



NEWS RELEASE

Tyndall Air Force Base

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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TYNDALL AIRCRAFT MISSING

TYNDALL AIR FORCE BASE, Fla. – "The US Coast Guard, supported by Tyndall AFB officials, is currently conducting search and rescue efforts following the loss of communication with a Tyndall-based F-16 aircraft early this morning.

The aircraft, assigned to the 53rd Weapons Evaluation Group, was performing a routine training mission over the Gulf of Mexico when the base lost contact with the pilot at approximately 9:15 a.m. Aircraft and rescue forces were immediately dispatched to the missing jet's last known location.

While the aircraft has not been found, search teams are working under the assumption that the aircraft has crashed into the water.

"The rescue of our Airman is our top priority," said Col. Mark O'Laughlin, 325 Fighter Wing Vice Commander.

"We want to assure the family and friends of the missing pilot that we are doing everything we can for this effort."

Base officials are encouraging anyone that might have information relevant to today's incident please contact the 325 Fighter Wing Public Affairs office at (850) 283-4500.

A representative from the base will be available for an official statement at 4 p.m. today at the base visitor center. More information will be released as it becomes available.

For information about the F-16, please view the fact sheet [here](http://www.af.mil/AboutUs/FactSheets/Display/tabid/224/Article/104505/f-16-fighting-falcon.aspx) (http://www.af.mil/AboutUs/FactSheets/Display/tabid/224/Article/104505/f-16-fighting-falcon.aspx).