Investigation into 2022 F-35C crash aboard Carl Vinson complete



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By Commander, Naval Air Forces Public Affairs

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SAN DIEGO – The investigation into the F-35C Lightning II crash that occurred onboard Nimitz-class aircraft carrier USS Carl Vinson (CVN 70) on Jan. 24, 2022, is complete and was released on Feb. 16, 2023. The cause of the mishap was found to be pilot error; however, the error was not a result of reckless actions or malicious intent. The pilot was current on all qualifications and designations and the aircraft was in

compliance with all periodic maintenance and service inspections.

On Jan. 24, 2022, at approximately 1630 local time, the F-35C crashed onto the flight deck of USS Carl Vinson which was operating in the South China Sea. The pilot safely ejected and the aircraft skidded off the flight deck and into the sea.

A total of six personnel injured during this incident – the pilot and five other Sailors who were working on the flight deck at the time of the crash. All injured personnel have been released from medical care. The crash resulted in approximately $120,000 in damage to Carl Vinson's flight deck, as well as more than $2.5 million in damage to an EA-18G Growler that was struck by debris while staged on the flight deck.

We remain grateful to the highly trained Sailors aboard Carl Vinson who immediately responded to ensure that the pilot was recovered from the water, all injured personnel were cared for, and flight deck was cleared and re-set for operations. After a short pause in accordance with safety procedures, the rapid response from the crew enabled flight operations resume in less than an hour with minimal impact to mission requirements.

On Mar. 2, 2022, a team from U.S. Navy Task Force 75 and the Naval Sea Systems Command's Supervisor of Salvage and Diving (SUPSALV), embarked on the diving support construction vessel (DSCV) Picasso, recovered the F-35C wreckage from a depth of approximately 12,400 feet.