



Jet Crashes 08-17-16

Two more recent military jet crashes raise many grave concerns and questions. [ABC News](#) reported the crash of an F-18 fighter jet in Nevada on August 2nd. Just four days earlier, the *Marine Corps Times* reported that a pilot was killed in an F/A-18C Hornet crash. On June 2nd, the *Navy Times* reported a pilot with the elite Blue Angels crashed in the same type of aircraft. The causes of these crashes are “still under investigation.”

EA-18 Growler jets, which are continually flying solo, in duos and trios from Whidbey Island over the Olympic Peninsula and back every day, are a variant of the F/A 18 jets. These jets continue to crash, yet no real explanation for these crashes is ever explained or published. When will the internal machinations of the military be forthcoming about the cause?

There is enough concern in Congress that [Rep. Niki Tsongas](#) (D-Mass.) who sits on the House Armed Services committee, has called for a review of “physiological episodes” such as hypoxia and decompression sickness, that affect pilots. The F-18 Hornet has been shown to undergo failures of its On-Board Oxygen Generation System (OBOGS). Pilots can become dizzy or confused when experiencing oxygen deprivation, which is a frightening notion when one considers that these jets are flying at speeds of hundreds of miles per hour. In February, 2016, *Breaking Defense* reported that Navy documents recorded 297 “physiological episodes” for all types of F-18 in a five-year period from 2010-2015. After five years of identifying this particular problem, the Navy is still “searching for a fix.”

Of particular concern to STOP and those of us living on the Olympic Peninsula, is the fact that Naval Air Station Whidbey Island is one of the hardest-hit squadrons, as reported by the *Navy Times* in May 2016. In a seven-month period-- October 2015 to May 2016—there were seven reported episodes. That is one every month! These facts are alarming to citizens, considering the cost of human life in the air and on the ground, the loss of aircraft with a price tag of \$70 million each, and the incalculable loss should one of these jets go down while flying over the Olympic National Forest.