Plane stolen at Sea-Tac crashes in Pierce County

HORIZON AIR TURBOPROP 2 fighter jets trail plane after airline employee fuels up, takes off without authorization

By PAUL CORNUELL and Durrell Smith

A 20-year-old Air Force member took off Friday night in one of the area’s Q400 turboprops at Seattle-Tacoma International Airport and crashed on an island in the south Puget Sound while being chased by two fighter jets, officials said.

The plane was taken by a Pierce County man at about 8 p.m., and crashed on Ketron Island about 9:30 p.m., the Pierce County Sheriff’s Office said. No passengers or crew were aboard the 76-seat plane, officials said.

“Combat video indicated the plane was shot down,” the county sheriff said.

The plane crashed either while the man was doing stunts or because of a lack of flying skills, according to the sheriff’s office.

“A joy ride gone terribly wrong,” Pierce County Sheriff Paul Farris said during a news conference in Steilacoom, which is about 3 miles from the island.

He said there was nothing to indicate the plane was shot down.

On a low-air traffic control tower, the parent flying the plane could be heard throughout the session.

Farris addressed the pilot as Rich and Rickard.

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