

## MQ-9 crashes

*Alamogordo Daily News Daily News Report Alamogordo Daily News*  
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### Daily News Report

An MQ-9 Reaper unmanned aircraft crashed Friday evening, according to a spokesman for the 49th Wing.

Arlan Ponder with 49th Wing Public Affairs said the Reaper went down on base property at 6:45 p.m. as it approached for landing Friday. He said there was some speculation the aircraft hit a power line and caused power to go out on base, but said he couldn't confirm that as of press time.

The aircraft is assigned to the 29th Attack Squadron, which is a remotely piloted aircraft flying training unit. The accident occurred at the end of a local training mission.

Ponder said a board is convening to investigate the cause of the accident.

Five previous Holloman-based unmanned aerial vehicles two MQ-1 Predators and three MQ-9 Reapers have crashed since Sept. 11, 2009, when base declared the UAV's initial operational capability. One crashed the day after Sept. 11, 2009. That accident was determined to be caused by a mechanical failure.

Two UAV crashes happened within a week of each other in October 2010, one happened April 2 and the last crash was a Reaper that crashed Aug. 24.

None of the UAV crashes involved injuries or damage to private property.

A manned QF-4 Phantom aircraft crashed July 6 near Hope and ignited a grass fire. The Phantom's pilot ejected safely from the aircraft. A rancher found the pilot apparently in good health.

During an October 2010 interview, Ponder said the cost estimate for a Reaper with its sensor is about \$10.5 million. It is more expensive than the Predator, estimated at \$4.5 million, as it has more capability and can carry more payload. The Reaper can carry four Hellfire missiles while the Predator can carry two, plus the Reaper can be upgraded to carry laser-guided bombs and AIM-9 Sidewinder missiles. Both unmanned aircraft models can fly up to 14 hours straight and both use normal airplane fuel.