The Flying Eagles of VFA-122 are proud to serve as ambassadors for the U.S. Navy, showcasing America’s stalwart strike-fighter and the rich history of Naval Aviation. The men and women of VFA-122 are proud to carry on America’s tradition of excellence in the skies. We stand on the shoulders of giants: those who introduced the world to the Great White Fleet, the victors of hard fought battles at Midway and in the Coral Sea, the pioneers of the jet age, the brave astronauts who won the race to the moon and flew the Space Shuttle, and the countless men and women who have designed, built and maintained every aircraft flown by Naval Aviators. The result of such bravery, dedication and sacrifice is the Flying Eagles’ Demonstration Team and VFA-122’s ability to succeed in its mission of training the future of Naval Aviation. Thank you for supporting the Flying Eagles and for enabling the spirit of Naval Aviation to thrive.

Commander Ernie Spence
Commanding Officer, VFA-122
Squadron History

The Flying Eagles of Strike Fighter Squadron (VFA) 122 trace their lineage back to Composite Squadron (VC) 35, flying various models of the A-1 Skyraider, nicknamed the “Spad.” Commissioned in 1950 at NAS San Diego, VC-35's mission was to supply all-weather attack and anti-submarine warfare aircraft detachments to Pacific Fleet aircraft carriers. The squadron's first combat deployment was to Korea in 1950-51. It proved the first of many for VC-35, and the squadron saw multiple tours of duty in the skies over the Korean Peninsula.

The squadron began its life as a training squadron in 1959 when it was re-designated as Attack Squadron (VA) 122. Known as the "Spad School," the squadron trained pilots and maintenance technicians to fly and fix the A-1. In 1963, the squadron moved to NAS Lemoore, then the Navy's newest air station. When the A-7 Corsair entered service in 1966, the "Spad School" became the “Corsair College.” VA-122 graduates quickly found themselves in combat in a new theater of operations over Vietnam.

For over 28 years VA-122 trained A-1 and A-7 pilots and maintainers who excelled in conflicts from Vietnam through the First Gulf War. In 1991 the Corsair College closed its doors with the retirement of the A-7 from active duty. During its time as a Fleet Replacement Squadron, VA-122 trained over 5,000 attack aviators and 55,000 aircraft maintainers.
VFA-122 Flying Eagles

“We Train the Experts”

The Flying Eagles saw new life in January 1999 when VFA-122 was established to train aviators for the FA-18E/F Super Hornet. In October 2010 the “Rough Raiders” of VFA-125 merged with VFA-122 to create a single FA-18 Fleet Replacement Squadron in Lemoore. The combination of the two squadrons resulted in VFA-122 becoming the largest squadron in the Navy with over 100 aircraft. Today the Flying Eagles are responsible for training the elite strike-fighter pilots of the US Navy, and foreign nations around the world.

Students in VFA-122 are trained in every FA-18 mission area including aerial combat, air-to-surface strike, and carrier operations. During a ten month course of instruction, student aircrew are prepared for the rigors of combat aviation and taught to fly multi-million dollar aircraft.

Over 150 new aviators are trained at VFA-122 each year by combat-experienced instructors who have completed multiple tours of duty in the US Fleet. The “Experts” of VFA-122 train on the E/F models of the FA-18 aircraft. Aircrew trained at VFA-122 have flown combat missions around the world and in Operation Iraqi Freedom, Operation Enduring Freedom, and Operation Inherent Resolve.
In 1999 the Super Hornet entered service in the US Navy. Larger than the Legacy Hornet, the FA-18E/F represents the 21st Century’s first truly multi-role fighter. Using the lessons learned from the original Hornet, the “ Rhino” brings advances in avionics, weapons capabilities, radar and sensors, and stealth technology. Having stepped up to fill the roles of the F-14 Tomcat, S-3 Viking and older FA-18’s, the Rhino not only carries combat ordnance but can provide valuable reconnaissance and air-to-air refueling support to the US Fleet.

After entering service with the Fleet, the Rhino quickly found itself in combat in the skies over Afghanistan and Iraq. Its increased fuel and ordnance carriage make the Rhino an asset to American combat operations around the world. With the capability for future growth in weapons and onboard systems, the Rhino will remain a credible strike-fighter for years to come.
VFA-122 Flying Eagles

**Specifications:**

- **Crew:**
  - 1 (FA-18E, pilot)
  - 2 (FA-18F, pilot and weapons systems officer)
- **Height:** 16.0 ft (4.8 m)
- **Length:** 60.3 ft (18.5 m)
- **Wingspan:** 44.9 ft (13.7 m)
- **Powerplant:** 2 x F414-GE-400 engines with 20,700 lbs thrust each
- **Top Speed:** Mach 1.8
- **Armament:**
  - 1 x M61A1 20 mm cannon
  - 11 weapons stations for combinations of:
    - AIM-9 Sidewinder, AIM-7 Sparrow, AIM-120 AMRAAM air-to-air missiles
    - Laser- and GPS-guided bombs
    - AGM-65 Maverick, AGM-88 HARM, AGM-84K SLAM-ER, AGM-154 JSOW air-to-ground weapons
    - Unguided bombs
    - ANQ-228 ATFLIR targeting pod
VFA-122 Flying Eagles

**Missions:**

- Close Air Support
- Forward Air Control (Airborne)
- Interdiction Strike
- Suppression of Enemy Air Defenses
- Anti-ship Mining
- Maritime Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance
- Fighter Escort
- Fleet Air Defense
- Aerial Refueling and Tanker
- Photo Reconnaissance
The Flying Eagles are proud to showcase the FA-18 to audiences around the world. The “Demo” is designed to highlight the mobility, versatility, and power of the FA-18 for the citizens who look to the Navy for the defense of freedom.

