

Downed Russian Pilot Set Off Grenade to Avoid Capture By Syrian Militants

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Sergei Bobylev / TASS

The pilot of a Russian Su-25 fighter jet shot down by militants in northern Syria on Saturday avoided capture by blowing himself up with a grenade.

The Russian Defense Ministry confirmed on Saturday that the Su-25 pilot had successfully ejected but later died in a gun battle with militants. Russia stepped up airstrikes in the Idlib province shortly after the downing, killing more than 30 Islamist fighters from Jabhat al-Nusrah, the terror group that was linked to the plane's downing, Interfax [reported](#) on Saturday.

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“He shot back as much as he could once encircled, but when the situation became desperate, Major [Roman] Filipov blew himself up with a grenade,” the Kommersant business daily [reported](#) Monday, citing military sources.

The defense ministry later confirmed that the pilot had taken his life with a grenade after being encircled by militants, Interfax [reported](#).

Unverified social media footage picked up by Russian state television reportedly [shows](#) Filipov's last battle.

“This one is for the lads,” a man is heard shouting in Russian, followed by the sound of an explosion and a plume of smoke amid a scattered group of armed men in military fatigues.

The Defense Ministry announced that it would posthumously award Filipov the “Hero of Russia” title, the country's highest honor.

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