Coast Guard Releases Names of Shooting Victims

Friday, 13 April 2012

Victims of Thursdays shooting at the Kodiak Coast Guard Base Richard Belisle (second from left), and Coast Guard Petty Officer 1st Class James Hopkins (second from right), are shown in this July 2, 2011, photo along with Jim Wells (left) and Petty Officer 3rd Class Cody Beauford (right), as they work to erect a 120-foot communications antenna on Shemya Island. U.S. Coast Guard photo by PA2 Charly Hengen

Jay Barrett/KMXT

The FBI has confirmed that they are investigating the deaths of two Coast Guard employees Thursday morning in Kodiak as a double-homicide. Bureau spokesman Eric Gonzales did not identify a suspect, who is still at large.

The victims have been identified as Coast Guard Petty Officer 1st Class James Hopkins, an electronics technician, and Richard Belisle, a civilian employee and retired Coast Guard chief petty officer.

The two men were found shot to death in one of the buildings at Communications Station Kodiak by coworkers when they arrived between 7 and 8 a.m. Thursday.

The ComSta is a high security area, responsible for radio communications across the North Pacific and Bering Sea. Coast Guard Captain Karl Moore said because of the sensitive nature of the area, there are several video surveillance cameras in the vicinity. He said the FBI will be reviewing them.

Since the killings took place on federal property, the FBI has jurisdiction. Military police, the Coast Guard Investigative Service and the Alaska State Troopers are assisting.

Security patrols at the Coast Guard base and the surrounding residential neighborhoods have been increased, but the base, and Petersen Elementary School which is on base, are open today.

Rear Admiral Thomas Ostebo, commander of the 17th Coast Guard District, said a number of crisis response personnel and resources have been sent to Kodiak to assist the victim's families, friends and coworkers to cope with the tragic

event.

Coast Guard Base Kodiak is the largest in the nation, with about 2,000 military personnel and civilian employees.