

Beat: Miscellaneous

UPDATE 3 -- 1 dead, 1 missing after U.S. Navy chopper crashes off Virginia

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USPA News - A large U.S. Navy helicopter crashed in the Atlantic Ocean off Virginia on late Wednesday morning, killing one crew member and leaving another unaccounted for, military officials said. Three more crew members were rescued and taken to hospital.

The accident occurred at around 11 a.m. local time on Wednesday when the MH-53E Sea Dragon aircraft went down in the ocean about 18 nautical miles (33 kilometers) off Virginia Beach, a city just east of Norfolk in Virginia. Five crew members were on board the aircraft as it conducted routine training operations. A second Navy helicopter that was in the area reported the crash and dropped a life raft to four people who were in the water, the U.S. Coast Guard said. The group was rescued at around 11:45 a.m. when two Navy helicopters hoisted them from the water and flew them to Sentara Norfolk General Hospital. The U.S. Navy later said one of those hoisted from the water had died but the conditions of the other three were not immediately known. "One crew member has been confirmed dead following the crash this morning," Naval Air Force Atlantic said in a statement. "Three crew members are being evaluated at Sentara Norfolk General Hospital." A search and rescue operation for a fifth crew member was continuing with multiple vessels and aircraft involved, including two MH-60S helicopters from the Navy's Helicopter Sea Combat Support Squadron 28 (HSC-28). Also searching in the area are Coast Guard Cutter Shearwater, a response boat from Coast Guard Station Little Creek and vessels from the Virginia Beach Fire Department Marine Response Team. The U.S. Navy said the downed helicopter was assigned to Helicopter Mine Countermeasures Squadron 14 (HM-14) at Naval Station Norfolk Chambers Field. The aircraft is one of the largest helicopters in the Western world and is known to be prone to accidents, with Sea Dragon crashes having killed more than 30 people since 1984. Wednesday's crash came less than 24 hours after a U.S. Air Force helicopter crashed in a nature reserve in a coastal area of eastern England. All four crew members on board were killed in the crash of the HH-60G Pave Hawk helicopter, which is a highly modified version of the better-known Black Hawk aircraft.

Article online:

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