



U.S. NEWS

Pilot safe after F-35 military jet sustains 'significant damage' in accident at Alaska base

The pilot, who declared an inflight emergency before the crash, was stable and being evaluated at a medical facility, his commander said.

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/ Source: The Associated Press

By The Associated Press

ANCHORAGE, Alaska — A U.S. Air Force pilot was reported to be safe after a single-seat F-35 fighter jet crashed Tuesday during a training exercise at a base in Alaska.

The pilot experienced an “inflight malfunction” but was able to eject from the aircraft, Col. Paul Townsend, commander of the 354th Fighter Wing, told a news conference. The plane crashed during the landing phase of the flight at Eielson Air Force Base, he said.

The pilot had declared an inflight emergency prior to the crash and was in stable condition and being evaluated at a medical facility, he said.

The crash, which occurred early Tuesday afternoon, caused significant damage to the aircraft, the Air Force said in a statement.

Eielson Air Force Base is about 25 miles south of Fairbanks.

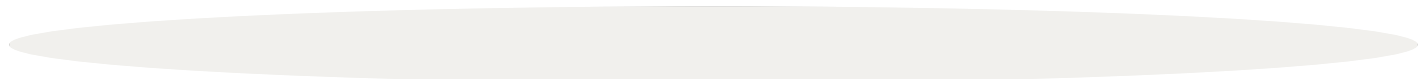
Townsend said in the statement said the Air Force would conduct “a thorough investigation in hopes to minimize the chances of such occurrences from happening again.”

Eielson was selected in 2016 to host 54 F-35s, spawning an expansion that cost more than a half-billion dollars that was to include 36 new buildings and dozens of housing units. The expansion included about 3,500 new active-duty airmen and their dependents.

With the capability to fly more than 12 hours at a time, the F-35 can reach almost anywhere in the Northern Hemisphere in one mission.

In May, an F-35 fighter jet on its way from Texas to Edwards Air Force Base near Los Angeles crashed after the pilot stopped to refuel in New Mexico. The pilot was taken to a hospital with serious injuries.

In October, a Marine investigation blamed the pilot of an F-35 for ejecting from the aircraft when he didn’t need to, causing the fighter to fly unmanned for 11 minutes before it crashed in rural South Carolina in 2023.



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