

Copter Crashes, Kills One In Warri

FROM CHIDO OKAFOR (WARRI), BETRAND NWANKWO (ABUJA), WOLE SHADARE AND BOLA TOLU-KUSIMO (LAGOS)

A Chopper belonging to Odegene Air shuttle services (OAS) yesterday crashed in Delta State. It was marked Ovwian, Aladja with number 5N- BHU and had four persons on board. The incident occurred at Ovwian in Udu local council, at 9 a.m.

A document found near the crash site gave comprehensive detail of the aircraft. The aircraft was manufactured on October 28, 1998

The helicopter departed Lagos yesterday morning and was heading to Port Harcourt.

The plane crashed near the Delta Steel Company (DSC) site, near the double lane highway leading to the company

There four persons on board the chopper when it crashed, were two Nigerians and two expatriates whose nationalities were yet to be established.

One of the Nigerians, it was learnt, died on the spot. *The Guardian* learnt that two of the victims were being treated at Delta Steel Clinic. The third survivor, who is the captain of the flight, an expatriate, was rushed to Kwofa Clinic located near the scene of the crash but Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC) medical crew reportedly came and moved him to their clinic at Ogunu for proper treatment.

The helicopter according to the Commander of the Joint Task Force (JTF) Brig. Gen. Alfred Ilogho, who visited the crash scene a few hours after it occurred, confirmed that it had four persons on board.

Ilogho observed that the chopper was flying so low that it got entangled in the high-tension electricity line supplying power to DSC before it crashed. He said that

bad weather might have forced the plane to come very low to the ground.

Before Illogho and heads of other security agencies arrived at the scene, Air force Chief in Warri, who refused to disclose any detail on the incident had rushed to the place with policemen to secure the plane. Thousands of residents trooped to the scene, thereby making it difficult for the police to secure the crash scene, which was by the busy DSC road. The Police at a point, apparently to scare the surging crowd eager to see the mangled helicopter had to fire a canister of teargas into the multitude.

A man, Joseph Eyaregbe, a mechanic who witnessed the crash as it was happening told *The Guardian* that he was at his workshop when he heard the sound of approaching helicopter. The chopper tried to avoid a high-tension tower but failed in the bid. It then hit the tower and destroyed it, sending all the high-tension cables falling to the ground.