309th Fighter Squadron

Lineage.
Constituted as 309th Pursuit Squadron (Interceptor)
on 21 January 1942.
Activated on 30 January 1942.
Redesignated 309th Fighter Squadron on15 May 1942.
Redesignated 309th Fighter Squadron, Single Engine,
on 20 August 1943.
Inactivated on 7 November 1945.

 Activated on 20 August 1946.
Redesignated 309th Fighter Squadron, Jet,
on 15 June 1948.
Redesignated 309th Fighter-Bomber Squadron on 20 January 1950.
Redesignated 309th Fighter-Escort Squadron on 16 July 1950.
Redesignated 309th Strategic Fighter Squadron on 20 January 1953.
Redesignated 309th Fighter-Bomber Squadron on 1 April 1957.
Redesignated 309th Tactical Fighter Squadron on 1 July 1958.
Redesignated 309th Tactical Fighter Training Squadron on 1 July 1982.
Redesignated 309th Tactical Fighter Squadron on 1 October 1986.
Redesignated 309th Fighter Squadron on 1 November 1991.¹
Inactivated on 31 December 1993.

 Activated on 1 April 1994.²
Not manned 30 May 2014.³
Remanned 2 July 2014.⁴

¹ TAC SO G-12, 1 November 1991
² AETC SO G-34, 25 March 1994
³ Hist of the 56 FW, 1 Oct 2013 – 30 Sep 2014 (FOUO), pp. 10-11 (Info used is not FOUO).
⁴ 56 MSG SP GS-25-14, 18 July 2014
Honors.

*Campaign Streamers.*

**World War II European-African-Middle Eastern Theater:**
- Air Offensive, Europe [1942–1944]
- Algeria-French Morocco with Arrowhead [1942]
- Tunisia [1942-1943]
- Sicily with Arrowhead [1942-1943]
- Naples-Foggia [1942-1944]
- Anzio [1944]
- Rome-Arno [1944]
- Normandy [1944]
- Northern France [1944]
- Southern France [1944]
- North Apennines [1944-1945]
- Rhineland [1944-1945]
- Central Europe [1945]
- Po Valley [1945]
- Air Combat [1941–1945]

**Vietnam:**
- Vietnam Air Offensive [1966-1967]
- Vietnam Air Offensive, Phase II [1967-1968]
- Vietnam Air Offensive, Phase III [1968]
- Vietnam Air/Ground [1968]
- Vietnam Air Offensive, Phase IV [1968-1969]
- TET 69/Counteroffensive [1969]
- Vietnam Summer-Fall 1969 [1969]
- Sanctuary Counteroffensive [1970]
- Southwest Monsoon [1970]

*Decorations.*

**Distinguished Unit Citations,**
- Rumania, 21 April 1944
- Poland, 25 July 1945

**Presidential Unit Citation**
- Vietnam, 1 May-31 December 1968.

**Air Force Outstanding Unit Award**
- 1 June–16 December 1966 with Combat "V" Device
- 17 December 1966–30 April 1968 with Combat "V" Device
Decorations. (Continued)

**Air Force Outstanding Unit Award (Continued)**

- 4 July 1952–16 July 1952
- 1 March 1962–30 November 1962
- 1 July 1994-30 June 1996\(^5\)
- 1 July 1996-30 June 1998\(^6\)
- 1 July 1998-30 June 2000\(^7\)
- 1 July 2001-30 June 2003\(^8\)
- [1 July] 2003-30 June 2005\(^9\)
- 1 July 2005-30 June 2006\(^{10}\)
- 1 July 2006-30 June 2007\(^{11}\)
- 1 July 2007-30 June 2008\(^{12}\)
- 1 July 2008-30 June 2009\(^{13}\)
- 1 July 2009-30 June 2010\(^{14}\)
- 1 July 2010-30 June 2011\(^{15}\)
- 1 July 2011-30 June 2012\(^{16}\)
- 1 July 2012-30 June 2013\(^{17}\)
- 1 July 2013-30 May 2014\(^{18}\)
- 1 July 2015-30 June 2016\(^{19}\)
- 1 July 2016-30 June 2017\(^{20}\)
- 1 July 2017-30 June 2018\(^{21}\)
- 1 July 2018-30 June 2019\(^{22}\)

