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Su-25 Military Jet Crashes, Crew Survives

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A Su-25 military jet crashed about 60 kilometers from a Siberian air base, but its crew of two ejected to safety, officials said.

The Su-25 ground attack jet crashed during a training mission, slamming into the ground near Aga-Khangil, a village in the Zabaikalsky region located about 100 kilometers north of the border with Mongolia and 60 kilometers northwest of the Step air base, the Air Force said.

The Air Force grounded its Su-25 fleet pending an investigation into the crash, spokesman Vladimir Drik said in a statement.

Drik said the two crewmen were quickly recovered by rescue teams, and the jet caused no damage on the ground.

But RIA-Novosti reported that it fell about 30 meters from a house under construction and its fragments set a wooden fence on fire and damaged the roofs of several houses in the village.

Interfax said the jet crashed after being grazed by a similar plane flying close by.

Drik refused to confirm or deny that report, saying only that an official panel had yet to determine the cause of the crash.

The twin-engine Su-25 was designed in the 1970s for ground attack missions and was built in great numbers for the Soviet Air Force and exports. Hundreds remain in service in Russia and other former Soviet republics.

(AP, MT)

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