

Beat: News

U.S. military plane crashes in Afghanistan, killing 3 Americans

-, 10.01.2014, 19:39 Time

USPA News - A small U.S. military plane crashed in eastern Afghanistan on early Friday morning, killing three Americans on board the aircraft, the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) said. The cause of the crash was not immediately known.

The accident happened early Friday morning when an MC-12W reconnaissance aircraft was conducting a nighttime mission over eastern Afghanistan, a U.S. defense official in Washington said. He said three Americans were killed, including two service members and one military civilian. The official said there were no indications that the small fixed-wing plane crashed as the result of enemy action, but no other details were immediately available. ISAF confirmed the deaths in a brief e-mailed statement, referring to the crash as an "aircraft mishap," but spokespersons for the alliance did not respond to repeated requests for comment. The primary mission of the MC-12W Liberty is to provide intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance support directly to ground troops. The aircraft, which typically carries two pilots and two sensor operators, is a military version of the civilian Hawker Beechcraft Super King Air 350. Friday's crash came hours after military officials disclosed that the crash of a Sikorsky UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter in southern Afghanistan on December 17 was caused by enemy action, even though ISAF had previously stated the opposite. The crash in the Now Bahar district of Zabol province killed six U.S. soldiers. There are currently more than 84,000 foreign troops in Afghanistan, including some 60,000 U.S. troops and 7,900 British soldiers. The UN Security Council in October extended ISAF's authorization for a final time, as all foreign combat troops are due to leave Afghanistan by the end of this year.

Article online:

<https://www.uspa24.com/bericht-1764/us-military-plane-crashes-in-afghanistan-killing-3-americans.html>

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UPA United Press Agency LTD
483 Green Lanes
UK, London N13NV 4BS
contact (at) unitedpressagency.com
Official Federal Reg. No. 7442619