Special Honors.
Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross with Palm,

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\(^5\) AETC SO GA-18, 15 November 1996
\(^6\) AETC SO GA-12, 9 November 1998
\(^7\) AETC SO GA-9, 8 December 2000
\(^8\) AETC SO GA-55, 29 April 2004
\(^9\) AETC SO GA-0052, 22 June 2006
\(^10\) AETC SO GA-045, 8 May 2007
\(^11\) AETC SO G-054, 28 February 2008
\(^12\) AETC SO G-071, 3 April 2009
\(^13\) AETC SO G-025, 11 March 2010
\(^14\) AETC SO G-086, 9 May 2011
\(^15\) AETC SO G-171, 17 April 2012
\(^16\) AETC SO G-036, 1 March 2013
\(^17\) AETC SO G-017, 1 February 2014
\(^18\) AETC SO G-029, 8 January 2015
\(^19\) AETC SO G-022, 22 March 2017
\(^20\) AETC SO G-015, 19 Dec 2017
\(^21\) AETC SO G-057, 20 May 2019
\(^22\) AETC SO G-013, 18 Dec 2019
### Squadron – 173.75 Total Aerial Victory Credits. 15 Squadron Aces:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Aerial Victories</th>
<th>In Sq</th>
<th>Lifetime Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st Lt John M. Ainlay</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Capt Samuel J. Brown</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>15.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capt George T. Buck, Jr.23</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Capt Frederic J. Dorsch, Jr.</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1st Lt Richard D. Faxon</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1st Lt Raymond F. Harmeyer</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maj Frank A. Hill</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Capt George G. Loving, Jr.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Capt Murray D. McLaughlin</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Capt Carl W. Payne</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Capt Dale E. Shafer24</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>1st Lt Robert D Thompson</td>
<td>5.25</td>
<td>5.25</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lt Col Harrison R. Thyng</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maj Victor E. Warford</td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Capt David C. Wilhelm</td>
<td>5</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Assignments

### Stations
- Baer Field, Indiana, 30 January 1942; New Orleans Air Base, Louisiana, 6 February-19 May 1942; High Ernall, England, c. 12 June 1942; Westhampnett, England, 1 August-23 October 1942; Tafaraoui, Algeria, 8 November 1942; La Senia, Algeria, 14 November 1942; Thelepte, Tunisia, 6 February 1943; Tebessa, Algeria, 17 February 1943; Youks-les-Bain,

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23 **NOTE**: Became an ace while in the squadron.
24 **NOTE**: Became an ace while in the squadron.

**Aircraft.**

Curtis P-40 Warhawk 1942
Bell P-39 Airacobra 1942
Supermarine Spitfire 1942-1943
North American P-51 Lightning 1943-1945, and 1947-1948
Lockheed P (later, F)-80 Shooting Star 1946-1947
Republic F-84 Thunderjet 1948-1957
North American F-100 Super Sabre 1957-1970
McDonnell Douglas F-4 Phantom II 1970-1986
Lockheed F-16 Fighting Falcon 1986-1993, and 1994-

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**Emblem.** Originally approved on 27 November 1944; newest rendition approved on 18 July 1995.

**Blazon.** Azure blended per. pale Celeste to sinister, Donald Duck in animated anger Proper garbed in a flight jacket and P-3 crash helmet Light Blue and Argent grasping in dexter hand a board bendwise sinister with a nail in the end Proper and in sinister hand a lightning flash bendwise above his head Or, above a demi-globe issuant from base, Celeste grid lined of the first land masses Brown and below in chief a mullet of eight Argent; in dexter the constellation, Ursa Major in mullets of four White; all within a diminished bordure of the first.

