

Community Meeting Over Slayings Called for Tonight

Monday, 16 April 2012

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Jay Barrett/KMXT

While authorities remain tight-lipped about a double-homicide at the Coast Guard Communications Station Thursday morning, Alaska State Trooper vehicles were seen blocking access to a home in Bell's Flats all weekend. Individuals in white Tyvek overalls were seen Sunday searching the house and area.

Petty Officer 1st Class James Hopkins, a 41-year-old electronics technician, and Richard Belisle, a 51-year-old civilian employee and retired Coast Guard chief petty officer, were found shot to death in what is known as the "rigging building" at the ComSta, about three miles down Antone Larsen Bay Road. Belisle worked as a rigger, who someone skilled in installing and maintaining communications towers.

Over the weekend, FBI spokesman Eric Gonzales said the killer was still on the loose, but that the community was not in danger. The Anchorage Daily News reported Gonzales would not say why he thought island residents were not in danger.

The Coast Guard has called a community town hall meeting for 7 p.m. tonight at the Gerald C. Wilson Auditorium to discuss the double homicide. Commander Paul Gill says that the meeting is open to all members of the community. A memorial service will be held this week for the two men, but a date and time has not been confirmed.

KMXT received a statement from the Belisle family, thanking the Coast Guard and Kodiak community for its support and asking for privacy. You can read the letter after the jump.

Letter from the Belisle Family:

We would to thank everyone who has kept us in your thoughts and prayers during this difficult time. We truly appreciate all of the assistance given to us by both the Coast Guard and the wonderful citizens of Kodiak. Your kindness and generosity has been overwhelming and extremely humbling.

We want you to know that Rich was an extraordinary husband, father, friend, and mentor to the young Coast Guardsmen serving our country. Rich has been very happily married to his wife Nicola for almost 20 years, and has three daughters, twins Amy and Emily age 19, and Hannah age 16. Everything Rich does he does for his girls.

We respectfully ask that you allow our family to mourn and request that any contact by media be directed the Public Affairs Office at Coast Guard Base Kodiak at 907-487-5700.

Thank you,

The Belisle Family