From the high “G” minimum radius turn to the slow speed “high-alpha” pass, the Demo flight puts the Rhino through its paces. A full description of each maneuver is provided by the show’s narrator and can be made available to event coordinators by request.

Each maneuver is meticulously rehearsed by Demo Team aircrew, first in the simulator, then in a series of qualification and practice flights. Demo aircrew are Fleet veterans, chosen for their abilities, knowledge, and experience. Throughout the show, adherence to procedure and the safety of observers are paramount. Although the maneuvers are dynamic, Demo team members adhere to guidelines established by VFA-122, the Navy, and the FAA to ensure their safety and that of the local community.
Static Display

In addition to the aerial demonstration, the Expert team provides parked “static” displays of the FA-18 and team members are always happy to answer questions about their aircraft. The team prides itself on accessibility to the American public who make Naval Aviation possible and are available for comment, interview or questions through the team’s points of contact.

The team’s support manual, available through the team’s coordinator, outlines the full range of requirements for hosting the Demo Team for either aerial or static displays.
Aviators

The Officers who fly in the Super Hornet Demonstration are veteran Naval Aviators, each with years of flight experience. Hailing from around the United States, these Pilots and Naval Flight Officers have each spent up to two years earning their Wings of Gold. After their flight training, they reported to various front-line squadrons on aircraft carriers around the globe. Many have flown combat operations in Iraq, Syria and Afghanistan and each has spent long months away from home during their time in the Fleet.

Upon completion of Fleet duties, these aviators were selected for their skill, experience and teaching ability to serve as flight instructors at VFA-122. They rely on their training to introduce the next generation of Naval Aviators to the F/A-18.

From amongst the cadre of VFA-122 instructors, demonstration pilots are chosen for their abilities in the aircraft in order to showcase the Navy’s premier strike-fighter to the American people.
**LT Brice Wheeler, Pilot**
- Hometown: Asheville, NC
- College: Virginia Military Institute, 2005
- Flight Hours: 1350 (1100 in FA-18)
- Carrier Arrested Landings: 270

**LT Zach Pleis, Pilot**
- Hometown: Granite Bay, CA
- College: U.S. Naval Academy, 2007
- Flight Hours: 1300 (1050 in FA-18)
- Carrier Arrested Landings: 300

**LT Brett Jakovich, Pilot**
- Hometown: Cambridge, MN
- College: Univ. of North Dakota, 2007
- Flight Hours: 1250 (1000 in FA-18)
- Carrier Arrested Landings: 230

**LT Nolan Lucas, WSO**
- Hometown: Pittsburgh, PA
- College: Maine Maritime Academy, 2007
- Flight Hours: 1150 (1000 in FA-18)
- Carrier Arrested Landings: 175
In addition to the Officers who fly the Demo, the team prizes its ground maintenance personnel who make the show possible. These enlisted Sailors hail from around the United States and repair and maintain the aircraft in peak flying condition. Without their hard work, long hours on the job, and time away from home and family, the Demo would never happen.

The personnel who accompany the team are specialists in maintaining the Super Hornet. Aviation structural mechanics, electricians, machinists, electronics technicians, and ordnance specialists travel with the team. Supporting the team from its home in Lemoore are countless administrative, records, survival equipment, legal, security, and logistics specialists.

These young men and women have each volunteered to serve their country and do their jobs year round in any weather, ashore or at sea, night or day.
# 2015 Show Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MARCH</th>
<th>AUGUST</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LA County (Lancaster, CA)</td>
<td>21-22 Mar</td>
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<tr>
<td>Abbotsford Int’l Air Show (Abbotsford, B.C.)</td>
<td>07-09 Aug</td>
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<tr>
<td>MAY</td>
<td>SEPTEMBER</td>
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<tr>
<td>Salute to Veterans (Columbia, MO)</td>
<td>24-25 May</td>
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<tr>
<td>Memphis Air Show (Millington, TN)</td>
<td>26-27 Sept</td>
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<tr>
<td>JUNE</td>
<td>OCTOBER</td>
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<tr>
<td>Denton Air Show (Denton, TX)</td>
<td>20-Jun</td>
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<tr>
<td>California Capital Air Show (Mather, CA)</td>
<td>03-04 Oct</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wings Over Houston (Houston, TX)</td>
<td>16-18 Oct</td>
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<tr>
<td>Amigo Air Show (Santa Teresa, NM)</td>
<td>24-25 Oct</td>
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<tr>
<td>JULY</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dubuque Jaycees Air Show (Dubuque, IA)</td>
<td>3-Jul</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gary’s South Shore Air Show (Gary, IN)</td>
<td>10-12 Jul</td>
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VFA-122 Flying Eagles

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