

Beat: Technology

U.S. Marine is first casualty of military operations against ISIS

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USPA News - A search and rescue operation was called off Thursday for a U.S. Marine Corps service member who went missing in the Persian Gulf after an aircraft suffered technical problems, the U.S. Navy said, making him the first coalition casualty in support of U.S.-led operations in Iraq and Syria. The Marine aircrew member, whose identity was not immediately released, was among four people on board a U.S. Marine Corps MV-22B Osprey aircraft which took off from the USS Makin Island on Wednesday afternoon (local time) before suffering a loss of power.

Two of the crew members bailed out of the aircraft when it appeared it was about to crash into the ocean. The pilot of the Osprey was eventually able to regain control of the aircraft and managed to land safely aboard the USS Makin Island, after which a search and rescue operation was launched. One of the two service members who exited the aircraft was later rescued from the water and transported back to the amphibious assault ship, where he was reported to be in a stable condition. "U.S. Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard personnel conducted an extensive search of the area using all available assets, which continued throughout the night and the next day," U.S. Naval Forces Central Command said in a statement. It said the search operation in the North Persian Gulf concluded at 1500 GMT on Thursday after efforts to locate the missing service member were unsuccessful. The U.S. Navy said the Osprey aircraft was participating in flight operations in support of a U.S.-led air campaign against the Islamic State group in Iraq and Syria. Wednesday's casualty makes him the first coalition service member to die during operations in support of the military campaign against ISIS. The Islamic State (IS), which was previously known as the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/ISIS), is an al-Qaeda splinter group which declared itself an Islamic caliphate earlier this year after seizing much of northeastern Syria and making huge gains in parts of Iraq. Their rule has been marked by brutal violence - such as beheadings and crucifixions - of anyone opposing the "caliphate." Since early August, U.S. forces have carried out more than 250 airstrikes in Iraq to protect U.S. interests and to assist Iraqi forces as they attempt to fight off ISIS. A coalition of countries - including France, the United Kingdom, and the Netherlands - have since joined that effort. The United States - along with several Arab countries - have also launched a separate air campaign against ISIS in northern Syria.

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