Attached below the disc a White scroll edged with a narrow Blue border and inscribed "309th FIGHTER SQ" in Blue letters.

**Official Motto.** None.

**Significance.** Blue and yellow are the Air Force colors. Blue alludes to the sky, the primary theater of Air Force operations. Yellow refers to the sun and the excellence required of Air Force personnel. The disc is blended dark to light blue indicating the unit's day and night defense capabilities. The single star and constellation depict the squadron's pioneering efforts in the establishment of celestial navigation as a viable and integral method of navigation for fighter units. Donald Duck in flight gear grasping a lightning bolt and board with nail, symbolizes the lineage of the unit as a fighter squadron and its defense and striking capabilities through in-flight refueling. It also implies the squadron's participation in two historic long range ocean crossings.

**Commanders.**

**309th Pursuit Squadron (Interceptor) [30 January 1942-15 May 1942]**


[Ace][Major General]

**309th Fighter Squadron [15 May 1942-20 August 1943]**

Maj Harrison R. Thyng 15 May 1942 [Ace][Major General]

Maj Frank A. Hill 12 May 1943 [Ace]

Maj Carl W. Payne 13 July 1943 – 20 August 1943 [Ace]
Commanders. (Continued)

309th Fighter Squadron, Single Engine [20 August 1943-7 November 1945; 20 August 1946 – 15 June 1948]

Maj Carl W. Payne 20 August 1943 [Ace]
Capt Robert E. McCarthy, Jr. 14 October 1943
Maj Garth B. Jared 9 November 1943
Maj John M. Meader 18 April 1944
Lt Col Victor E. Warford 22 May 1944 [Ace]
Maj George T. Buck, Jr. 12 October 1944 [Ace]
Maj Simon H. Johnson, Jr. 16 February 1945
Maj Julius D. Shivers 9 May 1945-Unknown
Unknown, 20 August 1946-October 1947

309th Fighter Squadron, Jet [15 June 1948-20 January 1950]
Lt Col Robert W. Stevens 15 June 1948

309th Fighter-Bomber Squadron [20 January 1950-16 July 1950]
Maj Arthur D. Thomas 20 January 1950

309th Fighter-Escort Squadron [16 July 1950-20 January 1953]
Maj William R. Young c. 1950
Maj Don V. Booty April 1951
Lt Col Charles W. Lenfest January 1952 - 20 January 1953 [Ace][Brigadier General]

309th Strategic Fighter Squadron [20 January 1953-1 April 1957]
Lt Col Charles W. Lenfest 20 January 1953 [Ace][Brigadier General]
Lt Col Hayden C. Curry June 1953
Maj Adrian E. Drew January 1955
Capt David W. Williams October 1955
Maj Donald W. Maggert April 1956 - 1 April 1957.

309th Fighter-Bomber Squadron [1 April 1957-1 July 1958]
Maj Donald W. Maggert 1 April 1957
Maj James E. Bean 11 October 1957
Commanders. (Continued)

309th Tactical Fighter Squadron [1 July 1958-1 July 1982]

Maj Arthur H. Johnson, Jr. 1 July 1958
Lt Col Louis R. Vogt 15 March 1959
Maj John B. Butler 1959
Maj Herbert L. Prevost 1960
Lt Col Garth L. Reynolds 13 December 1961
Maj Aubrey C. Edinburgh 1 April 1963
Lt Col Garth L. Reynolds 9 September 1963
Lt Col Tom L. DeGraf fenried 8 June 1964-5 November 1965
Lt Col Carlos O. Beasley 1965
Lt Col Freddie L. Poston 1966
[Maj Arthur H. Johnson, Jr. 1 July 1958]

