into the St Johns river at the end of the runway at Naval Air Station Jacksonville at about 9:40 pm local time, a spokesman for the Florida air base said.

"The plane was not submerged. Every person is alive and accounted for," the sheriff's office said on Twitter. The sheriff's tweet was accompanied by two photographs showing the plane, bearing the logo of Miami Air International, resting in shallow water and fully intact.

Lenny Curry, said on Twitter that US President Donald Trump had called him to offer help.

"No fatalities reported. We are all in this together," Curry said in a separate tweet.

A passenger on board the plane, attorney Cheryl Bormann, told CNN in an interview that the flight, which had been four hours late in departing, made a "really hard landing" in Jacksonville amid thunder and lightning.

"We came down, the plane

bounced. It was clear the pilot did not have total control of the plane. It bounced again," she said, adding that the experience was "terrifying." Bormann said she hit her head on a plastic tray on the seat in front of her as the plane veered sideways and off the runway. "We were in the water, we couldn't tell where we were, whether it was a river or an ocean."

The military base is situated on the western bank of the St Johns River about 8 miles in the northeastern corner of Florida about 350 miles north of Miami.

Bormann described emerging from the plane onto the wing as oxygen masks deployed and smelling the jet fuel that she said was apparently leaking into the water.

Bormann, from Chicago, said that most of the passengers were connected to the military and helped each other out of their seats and onto a wing, where they were assisted after some time into a raft.

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