

Navy to Combine F-35C Replacement Training Squadrons in 2019

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According to a Navy internal directive dated Sept. 10, the Navy intends to deactivate Strike Fighter Squadron 101 (VFA-101) on July 1. VFA-101 is based at Eglin Air Force Base, Florida, and is mainly involved in training instructor and test pilots for the F-35C.

The Navy will “realign” VFA-101 assets into VFA-125, the fleet replacement training squadron based at Naval Air Station (NAS) Lemoore, California.

“This will co-locate the fleet [replacement] squadron production of pilots directly into the operational squadrons scheduled for transition to F-35C and meet testing and evaluation requirements for initial operating capability of VFA-147 as the first [F-35C] joint strike fighter deployer in fiscal year '21,” the directive said. “The move of VFA-101 personnel and aircraft also supports Naval Aviation Warfighting Development Center advanced training at NAS Fallon, Nevada.”

VFA-101, a former fleet replacement squadron for the F-14 Tomcat fighter, was reactivated in 2012 and began flying the F-35C in 2013.