Lt Col Daniel J. Sheehan, Jr. 1 November 1967
Lt Col David S. Renshaw 1968
Lt Col Lawrence W. Whitford, Jr. 6 February 1969
Lt Col Ronald A. Berdo 26 September 1969
Lt Col Clarence D. Glenn 24 August-c. 15 October 1970
Lt Col Charles W. Hetherington 30 October 1970
Lt Col Donald V. MacKellar 10 May 1972
Lt Col Steve Braswell 10 March 1973
Lt Col Donald A. Elliott 24 May 1974
Lt Col Edward S. Joiner 9 September 1975
Lt Col Ralph E. Beekman 31 December 1977
Lt Col Michael G. Major 26 November 1979
Lt Col Travis E. Harrell 3 April 1981 – 30 June 1982 [Brigadier General]

309th Tactical Fighter Training Squadron [1 July 1982-1 October 1986]

Lt Col Travis E. Harrell 1 July 1982 [Brigadier General]
Lt Col Thomas R. Lanum 13 July 1982
Lt Col William D. Ray 24 July 1984
Lt Col David L. Haas 12 June 1986 - 1 October 1986

309th Tactical Fighter Squadron [1 October 1986-1 November 1991]

Lt Col David L. Haas, 1 October 1986
Lt Col Robert D. O’Dell, 7 June 1988
Lt Col Thomas B. Poole, 29 December 1989 - 1 November 1991
Commanders. (Continued)

309th Fighter Squadron [1 November 1991–31 December 1993; 1 April 1994–]

Lt Col Thomas B. Poole 1 November 1991
Lt Col Thomas A. Gilkey July 1992–31 December 1993
Lt Col Charles B. Oltman 1 April 1994
Lt Col Randy S. Wenzel 13 July 1995
Lt Col William D. McConnell 31 January 1997
Lt Col Philip A. Oppenheimer 1 February 1999
Lt Col Christopher P. Bisgrove 25 February 2000
Lt Col Neal R. Carbaugh 1 October 2001
Lt Col Roy D. McMickel 19 March 2003
Lt Col Keith S. Miller 23 March 2004
Lt Col Peter F. Davey 12 May 2006
Lt Col Peter Bilodeau 23 May 2008
Lt Col Daniel T. Lasica 21 May 2010
Lt Col Stephane Wolfgeher 24 May 2012
None (not manned) 30 May 2014–1 July 2014
Maj (later, Lt Col) William H. McKibban 2 July 2014
Maj (later, Lt Col) Kathryn K. Gaetke 24 June 2016
Lt Col James D. Smith 29 June 2018–Present.

Narrative.

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27 58 MSS SO SO-GAJ-01, 25 March 1994
28 56 FW SO SO-GAJ-01, 12 July 1995
29 309 FS SO SO-GJ-02, 16 January 1997
30 309 FS SO SO-GJ-02, c. 26 January 1999
31 309 FS SO SO-GJ-01, c. 28 February 2000
32 309 FS SO SJ-001, 1 October 2001
33 309 FS SO 309FS GS-1, 10 March 2003
34 309 FS SO 56 OSS-6-2004-3, 17 March 2004
35 309 FS SO 56OG-G2006-05, 4 May 2006
36 309 FS SO G-018, 22 May 2008
37 56 MSG SO G-006, 19 May 2010
38 56 MSG SO G-004, 9 April 2012
40 56 MSG SO GS-25-14, 18 July 2014
42 56 MSG SO G-11-18, 31 May 2018
On 21 January 1942, the unit was constituted as the 309th Pursuit Squadron (Interceptor). It activated at Baer Field, Indiana, on 30 January 1942, was assigned to the 31st Pursuit (later, 31st Fighter) Group. On 6 February 1942, the unit moved to New Orleans AB, Louisiana. During this period, the squadron trained in the Curtis P-40 Warhawk and Bell P-39 Airacobra. On 15 May 1942, the unit was redesignated as the 308th Fighter Squadron. Four days later, the unit left for Europe without aircraft. Around 12 June 1942, the squadron arrived at High Ercall, England. Equipped with the Supermarine Spitfire, the squadron trained in the aircraft for two months. On 1 August 1942, the unit moved to Westhampnett, England, where it began flying combat missions in the Theater of Operations (ETO) on the 17th.

