

Marine Corps F-35B, KC-130J Collide in Mid-Air



No one was hurt in the collision between a Marine Corps F-35B Lightning II strike fighter and the KC-130J Super Hercules. KESQ RADIO

ARLINGTON, Va. – A Marine Corps F-35B Lightning II strike fighter collided with a Marine Corps KC-130J Super Hercules tanker/transport aircraft over Southern California on Sept. 29, resulting in the loss of the F-35B and a crash landing of the KC-130J.

“At approximately 1600 [local time] it was reported that an F-35B made contact with a KC-130J during an air-to-air refueling evolution, resulting in the crash of the F-35B,” the Marine Corps said in a release. “The pilot of the F-35B ejected successfully and is currently being treated. The KC-130J is on deck in the vicinity of Thermal Airport. All crew members of the KC-130J have been reported safe.”

A photo of the KC-130J published in the Palm Springs Desert News showed the KC-130J largely intact, having made a gear-up landing in a field in a carrot field in Thermal, California. The photo showed that the two starboard engines and external fuel tank had been heavily damaged. The F-35B crashed near Salton City, California.

The KC-130J was assigned to Marine Aerial Refueler/Transport Squadron 352, based at Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, California. The squadron of the F-35B was not announced.

The F-35B crash is the second for the Marine Corps. An F-35B assigned to Marine Fighter Attack Training Squadron 501 based at Marine Corps Air Station Beaufort crashed in 2018. The Corps lost its first KC-130J in December 2018 in a mid-air collision during an aerial refueling with a Marine Corps

F/A-18D Hornet strike fighter off Japan.