

# ATAC Pilot Safe After Hawker Hunter Supporting Sentry Aloha Crashed Off Hawaii on Wednesday

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<http://www.airforcemag.com/Features/Pages/2018/December%202018/ATAC-Pilot-Safe-as-Hawker-Hunter-Supporting-Sentry-Aloha-Crashed-Off-Wednesday-in-Hawaii.aspx>



A MK-58 Hawker Hunter prepares to take off aboard Marine Corps Air Station Beaufort June 27. *Marine Corps photo by Lance Cpl. Ashley Phillips.*

The Hawaii Air National Guard temporarily suspended Exercise Sentry Aloha on Wednesday afternoon after an Airborne Tactical Advantage Company Hawker Hunter aircraft participating in the exercise crashed in the waters a few miles off the coast. The pilot safely ejected and was rescued by a civilian sailboat, then transferred to a US Coast Guard vessel and transported to the hospital, according to a Hawaii ANG release.

Videos posted by local media show the pilot ejecting and the aircraft heading toward land before crashing into the water. No other damage or injuries were apparent.

Hawaii News Now identified the pilot as Matt Pothier, a 47-year-old former Navy pilot who works for ATAC, which has flown contract adversary air for the US Navy since 1996. The news organization quoted Chelsea Davis, Pothier's wife, as saying she was grateful her husband's injuries were not life threatening.

ATAC Director of Business Development John Zentner told Air Force Magazine the pilot remains in the hospital and the company hopes to release an update on his condition later this evening, but he could not provide any additional details or confirm his name at this time.

"Today, and last night especially, we're focused 100 percent on the safety and well-being of our pilot and his family," said Zentner. "We have a very good team in Hawaii that's all rallied together and we're working with the relevant authorities to determine the cause of the accident. We'll provide as much information as we can as it becomes available."

Zentner said ATAC is working with the Federal Aviation Administration and the National Transportation Safety Board, but it's possible the Defense Department also could request involvement in the investigation. "It's still too early" to determine which agency will take the lead, he added.

According to a recent company press release, "ATAC is the only adversary air contracted air services company executing tactical jet flight operations in Hawaii."

Witnesses said they saw two aircraft take off and one crash into the water a few minutes later. Another witness told Hawaii News Now they overheard the pilot say both engines cut out shortly after takeoff.

The Air National Guard is expected to resume Sentry Aloha operations on Thursday, and the mishap remains under investigation.