan was Sgt.

## Helicopter crashes in Afghanistan

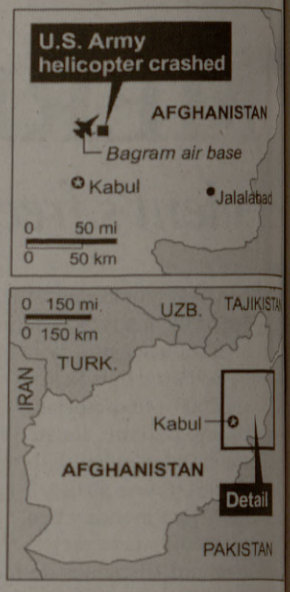
A U.S. Army UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter carrying several Americans crashed near the Bagram air base Thursday.

**UH-60 Black Hawk**



**Primary function:** Medium-lift helicopter  
**Length (rotors turning):** 64 feet, 10 inches (19.76 meters)  
**Height:** 16 feet, 10 inches (5.13 meters)  
**Speed:** 223 mph (359 kph)  
**Ceiling:** 19,000 feet (5,790 meters)  
**Range:** 368 miles (592 km)

**U.S. Army helicopter crashed**



AFGHANISTAN  
 Bagram air base  
 Kabul  
 Jalalabad

0 50 mi  
 0 50 km

IRAN TURK UZB. TAJIKISTAN  
 0 150 mi  
 0 150 km  
 Kabul  
 AFGHANISTAN  
 PAKISTAN  
 Detail

SOURCES: Associated Press; Defense Dept.; Jane's Information Group; ESRI

Steven Checo, 22, a member of the Army's 82nd Airborne. He was shot Dec. 21, 2002, while on a nighttime operation in the eastern province of Paktika, near the border of Pakistan.

Since U.S. military action in Afghanistan began in October 2001, at least five U.S. helicopters have crashed or had hard landings that have injured or

killed troops. Two Army Rangers and two Marines have been killed, and at least 11 other troops have been injured.

On Oct. 19, 2001, Army Ranger Pfc. Kristof Stonesifer, 28, and Spc. John Edmunds, 20, were killed in the crash of a Black Hawk near Pakistan.

# Sept. 11 suspect on trial in Germany

By David Rising  
 THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

HAMBURG, Germany — Their voices quivering as they told how their loved ones died on Sept. 11, five Americans on Thursday confronted the first suspect to stand trial for the attacks and demanded harsh punishment for "the puppets of Osama bin Laden."

Mounir el Motassadeq, an alleged member of the al-Qaida cell that included lead hijacker Mohamed Atta, listened intently but showed no emotion as the men and women painfully relived their experiences in Hamburg state court.

Led by Stephen Push, whose wife was killed in the plane that crashed into the Pentagon, more than 20 relatives have joined the proceedings, which began in October and are expected to end next month, under German laws allowing relatives of crime victims to review evidence, file motions and question witnesses.

Observers cried softly in the courtroom gallery as Maureen Fanning, whose New York City firefighter husband Jack, 54, was killed in the collapse of the second tower of the World Trade Center, told the court what the loss had meant to their two severely autistic sons.

"The boys have very little in their lives — they can't read, they can't write," said Fanning, her voice choked with emotion. "But they had Jack to walk in the door and smile at them — something special — that was stolen from them on Sept. 11."

El Motassadeq, a 28-year-old Moroccan, is accused of providing logistical support to the Hamburg cell. He faces a possible life sentence if convicted of membership in a terrorist organization and more than 3,000 counts of accessory to

murder, though his actual time in prison would likely translate to a maximum of about 15 years under German law.

Fanning pleaded for him to be kept behind bars for life, saying "the world has to be protected from the suicidal murderous inclinations of the defendant and his friends."

After the statement, Presiding Judge Albrecht Mentz said it would have been inappropriate to interrupt her, but asked those who were to follow to avoid making pronouncements of el Motassadeq's guilt or innocence.

That did not stop Deena Burnett, who moved with her three young daughters back near her family in Little Rock, Ark., after her husband, Thomas Burnett, was killed when United Airlines Flight 93 crashed in Pennsylvania. Burnett is believed to have joined other passengers who broke into the cockpit and prevented the hijackers from carrying out an attack on the capital.

"My request is for you to demonstrate the same courage as the passengers on Flight 93 in holding the defendant responsible for his acts of terrorism and murder," she told the five judges hearing the case.

Joan Molinaro said her 32-year-old New York City firefighter son, Carl Molinaro, left behind his wife and then 2-year-old daughter and 3-week-old son when he was killed helping people escape the World Trade Center.

"Rather than fight our military as true soldiers would have done, these cowards chose to kill innocents, including women and children," she said. "The puppets of Osama bin Laden are not men, they are cowards."

After the statements, the Americans said they were struck by the fact that el Motassadeq sat 15 feet away and looked at them the whole time, but never flinched.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Belgium recognizes gay marriages

BRUSSELS (AP) — Belgium became the second nation in the world to officially recognize gay marriages Thursday, when parliament backed the move with a large majority.

The Netherlands approved same-sex marriages two years ago, but unlike its northern neighbor, Belgium did not go as far to allow such couples to adopt children.

"It makes it clear that an enduring and loving relationship is appreciated in the same way in our modern society," said Kristien Grauwels, a Green Party member.

### Australia train wreck kills 7, injures 16

SYDNEY, Australia (AP) — A train packed with commuters derailed during rush hour Friday morning outside Sydney, killing at least seven people and trapping others in the wreckage. All four of the train's cars lay crumpled or toppled along the tracks.

Rescue workers were trying to extricate passengers from the cars in the rough terrain of ravine 20 miles south of downtown Sydney.

Seven bodies had been found so far. At least 16 people were injured and 16 others were trapped in the cars.

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| 16     | 17<br>Open Call Audition 6pm   | 18                               | 19                                     | 20<br>LADIES FREE<br>\$0.25 Wells (8-11)<br>\$1.50 Wells (11-1) | 21<br>Ladies Night! Best Assets Contest (Round III) | 22<br>\$1.00 Wells (8-11)<br>\$2.00 LITs<br>Martini Specials |
| 23     | 24   | 25<br>ZTA Mardi Gras Crush Party | 26<br>1st annual Local Band Award Show | 27<br>LADIES FREE<br>\$0.25 Wells (8-11)<br>\$1.50 Wells (11-1) | 28<br>Ladies Night! Best Assets Contest (Round IV)  |  |

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Volume 109

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