

Pope AFB sergeant among those killed in Afghanistan

Associated Press

RALEIGH, March 5 -- A Pope Air Force Base sergeant was one of seven military men killed in Afghanistan when their helicopters were fired upon, Pentagon officials said Tuesday.

The remains of Tech. Sgt. John A. Chapman, 36, of Waco, Texas, and those of the others killed Monday when al-Qaida and Taliban fighters fired on U.S. helicopters were brought Tuesday to a base in Ramstein, Germany, heading for the United States.

An Air Force Special Operations spokeswoman confirmed that Chapman was stationed at Pope.

The others killed were: Sgt. Bradley S. Crose, 27, of Orange Park, Fla.; Sgt. Philip J. Svitak, 31, Joplin, Mo.; Spc. Marc A. Anderson, 30, Brandon, Fla. and Pfc. Matthew A. Commons, 21, Boulder City, Nev. All were members of the Army.

Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Neil C. Roberts, 32, of Woodland, Calif. and Senior Airman Jason D. Cunningham, 26, of Camarillo, Calif., were also among the dead.

Chapman, raised in Windson Locks, Conn., joined the Air Force in 1985. He was a combat controller who had received two Air Force Commendation Medals.

Lori McQueeney, an older sister who still lives in town, said her family always knew he could be killed in action.

"We knew it was a possibility, but you never think it's going to happen to you," McQueeney said.

Chapman is the second North Carolina-based military person to die in the intense renewed fighting in Afghanistan since Saturday. Chief Warrant Officer Stanley L. Harriman, 34, of Wade, was killed by enemy fire in a ground attack Saturday.

Nicholas Giaccone, Chapman's stepfather, told The (Manchester, Conn.) Journal-Inquirer on Tuesday that military officials informed him and his family of Chapman's death at 10:30 p.m. Monday.

Lisa Hawes, a friend of the Chapman family, told the newspaper that Chapman had a wife, Valerie, and two daughters, ages 5 and 3.