Navy Confirms Pilot Died in F/A-18E Crash

ARLINGTON, Va. – The commander of Naval Air Forces confirmed that the pilot of the F/A-18E Super Hornet strike fighter that crashed July 31 in Southern California died in the crash.

"At approximately 10 a.m. PST on July 31, a F/A-18E Super Hornet assigned to the 'Vigilantes' of Strike Fighter Squadron (VFA) 151 based at Naval Air Station Lemoore, California, crashed approximately 40 miles north of Naval Air Weapons Station China Lake, California," CNAF said in a release. The aircraft was on a routine training mission in the area at the time. The cause of the crash is currently under investigation."

The F/A-18E was on a low-level flight through a feature called Star Wars Canyon in Death Valley National Park when it crashed near a popular overlook that aviation photographers and other tourists visit to watch jets streak through the canyon. The crash caused minor injuries to seven civilian tourists at the overlook with fire and flying debris.

The Super Hornet that crashed is only the fourth Navy aircraft to be

lost in a crash so
far in fiscal 2019, according to records.

This fiscal year, prior to the F/A-18E loss, aerial mishaps claimed an F/A-18F Super Hornet, an MH-60R Seahawk helicopter and a T-45C Goshawk training jet.

Until the July 31 mishap, no Navy aviators had been killed in a mishap this year.