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MARINE CORPS AIR STATION YUMA

Press Release

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Date Released: April 1, 2019
Release #3-19

Marines identified in AH-1Z Helicopter Crash

MARINE CORPS AIR STATION YUMA, Ariz. (April 1, 2019) – Two Marine pilots conducting routine training during the semi-annual Weapons and Tactics Instructor Course hosted by Marine Aviation Weapons and Tactics Squadron One (MAWTS-1) were killed as a result of an AH-1Z Viper helicopter crash aboard MCAS Yuma training grounds, at approximately 8:45 p.m. (PST), March 30, 2019.

"It is a somber day for the entire Marine Air Ground Task Force Training Command (MAGTFTC) as we mourn this tremendous loss. Our thoughts and prayers remain with their families and loved ones during this extremely difficult time," said Brig. Gen. Roger B. Turner Jr., commanding general, MAGTFTC, Twentynine Palms, Calif.

Maj. Matthew M. Wiegand, 34, of Ambler, Pennsylvania, was a pilot assigned to MAWTS-1, Yuma, Arizona. Wiegand joined the Marine Corps in 2008. He held qualifications in the AH-1W Super Cobra and AH-1Z Viper.

Wiegand's previous duty stations include Naval Air Station Pensacola, Fla., Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif., and MCAS Yuma, Ariz.

Wiegand previously deployed in support of a Unit Deployment Program in Okinawa, Japan. He participated in numerous bi-lateral exercises with Joint and Foreign partners. His personal decorations included the Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal with gold star in lieu of second award.

Capt. Travis W. Brannon, 30, of Nashville, Tennessee, was a pilot assigned to Marine Light Attack Helicopter Squadron (HMLA) 367, Marine Aircraft Group 24, 1st Marine Aircraft Wing,

Kaneohe Bay, Hawaii. Brannon was attending Weapons and Tactics Instructor (WTI) course 2-19.

Brannon's previous duty stations include Naval Air Station Pensacola, Fla., Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif., and MCAS Kaneohe Bay, Hawaii.

Brannon participated in Marine Rotational Force Darwin, Northern Territory, Australia. His personal decorations include the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal and Sea Service Deployment Ribbon.

"We join the families of Maj. Wiegand and Capt. Brannon in mourning the loss of a loved one," said Col. Kelvin W. Gallman, commanding officer of MAWTS-1. "Our most valued assets are the individual Marines and our primary focus is supporting the families during this difficult time."

The cause of the crash is currently under investigation.

For more information pertaining to Maj. Wiegand, please contact Capt. Gabriel Adibe at MCASYuma_media@usmc.mil or at 928-269-5505.

For more information pertaining to Capt. Brannon, please contact Capt. Eric Abrams at eric.abrams@usmc.mil or at 808-257-0610.