

16 killed in US military plane crash in Mississippi

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Sixteen people were killed after an American military plane crashed into a field in rural Mississippi on Monday.

Photo: AP 16 killed in US military plane crash

16 bodies had been recovered after the KC-130 spiraled into the ground about 85 miles (135 kilometers) north of Jackson in the Mississippi Delta, Leflore County Emergency Management Agency Director Frank Randle told media persons.

KC-130 is used as a refuelling tanker and according to Marine Corps spokeswoman Capt. Sarah Burns, it experienced a mishap Monday evening although she did not provide further details.

All 16 victims were on the Marine Corps aircraft and there were no survivors, Frank Randle told CNN.

Andy Jones said he was working on his family's catfish farm just before 4 p.m. when he heard a boom and looked up to see the plane corkscrewing downward with one engine smoking.

You looked up and you saw the plane twirling around, he said. It was spinning down.

Jones said the plane hit the ground behind some trees in a soybean field, and by the time he and other reached the crash site, fires were burning too intensely to approach the wreckage. The force of the crash nearly flattened the plane, Jones said.

Beans are about waist-high, and there wasn't much sticking out above the beans, he said.

Jones said a man borrowed his cellphone to report to authorities that there were bodies across U.S. Highway 82, more than a mile from the crash site.

Greenwood Fire Chief Marcus Banks told the Greenwood Commonwealth that debris from the plane was scattered in a radius of about 5 miles (8 kilometers).

Jones said firefighters tried to put out the fire at the main crash site but withdrew after an explosion forced them back. The fire produced towering plumes of black smoke visible for miles across the flat region and continued to burn after dusk, more than four hours after the crash.

Aerial pictures taken by WLBT-TV showed the skeleton of the plane burning strongly.

It was one of the worst fires you can imagine, Jones said. He said the fire was punctuated by the pops of small explosions.

Officials did not release information on what caused the crash or where the flight originated.

- (With AP inputs)