



Written by [Jack Kenny](#) on August 8, 2011

Cost of War Brought Home by Deaths in Afghanistan

The passengers and crew were on a night-raid mission in Tangi Valley in Warduk Province when they were brought crashing to the earth, most likely by a rocket-propelled grenade, according to a coalition source [cited by the New York Times](#). The Taliban claimed credit for the attack that made Saturday the deadliest day for Americans in Afghanistan since U.S. forces arrived there in search of Osama bin Laden and his al-Qaeda followers in the fall of 2001, just weeks after the terrorist attack of 9-11. The dead on Saturday included 22 members of SEAL Team 6 unit responsible for the tracking down and killing of bin Laden in Pakistan on May 2 of this year, though the Seals on board the helicopter did not take part in that raid.



The attack occurred around 1 a.m. Saturday, following an assault on a Taliban compound, Gen. Abdul Qayum Baqizoy, the police chief of Wardak, said. A spokesman for the Taliban said insurgents had been at the compound and eight were killed in the fighting.

All 30 Americans were part of NATO's International Security Assistance Force. About 150,000 ISAF personnel are in Afghanistan, including 100,000 Americans. Saturday's loss came in the beginning of a draw down of U.S. and other NATO troops, as more of the responsibility for the war is being turned over to the Afghan army. American soldiers had recently turned over the lone combat outpost in Tangi Valley to the Afghans, the *Times* reported. The Taliban maintains strongholds in the southern Afghanistan and along the Afghan-Pakistan border in the east.

In a statement issued from the White House on Saturday, President Obama expressed his regrets over the lost servicemen and his thoughts and prayers for their families and loved ones. "Their deaths are a reminder of the extraordinary sacrifices made by the men and women of our military and their families, including all who have served in Afghanistan."

The loss of 22 Navy SEALs is an especially heavy blow to the U.S. military, since the making of a Navy SEAL involves a huge investment and years of training. The SEALs operate on covert missions throughout Afghanistan, Iraq, and other combat zones, conducting raids, searches, and high-risk operations.

One of the SEALs killed on Saturday was Aaron Carson Vaughn, 30, of Virginia Beach, Virginia, [CNN News reported](#). His grandmother, Geneva Carson Vaughn of Union City, Tennessee, told the news channel that Vaughn left behind a wife and two small children. She described him as a brave warrior and gentle man who was not afraid of death. "He said 'I'm not afraid. Because I know where I am going if something happens to me,' " she recalled. "He is with the Lord now," she said. "I will see him again someday."



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