

Enemy Fire Caused Hard Landings of Two U.S. Helicopters

Contributed by 1st Lt. Jeff Roberson
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Initial reports indicate that hostile fire caused two CH-47 Chinook helicopters to make hard landings Dec. 4 in southern Afghanistan, officials reported today.

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WASHINGTON - Initial reports indicate that hostile fire caused two CH-47 Chinook helicopters to make hard landings Dec. 4 in southern Afghanistan, officials reported today.

Officials initially reported Dec. 4 that one heavily damaged helicopter made a hard landing north of Kandahar, wounding five American soldiers. The other Chinook made a hard landing at a forward operating base south of Tarin Kowt, in Uruzgan province, wounding an Afghan National Army soldier, officials noted.

The Afghan soldier is in stable condition at a nearby U.S. military treatment facility.

The five U.S. soldiers are also reported in stable condition at a U.S. medical facility.

Elsewhere in Afghanistan, three U.S. soldiers were injured Dec. 4 when an improvised explosive device went off near their convoy in Zabul province, southwest of Deh Chopan, officials said. The injured soldiers are in stable condition at a military medical facility at U.S.-run Kandahar Airfield, about 15 miles from Kandahar, Afghanistan's second largest city and chief trade center.

Elsewhere, Afghan National Police and coalition forces broke up two IED assembly and emplacement cells and arrested five individuals in separate raids conducted near Bagram and Ghazni Dec. 2 and Dec. 4. Police were tipped off about the IED cell's locations.

"These were (Afghan police) planned, led and executed operations," said Army Lt. Col. Jerry O'Hara, spokesman for the coalition's Combined Joint Task Force 76. "The success of these operations is indicative of the level of professionalism and dedication we routinely see among (Afghan police) and Afghan National Army forces. Had these two cells continued to operate, they could have been responsible for the deaths of untold innocent Afghan men, women and children."

In the first raid near Ghazni, police confiscated an undisclosed amount of explosive materials and documents outlining the assembly and emplacement of IEDs, officials noted. They said the second raid netted enough explosives to assemble one IED and included a large amount of IED assembly materials. The five suspects are in Afghan custody.

In the air war over Afghanistan, coalition aircraft flew 28 close-air-support missions in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, including missions supporting coalition and Afghan troops, reconstruction activities, and the conduct of presence route patrols.

U. S. Air Force
A-10 Thunderbolts and British Royal Air Force GR-7 vertical take-off and landing attack aircraft provided close-air support to coalition

forces in contact with enemy troops in the vicinity of Oruzgan, officials noted.

Four U.S. Air Force intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance aircraft flew missions in support of operations in Afghanistan. Also, Royal Air Force fighter aircraft performed in a nontraditional ISR role.

(Compiled from Combined Forces Command Afghanistan and U.S. Central Command Air Forces Forward news releases.)