

TRI-STATE AREA

West Point Cadet Who Went Missing Found Dead

Cause of death for Kade Kurita, 20, is under investigation, officials say



Cadet Kade Kurita, from Gardena, Calif., was a member of the academy's class of 2021. PHOTO: U.S. MILITARY ACADEMY

By Ben Chapman

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A West Point cadet who disappeared with his rifle on Friday amid training exercises at the U.S. Military Academy in New York was found dead, officials said Wednesday.

The body of cadet Kade Kurita was found at West Point on Tuesday at 9:47 p.m., according to the officials. Mr. Kurita, who was 20 years old and from Gardena, Calif., was a member of the academy's class of 2021.

The cause of Mr. Kurita's death is under investigation, the officials said, but foul play isn't suspected. West Point officials wouldn't provide further information on how and where he was discovered.

"We are grieving this loss and our thoughts and prayers go out to Cadet Kurita's family and friends," said Lt. Gen. Darryl Williams, superintendent of the U.S. Military Academy, in a statement issued Wednesday.

West Point officers learned of Mr. Kurita's disappearance after he failed to report for a military-skills competition at the academy Friday night, according to military officials.

The cadet's weapon, an M4 rifle, also went missing, according to the officials, but the cadet wasn't believed to have taken any magazines or ammunition. It wasn't known Wednesday morning whether the weapon had been recovered with Mr. Kurita's body.

West Point cadets and military police began their search for Mr. Kurita following his disappearance, with the military academy's personnel combing through academic and athletic facilities and cadet barracks.

Following a canvass of local hospitals and emergency rooms, West Point officers contacted the Coast Guard, which commenced a search of nearby waterways on Sunday morning just before dawn, according to the officials.

Later that morning, New York State Police provided dogs and drones to aid in the search, as well as a helicopter for an aerial sweep of West Point and surrounding areas with an infrared radar system, the officials said.

On Monday, roughly 130 soldiers from the 23rd Military Police Company arrived at West Point from Fort Drum, N.Y., to join state troopers for a massive ground search. The ground search focused on the West Point campus because there was no activity on Mr. Kurita's credit cards indicating he had traveled, officials said. The soldiers and troopers had searched more than 6,000 acres of land at West Point as of Wednesday.

Mr. Kurita's death follows a fatal accident at West Point in June, in which a troop vehicle rolled over on the way to a summer-training exercise at the U.S. Military Academy, killing one cadet. Nineteen other cadets and two soldiers were injured in the accident, which took place near the Camp Buckner and Natural Bridge training sites.

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