

# US team arrives to salvage crashed Chinook helicopter

Posted: 3:17 PM (Manila Time) | Mar. 27, 2002  
By Agence France-Presse

ZAMBOANGA – A team of US soldiers and civilian contractors are in the central Philippines to recover the wreckage of a Special Forces MH-47 Chinook helicopter that crashed into the sea last month, the US military said Wednesday.

The aircraft crashed off the island of Negros on February 22 with the loss of all 10 American military personnel on board. Only three bodies were recovered and the cause of the crash has not been established.

Jan Steen, a Dutch-owned search and recovery ship based in Singapore and contracted by the US military, arrived at the crash site Monday to begin work, the US armed forces said in a statement.

"This effort is to help determine the cause of the mishap" as well as to prevent similar mishaps in the future," it added. "We will take the time needed to accomplish the mission."

The team of US Army, Navy and civilian recovery experts are using a deep drone remotely operated vehicle as well as a dual frequency side scan sonar to scour the sea bottom, the statement said.

The Chinook crashed at night while returning to its temporary base in the central city of Cebu.

It had come from the southern island of Basilan where it dropped off a US Special Forces team who would "train, advise and assist" Filipino forces going after the Abu Sayyaf, a Muslim guerrilla group with links to the al-Qaeda network of US terror suspect Osama bin Laden.