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U.S. Naval Officer Killed in Greece By Remote-Control Car-Bomb Blast

By RALPH JOSEPH

ATHENS, Greece (UPI) — A car bomb detonated by remote control killed the U.S. naval attache in Athens yesterday, catapulting him about 10 yards from his bulletproof vehicle just after he left his suburban residence.

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There were no immediate claims of responsibility for the assassination of Capt. William Nordeen, 51, a defense attache at the U.S. Embassy who had planned to retire in August after 30 years in the Navy. He had a wife and 12-year-old daughter.

Suspicion focused on a leftist terrorist group, November 17, responsible for a series of attacks on Americans in Greece and whose demands include the removal of U.S. military bases from Greek soil.

Witnesses told police two men sped away from the scene on a motorcycle shortly after the blast. Police found a Kawasaki motorcycle near the scene, but no suspects were apprehended.

U.S. Embassy spokesman Kitty Munshi said Nordeen, born in Amery, Minn., but whose hometown of record, Centuria, Wis., was "found dead at the site." Police found his body in the compound of an empty house near the scene of the explosion.

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U.S. military personnel have been the target of leftist attacks before in Athens and American servicemen are under standing orders not to gather in large groups at nightclubs and other public places.

Two people have been killed and nearly 100 wounded in attacks on U.S. officials and military personnel in Greece since 1975.

Police said Nordeen left his house alone in the suburb of Kefalari, about 10 miles north of Athens, and was on his way to work at the embassy when a "very strong" explosion was triggered about 8:10 a.m. several doors down from his home.



CAPT. WILLIAM NORDEEN
Planned to Retire in August

Witnesses and police said Nordeen was blown some 10 to 15 yards from his "lightly armored" vehicle when the explosives planted in a parked blue Toyota were detonated by remote control as he was passing.

Both cars were overturned by the blast and lay with their doors and wheels blown off about three yards apart. Nordeen's car was blown off the narrow street and landed partially across a roadside fence.

Debris was scattered over a 15-yard radius. Windows were broken within 100 yards of the explosion and telephone and power lines were shredded.

In Washington, the United States swiftly condemned the killing.

"We condemn this senseless act of brutality," White House spokesman Marlin Fitzwater said. "We will work with Greek authorities to bring the murderers to justice."

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Nordeen's mother, Edna Capello, grieved for her son, saying, "I just can't believe it. I'm just stunned."

Capello, who lives in Centuria, a village in northwestern Wisconsin, said her son had the option of returning to Washington for more duty but planned to retire once his three-year assignment in Greece was finished.

"He'd put in almost 30 years now and then to have to come out like this. They wanted to assign him to D.C., but he chose to retire instead. Now this happens," she said.

Prime Minister Andreas Papandreou, attending a European Community summit in Hanover, West Germany, expressed his "deep grief" and his message was conveyed to the U.S. ambassador to Greece, Robert Keeley, the semi-official Athens News Agency said.

Greek government spokesman Sotiris Kostopoulos termed the killing an act of "violence and terrorism."

Nordeen was decorated three times for outstanding military service when he was with the Pacific Fleet. He served later as naval inspector in Washington before being appointed defense and naval attache in Athens in 1985.