

UGANDAN GENERAL DIES IN AIR CRASH

AP

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NAIROBI, Kenya, Dec. 3— The Chief of Staff of the Ugandan Army, a confidant of President Milton Obote, has been killed in a helicopter crash, the Uganda radio reported today.

A spokesman for a guerrilla group, the National Resistance Army, said its forces had shot down the helicopter, but the report could not be confirmed.

A statement signed by Vice President Paulo Muwanga, who is also the Defense Minister, announced the death of Maj. Gen. David Oyite Ojok in a broadcast. The state-run radio, monitored here, then canceled scheduled programs and broadcast solemn music.

The radio said the crash occurred Friday night and killed five other army officers and three unidentified people. It gave no further details.

General Ojok, who was believed to be 49 years old, was widely regarded as a potential successor to Mr. Obote. Mr. Obote was returning today from a Commonwealth meeting in New Delhi.

General Ojok was the No. 2 man in the Ugandan military, under Lieut. Gen. Tito Okello. He was a graduate of Britain's Royal Military Academy at Sandhurst and was a senior military officer when Idi Amin seized power from Mr. Obote in January 1971. Role in Ousting Idi Amin

In the ensuing dictatorship, General Ojok lived in neighboring Tanzania. He spearheaded a force of Ugandan exiles and Tanzanian regular troops that ousted the dictator in April 1979.

A guerrilla spokesman said in a telephone call to a reporter in Nairobi that rebels shot down the helicopter as it flew from Bombo army barracks, about 20 miles north of Kampala, to the capital.

Besides General Ojok, the guerrilla spokesman said, the helicopter was carrying the chief of military intelligence, a major named Agwa, and the commanders of the Bombo and Kampala army barracks. He had no names for those officers.

The rebel group is the most active in Uganda. It is led by Yoweri Mseveni, who was Defense Minister in interim administrations after Idi Amin was ousted.

Last September Mr. Mseveni's guerrillas said they had shot down a Ugandan military helicopter near Kampala. There has been no confirmation of the report.

Since February 1981 Mr. Obote has been faced with a threat from guerrilla groups that say he rigged the 1980 elections with the connivance of Tanzanian forces.
