

Beat: News

Canadian Forces Snowbirds

Update On The October 13th 2019 Crash

Dartmouth, Canada, 27.11.2019, 23:48 Time

USPA NEWS - The Canadian Forces Snowbirds 431 Squadron is the military's air demonstration team whose mandate is to demonstrate the skill, training and team spirit. The Squadron is based in Saskatchewan at 15 Wing CFB Moose Jaw. The Snowbirds consist of a fleet of the Tudor CT-114 aircraft. The 2019 season is the Snowbirds 49th season of thrilling performances.

On Sunday October 13th, 2019 as Canadians celebrated Thanksgiving, the beloved Canadian Forces Snowbirds were scheduled to perform in Atlanta, Georgia. Shortly before they were to perform Captain Kevin Domon-Grenier pilot of Snowbird number 5 was forced to eject from the aircraft before the jet crashed in an unpopulated area. Captain Kevin Domon-Grenier made it to the ground safe and uninjured.

Shortly after the incident the following statement was released to the Canadian Forces Snowbirds social media page.

Lieutenant-Colonel Mike French, Commanding Officer of 431 (Air Demonstration) Squadron said,

"At approximately 1:15 p.m. Eastern Standard Time today, Captain Kevin Domon-Grenier, Snowbird 5 with the Canadian Forces Snowbirds, was forced to eject from his CT-114 Tutor aircraft shortly before the team's performance in Atlanta, Georgia, USA. We're very grateful that Captain Domon-Grenier made it safely to the ground. He was taken to hospital as a precaution and has since been released. He remained calm throughout the entire incident which is a testament to his skill and professionalism. The plane crashed in an unpopulated area and no one was injured."

"At this time the precise circumstances leading up to the ejection are not known. The crash site has been secured by local law enforcement and the immediate Flight Safety response is being coordinated on the ground by the team's Flight Safety Officer. An investigation team from the Directorate of Flight Safety in Ottawa will travel to Georgia within the next 24 hours to conduct a flight safety investigation to determine the cause of the incident. The RCAF Flight Safety Investigation team is coordinating their efforts with the United States Air Force Safety Center and the Federal Aerospace Administration."

"We want to thank the Atlanta Airshow for its timely and professional response, the first responders from Fayette County and Henry County who attended the scene, and the pilots from the Army Aviation Heritage Foundation who launched a helicopter to check on Kevin's well being. We also owe thanks to our colleagues, the USAF Thunderbirds, who did not hesitate to jump in and help the team as we dealt with the situation. Finally, I want to thank my dedicated team of professionals who maintained their composure through this incident."

"It is too early to speculate whether the Snowbirds will take part in their last airshow of the 2019 season which is currently scheduled for October 19 and 20 in Houston, Texas. The priority right now is to provide support to the members of our squadron and their families and to investigate fully the cause of the accident."

"15 Wing Moose Jaw, the home base of the Canadian Forces Snowbirds, will provide the team, their families and the military community at 15 Wing the support resources they need at this time."

UPDATE: October 15, 2019

The Snowbirds were scheduled to perform two shows in Houston, Texas this weekend at the Wings Over Houston Air Show, but the decision has been made to cancel these performances as the Canadian Forces and authorities work to determine the cause of the crash in Atlanta. The news of the cancelled performances was communicated in the following message on the CF Snowbirds social media page. "We will not be traveling to Houston, Texas this weekend for our final scheduled show of the 2019 season. We regret we will not get to perform for fans at Wings Over Houston Airshow, however determining the cause of the accident is our top priority right now."

INVESTIGATION UPDATE: November 22, 2019 by Flight Safety Investigator. (Posted on the Royal Canadian Air Force website)

"The accident involved a CT114 Tutor aircraft from the Canadian Armed Forces Air Demonstration Team (Snowbirds) enroute to the Atlanta Air Show being held at the Atlanta Motor Speedway in Hampton, Georgia.

Following a routine check while inverted, the pilot rolled level and applied full power to rejoin the formation. Shortly after the pilot experienced a loss of thrust. Losing altitude and unable to recover engine power, the pilot elected to eject as the aircraft was too low to attempt a safe recovery to an airport. The pilot successfully ejected from the aircraft however reported anomalies with the ejection

sequence.

The aircraft was destroyed upon impact and the pilot received minor injuries as a result of the ejection sequence.

The investigation is focused on materiel cause factors for the engine mechanical failure, as well as the ejection sequence."

DECEMBER 5, 2019 UPDATE: The team of Snowbird pilots, had returned to Canada a week after the accident, but now that the Tutors have been cleared to fly, the pilots returned to Georgia to fly their CT-114 aircraft home to CFB Moose Jaw in Saskatchewan. Up until then, the Tutor aircraft had been grounded, which forced the cancellation of the remainder of the 2019 season.

Next year the Snowbirds will be marking their 50th anniversary as Canada's air demonstration team. Planning is underway to highlight the event with special themes. We are being told that the Snowbirds schedule for the 2020 season will be released on December 10th, 2019. The schedule will outline the 30 performance dates at venues throughout North America with the season starting on June 6th, 2020. During the winter months, the Snowbirds team will be training for the upcoming season. There will be upwards to 100 training missions before the spring training that will take place in Comox, British Columbia.

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