

Officials Identify Victims Of Midair Plane Collision

By KIRK COUCH

A Fort Hood man killed in Sunday's midair crash of two single-engine Cessnas at Draughon-Miller Municipal Airport was identified Monday by Fort Hood officials as Chief Warrant Officer 2 Stephen L. Morris, 34, of Columbus, Ohio, a member of D Company, 502nd Aviation Battalion, 2nd Armored Division.

The two men injured in the crash were identified by Fort Hood officials as Chief Warrant Officer 2 Gregory A. Arzola, 30, of Santa Fe, N.M., and a member of Morris' company; and 1st Lt. Shannon A. Schunicht, 24, of Coco Beach, Fla., a member of 1st Battalion, 5th Cavalry, 1st Cavalry Division.

Arzola and Schunicht were in critical condition Monday in the intensive care unit at Scott and White Memorial Hospital with severe closed-head injuries, a Scott and White spokeswoman said. Schunicht also suffered a right wrist fracture and a left elbow fracture, she said.

According to reports, the Cessna 150 and the Cessna 152 collided in

midair about 4:20 p.m. Sunday while both were in final approaches for landing at the airport.

Morris was piloting the Cessna 150 with Arzola as his passenger. Schunicht was the sole occupant of the Cessna 152.

According to reports, Morris was making several "touch and go" practice landings at the airport while Schunicht was making a straight approach for landing when the wingtips of the aircrafts apparently touched.

The Cessna 150 nose-dived into the ground, 150-200 feet north of runway 15, while the Cessna 152 crashed on its belly about 20 feet away.

Schunicht had rented the Cessna 152 from Cardinal Aviation in Killean on Sunday, a Cardinal Aviation spokesman said Monday.

Temple Airport Manager Stewart Shirey said the Cessna 150 belonged to 1st Lt. James Wallace of the 502nd Aviation Battalion, 2nd

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Armored Division.

Officials from the Federal Aviation Administration and the National Transportation Safety Board arrived in Temple Sunday to begin an investigation of the crash.

J.H. Daugherty, an investigator for the safety board, said Monday the report on the cause of the crash will be released in about seven months.

"The cause will be determined by the Safety Board in Washington based on the report I provide," Daugherty said. "I don't speculate."

Shirey said the wreckage is being transported to Fort Worth, where it will be inspected by an independent firm.