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DELTA GROUP

AP
FAYETTEVILLE, N.C. (AP) -- FIFTY MEMBERS OF THE DELTA GROUP
COMMANDO UNIT WERE GRIM-FACED AS THEY RETURNED TO FORT BRAGG AND ONE
EXPRESSED FRUSTRATION THAT THEIR MISSION TO RESCUE THE AMERICAN
HOSTAGES IN IRAN WAS CANCELED.

A
"YOU'VE GOT A MISSION. YOU KNOW YOU CAN DO IT, AND SOMEBODY TELLS
YOU TO PULL OUT," ONE OF THE MEN TOLD REPORTERS AS THE GROUP WALKED
THROUGH FAYETTEVILLE AIRPORT TUESDAY.

IF THE OTHERS SHARED IN HIS FRUSTRATION WITH THE PULLBACK ORDER,
THEY WEREN'T WILLING TO TALK TO REPORTERS ABOUT IT.

THE MISSION WAS ABORTED AFTER THREE OF EIGHT HELICOPTERS WERE
DISABLED. IN LEAVING A RENDEZVOUS POINT IN IRAN, ANOTHER HELICOPTER
COLLIDED WITH A C-130 TRANSPORT, KILLING EIGHT AMERICANS.

THE DELTA GROUP, WHICH ALSO IS KNOWN AS OPERATION BLUE LIGHT, IS
MADE UP OF ABOUT 300 PERSONS FROM ALL U.S. MILITARY SERVICES. BASED
AT FORT BRAGG, THE ANTI-TERRORIST UNIT REPORTEDLY IS CONTROLLED
DIRECTLY BY THE PENTAGON.

DEFENSE SECRETARY HAROLD B. BROWN SAID AFTER THE ILL-FATED MISSION
THAT 180 MEN WERE INVOLVED.

THOSE RETURNING TUESDAY FLEW TO FAYETTEVILLE ABOARD PIEDMONT
AIRLINES FLIGHT 250 FROM ATLANTA.

AT THE FAYETTEVILLE AIRPORT, THEY QUICKLY WALKED THROUGH THE
TERMINAL TO MORE THAN A HALF-DOZEN DARK GREEN ARMY VANS, STATION
WAGONS AND STAFF CARS WAITING OUTSIDE AND WERE DRIVEN OFF, APPARENTLY
TO FORT BRAGG.

SOME OF THE MEN CARRIED SMALL MILITARY BRIEFCASES. MOST WORE
LEISURE SUITS OR SPORTS CLOTHING WITH OPEN-NECK COLLARS.

AT HURLBURT FIELD, FLA., TODAY, THE AIR FORCE HONORED FIVE AIRMEN
FROM THE SMALL FLORIDA PANHANDLE BASE WHO DIED DURING THE ABORTED
RESCUE ATTEMPT.

AP-WX-0430 1320EDT

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