

Navy's Second F-35C Fleet Squadron Declared Safe for Flight



A Navy F-35C Lightning II is drogue refueled by a KC-10A during a training mission near Eglin Air Force Base, Florida, in 2015. *U.S. AIR FORCE /Staff Sgt. Brian Kelly*

ARLINGTON, Va. – The Navy's second fleet squadron to operate the F-35C Lightning II strike fighter has been declared safe for flight in that aircraft.

Strike Fighter Squadron 97 (VFA-97) – the Warhawks – reached that status Feb. 18, a few days after VFA-147, the first fleet F-35C squadron, returned on board USS Carl Vinson (CVN 70) from the first F-35C deployment.

The first Marine Corps F-35C squadron, Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 314, currently is deployed to the Indo-Pacific region on board USS Abraham Lincoln (CVN 72).

VFA-97, which began transition to the F-35C in February 2021, had operated the F/A-18E Super Hornet strike fighter since 2013, when it had upgraded from the F/A-18C version.

The Warhawks were established on June 1, 1967, as an A-7 Corsair II squadron and were deployed the next year to the Vietnam War.