



F-35 Lightning II Program

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Wheels Up: Navy Strike Fighter Squadron 147 ‘Argonauts’ Execute First F-35C Flight

F-35 Joint Program Office

The Navy’s Strike Fighter Squadron VFA-147 ‘Argonauts’ completed its first F-35C flight at Naval Air Station (NAS) Lemoore, Calif. April 18. The inaugural flight supports the squadron’s transition from the F/A-18E Super Hornet to the F-35C, marking a significant step toward the integration of the F-35C weapons system into the Navy’s arsenal.

“In the back of my mind, I knew this day would happen eventually, but I still can’t believe that we are here, we are doing it and I have the privilege of being a part of this amazing program,” said Lt. Dave “Strokes” Hinkle, the first U.S. Navy operational squadron pilot to fly the F-35C. “When you realize what this day means, not just in the context of our squadron’s history, but also what it means to the U.S. Navy, it is both simultaneously humbling and empowering to catch a glimpse of what’s in store for our community.”

The squadron began the initial transition in December after completing a six-month deployment aboard USS Nimitz (CVN 68) as part of Carrier Air Wing 11. Since their return, both pilots and maintainers have undergone extensive training, completing F-35 ground school at Eglin Air Force Base and NAS Lemoore. The transition, which is set to be complete in late 2018, makes the Argonauts the first operational squadron in the USN to receive and field the aircraft.



F-35C Lands at NAS Lemoore