

Marine Corps Identifies Personnel Killed in AAV Mishap



Naval Air Crewman (Helicopter) 2nd Class Joseph Rivera, a search-and-rescue swimmer assigned to the amphibious assault ship USS Makin Island, looks out of an MH-60 Seahawk helicopter while conducting search-and-rescue following an amphibious assault vehicle mishap off the coast of Southern California on July 30. U.S. MARINE CORPS / Lance Cpl. Mackenzie Binion

MARINE CORPS BASE CAMP PENDLETON, Calif. – Officials with the 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit, I Marine Expeditionary Force, have identified the one Marine who was killed and seven other Marines and one Sailor who are presumed dead after an amphibious assault vehicle mishap on July 30.

Lance Cpl. Guillermo S. Perez, 20, of New Braunfels, Texas, was pronounced dead at the scene before being transported by helicopter to Scripps Memorial Hospital in San Diego. He was a rifleman with Bravo Company, Battalion Landing Team 1/4, 15th MEU.

The seven Marines – all riflemen – and one Navy hospital corpsman were from Bravo Company, Battalion 1/4 of the 15th MEU. The presumed dead are:

- Pfc. Bryan J. Baltierra, 19, of Corona, California
- Lance Cpl. Marco A. Barranco, 21, of Montebello, California
- Pfc. Evan A. Bath, 19, of Oak Creek, Wisconsin
- Pfc. Jack Ryan Ostrovsky, 21, of Bend, Oregon
- Cpl. Wesley A. Rodd, 23, of Harris, Texas
- Lance Cpl. Chase D. Sweetwood, 19, of Portland, Oregon
- Cpl. Cesar A. Villanueva, 21, of Riverside, California

- Navy Hospitalman Christopher Gnem, 22, of Stockton, California

The injured were:

- A Marine rifleman with Bravo Company, BLT 1/4, 15th MEU. The Marine was transported from the scene to Scripps Memorial Hospital by helicopter and was in critical condition.
- A Marine assault amphibious vehicle crew member with Mechanized Company, BLT 1/4, 15th MEU. The Marine was transported from the scene to Scripps Memorial Hospital by helicopter and was in critical condition. He has since been upgraded to stable condition.

In total, 16 personnel were aboard the AAV when on July 30 around 5:45 p.m. they reported taking on water while conducting shore-to-ship waterborne operations training in the vicinity of San Clemente Island off the coast of Southern California. Five Marines were rescued and brought aboard the USS Somerset.

Defense Secretary Mark Esper issued the following statement: "A grateful nation and the Department of Defense grieves the tragic loss of the Marines and Sailor lost in the amphibious assault vehicle accident off the coast of San Clemente Island. Our prayers and condolences are with the family and friends of these brave young men. Their service, commitment and courage will always be remembered by the nation they served.

"While the incident remains under investigation, I want to assure our service members and their families that we are committed to gathering all the facts, understanding exactly how this incident occurred, and preventing similar tragedies in the future."