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1 Killed, 2 Hurt In Temple Mid-Air Crash

From Staff, Wire Reports

TEMPLE — One man was killed and two others were critically injured Sunday when two single-engine Cessnas crashed in midair as they came in for a landing at Draughon-Miller Municipal Airport, a Temple Police Department spokesman said.

All are believed to be soldiers from Fort Hood, according to Fort Hood Public Information Officer Janet Lackey.

Identities of the victims were not released Sunday night pending the notification of relatives, said Temple patrolman Terry Kelley.

The accident occurred at about 4:20 p.m., moments after the pilot of a third plane tried in vain to radio the pilots that the two aircraft were flying dangerously close. He received no response, said Kelley.

"We don't know why they got so close. They might have been on each other's blind side," said Steve Klempa, Temple deputy police chief.

Witnesses said one plane was flying underneath the other as they approached the runway, Kelley said. As they got closer to the ground, "the wings touched and they went down," Kelley said.

The planes were about 150 to 200 feet northwest of the runway when they went down.

"We don't know how high they were when it happened but they were on final approach," Kelley said.

One of the aircraft, a Cessna 150, carried a passenger and the pilot who died, Kelley said. He was pronounced dead at 5:30 p.m. at Scott and White Memorial Hospital in Temple, the officer said.

Only one person was aboard the other plane, a Cessna 152, he said.

The two injured were listed in critical condition, according to Scott and White Hospital spokesman Donald Nelson.

Representatives of the Federal Aviation Administration and the National Transportation Safety Board from Fort Worth arrived Sunday night to begin an investigation, Kelley said.

The crash is believed to be the worst in 19 years at the Temple airport.