Beat: Miscellaneous

Taiwanese Air Force jet crashes in eastern France, killing pilot

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USPA News - A Taiwanese pilot was killed on Wednesday when a Taiwanese Air Force fighter jet crashed during a training mission in eastern France, officials in both countries said on Thursday. Taiwan immediately grounded all its Mirage fighter jets while an investigation is underway.

The accident happened at around 9 a.m. local time on Wednesday when radio contact was lost with the Mirage 2000-5 aircraft as it was conducting training operations over Froideconche, a district approximately 10 kilometers (6 miles) from the Luxeuil-les-Bains airfield in eastern France. The Republic of China (Taiwan) Ministry of National Defense identified the pilot, who was killed in the accident, as 37-year-old Lieutenant Colonel Wang Tung-yi. He was an experienced pilot who had logged more than 1,300 hours of flight time in the Mirage 2000-5 aircraft and was just two months from completing a two-year training course in France. Froideconche Mayor Henri Passard told French media that Wang Tung-yi had managed to steer the aircraft away from a nearby residential area before the plane came down. The Mirage 2000-5 eventually crashed in a wooded area just 500 meters (0.3 mile) from a group of residential buildings. The cause of the accident was not immediately known, but the Taiwanese Air Force has grounded all its Mirage fighter jets until France has established the cause of the crash. The aircraft involved in Wednesday`s accident was one of 60 Mirage 2000-5 planes which Taiwan purchased from a French aviation firm in 1992, a deal which upset Taiwan`s bitter rival China. The last aircraft was delivered in 2001 and four of them have since crashed in separate accidents, leaving 56 of them in service.

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