

BRISTOW CHOPPER CRASH: Bodies of pilot, co-pilot recovered

By Leke Adeseri, South West Regional Editor, Olasunkanmi Akoni & Esther Onyegbula

LAGOS—THE bodies of the two remaining persons missing from Wednesday's Bristow helicopter crash in Lagos have been recovered by the search and rescue team.

The bodies, recovered at about 10.25 a.m. yesterday were that of a white American, Captain Jay Wyatt, who was the pilot and a black, who was the co-pilot.

The two-man crew perished when the twin-engine Sikorsky 76C+ plunged into the water north of the city as it was heading back from an oil rig on Wednesday.

The bodies were brought to the shore of the lagoon at 10.45 a.m.

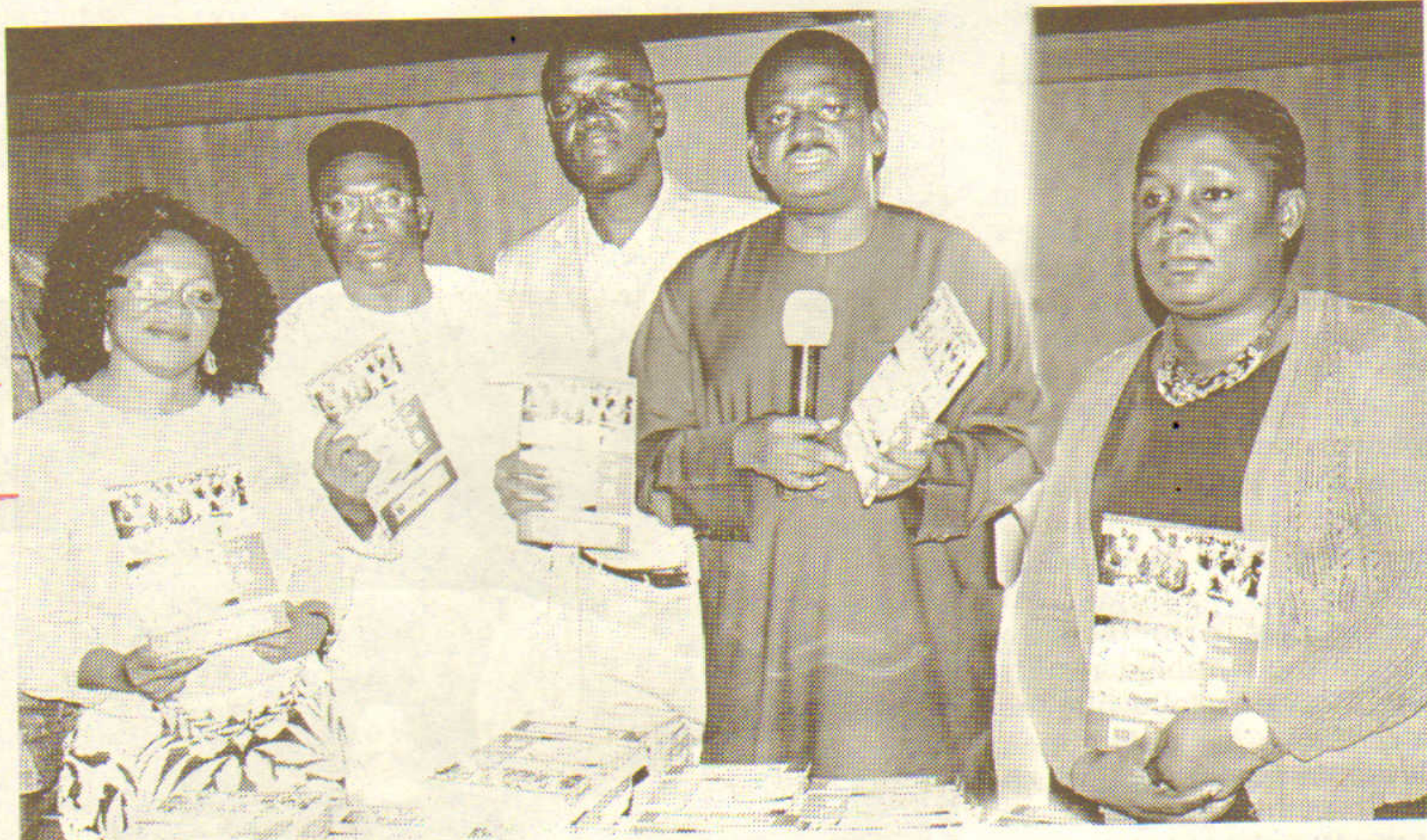
Sources said the white man was the helicopter's pilot, while the black man was the co-pilot.

The bodies had been taken to the Mainland Hospital by Lagos State Environmental Health Monitoring Unit.

While the search team was still looking for the two persons, some relations of the victims besieged the scene looking for their loved ones.

The General Manager of LASEMA, Mr Michael Akindele, who briefed the media jointly with Dr Onimode Bamdele, South-West Coordinator of the National Emergency Management Agency, NEMA, said the rescue and search mission had been concluded.

Akindele said that though the bodies had been recovered, they could not give names of the victims because they were yet to have the manifest.



PRESENTATION: From left: National Association of Women Journalists, NAWOJ President, Mrs Ifeyinwa Omowole; Executive Secretary, Nigerian Press Council, Mr Nnamdi Njemanze; National President of Nigeria Union of Journalists, NUJ, Mr Abdulwaheed Odusile; Senior Special Adviser to the President on Media and Publicity, Mr Femi Adesina and the Communications and Reporting Advisor, UNDP, Ms Toyin Adewale-Gabriel, at the public presentation of reportage of 2015 elections: a monitoring scorecard of print and online media, in Abuja, yesterday.

He commended the local divers, Marine Police, Lagos State Waterways Authority, LASWA; the Nigeria Police Force, Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps, NSCDC and others for a job well done.

Akindele said the second phase of the operation would be handled by the Accident Investigation Bureau, AIB, of the Federal Ministry of Aviation.

He said the agency would determine how the remains of the helicopter would be evacuated from the water.

According to a report by LASWA Managing Director, Mr Yinka Marinho, submitted to the state government, a copy of which was obtained by *Vanguard*; "At 9.30am yesterday, a joint effort by

the Nigerian Navy and LASWA rescue teams retrieved the bodies of the Captain and copilot from the cockpit of the crashed helicopter. The bodies were handed over to the police station at Oworonshoki.

Mr Clement Onyeyiri, Senior Investigator, Air Safety of AIB, said that as at now, all they knew was that there was an accident and that its nature was still unknown.

The Lagos State Police Command's spokesperson, DSP Patricia Amadin, had confirmed that after the crash, six persons were rescued alive on Wednesday and four dead.

The police also confirmed that the ill-fated helicopter which plunged into the Lagos Lagoon at Oworonshoki, was carrying 12

passengers when the accident occurred at about 3.10 p.m.

Bristow pledges assistance to survivors, deceased families

Meantime, Bristow Helicopter Limited yesterday promised to assist survivors and families of the dead victims of its ill-fated chopper that plunged into the Lagoon on Wednesday in Lagos.

Bristow Regional Director for Africa, Duncan Moore, made the pledge in a statement in Lagos.

"Our thoughts are with those affected by the unfortunate accident. We regret the loss of lives in the air crash and we are ready to assist them with our full resources."