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Messages are pasted on a display bearing a photograph of late chief of the general staff general Shen Yi-ming at the Taipei Guest House yesterday.

Photo: Chien Jung-fong, Taipei Times

A UH-60M Black Hawk helicopter that crashed on Thursday, killing eight military officers including the chief of the general staff, is unlikely to have gone down due to mechanical failure or weather, a Taiwan Transportation Safety Board official said yesterday.

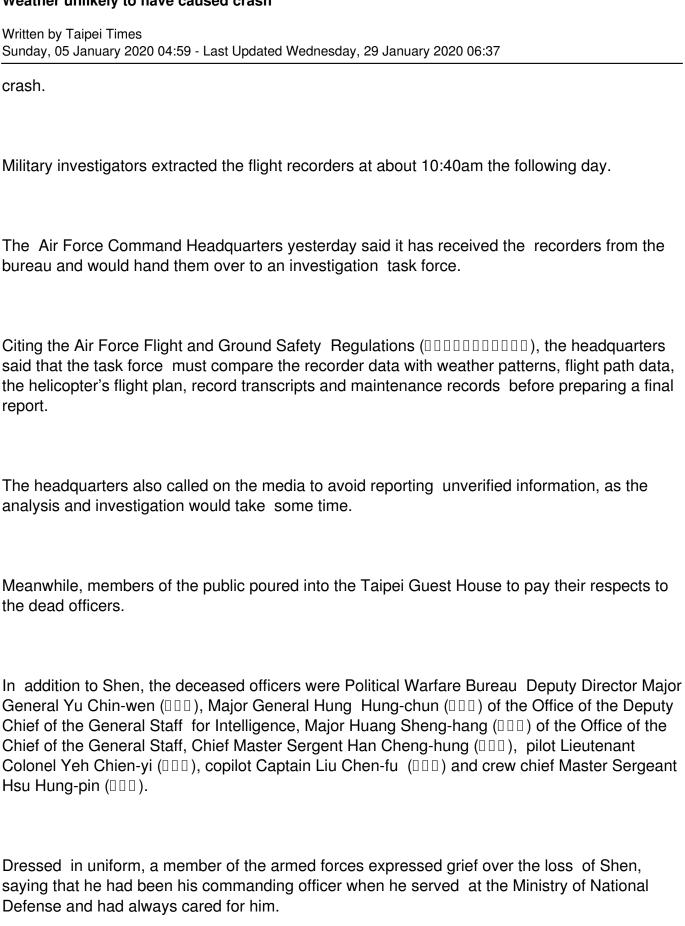
Based on a preliminary investigation of the helicopter's two flight data recorders, mechanical failure could be 80 percent ruled out as the cause, while weather, including elements such as turbulence and wind shear, could be 80 to 90 percent excluded, the official said.

However, the flight recorders contain a memory card that can only be decoded by the aircraft's US-based manufacturer, they said.

The card is to be sent to Sikorsky Aircraft Corp, as it contains important data about the helicopter's mechanical systems and its operational handling, the bureau said.

Mechanical failure could be completely ruled only after the information is retrieved from the recorder, the official said, adding that the possibility of human error was also being considered.

The helicopter, carrying military personnel to Dongaoling Base (□□□) in Yilan County, went down in the mountains of New Taipei City's Wulai District (□□) on Thursday with 13 people on board. Eight, including Chief of the General Staff General Shen Yi-ming (□□□), died in the



Political Warfare Bureau staff officer Lieutenant Colonel Lee Chun-feng (□□□) said that he had

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just been promoted by Yu and reported to the bureau on the day of the accident.

"I never thought I would never have a chance to report to Yu directly," he said.

An animation created by members of the brigade in which Yu had originally served to wish him a happy Lunar New Year later this month had no use now, he added.

On a bulletin board dedicated to Hsu were two unsigned notes that said: "Dad, let's play with your cellphone next time," and "I love you, dad."

Other notes left by Hsu's colleagues and friends said: "The mission is over. Good work," and "Thank you for what you have done for the nation."

His father, weeping, said that Yeh, who was his first son, had on Wednesday called his mother "to wish her a happy birthday, yet the following day he was gone."

Liu's friends and relatives also mourned him, saying that he was raised by a single parent and had gotten married just last year.

President Tsai Ing-wen ([][]]) visited the guest house after inspecting the Dongaoling radar station, where Shen had been scheduled to visit, to boost the morale of military personnel stationed there.

Tsai posted on the board dedicated to the deceased officers sticky notes written by military personnel stationed at the station who asked the president to post them on their behalf.

A formal public service is to be held on Jan. 14 at the Songshan Air Force Base in Taipei, the ministry said.

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