On 23 October 1942, the squadron departed for the Mediterranean Theater of Operations (MTO). It landed at Tafaraoui, Algeria, 8 November 1942, the first day of the Allied invasion of North Africa. On 14 November 1942, the squadron operated from La Senia, Algeria. On 6 February 1943, the squadron moved to Thelepte, Tunisia. On 17 February 1943, the unit moved to Tebessa, Algeria. Five days later, it moved to Youks-les-Bain, Algeria and four days after that to Kalaa Djerda, Tunisia. On 11 March 1943, it moved back to Thelepte, Tunisia. On 7 April 1943, the squadron moved to Djilma, Tunisi, and five days later to Le Sers, Tunisia. The North Africa Campaign ended on 13 May 1943. Four days later, the squadron moved to Korba, Tunisia. In preparation for the invasion of Sicily, on 3 July 1943, the squadron moved to an island off of Malta by the name of Gozo. The invasion began on 9 July 1943. Four days after that, the squadron moved to Ponte Olivo, Sicily, and then Agrigento, Sicily, eight days after that. On 5 August 1943, the unit moved to Termini, Sicily. The invasion ended on 17 August 1943. On 20 August 1943, the squadron was redesignated as the 309th Fighter Squadron, Single Engine. On 5 September 1943, two days after the Allies invaded Italy, the squadron moved to Milazzo, Sicily. Sixteen days later, the squadron moved to Montecorvino, Italy. On 14 October 1943, it moved again to Pomigliano, Italy. About this time, the squadron converted to the North American P-51 Lightning, which it flew for the rest of the war. In preparation for the Allied amphibious landings at Anzio, the squadron moved to Castel Volturmo, Italy, around 14 January 1944. On 4 April 1944, the unit move to San Severo, Italy, and on 4 March 1945 to Mondolfo, Italy. On 15 July 1945, the squadron moved to Triolo, Italy. On 5 August 1945 it departed for the United States. It arrived at Drew Field, Florida, in August 1945, and inactivated on 7 November 1945. During World War II, the 309th created 15 aces and was credited with 173.75 aerial victories. For its efforts, the squadron garnered 2 Distinguished Unit Citations and 15 campaign streamers.

The 309th Fighter Squadron, Single Engine, reactivated on 20 August 1946, flying the Lockheed P (later, F)-80 Shooting Star at Giebelstadt, Germany. It was reassigned to the 31st Fighter (later, 31st Fighter-Bomber; 31 Fighter-Escort) Group. Around 30 September 1946, the squadron moved to Kitzingen, Germany. On 25 June 1947, the squadron moved to Langley Field, Virginia, and flew the North American P-51 Lightning. On 4 September 1947, the squadron moved to Turner Field (later, Air Force Base), Georgia. In 1948, the squadron began a yearlong transition to the Republic F-84 Thunderjet. On 15 June 1948, the unit was redesignated
as the 309th Fighter Squadron, Jet. On 20 January 1950, the squadron was redesignated as the 309th Fighter-Bomber Squadron and then the 309th Fighter-Escort Squadron on 16 July 1950. Between 26 December 1950 and 25 July 1951, the unit deployed to Manston Royal Air Force Station, England. On 27 July 1951, the squadron was attached to 31st Fighter-Escort Wing. On 16 June 1952, the unit was officially assigned to the 31st Fighter-Escort (later, 31st Strategic Fighter; 31st Fighter-Bomber; 31st Tactical Fighter) Wing. Four days later, the squadron deployed at Misawa Air Base, Japan, and remained there until 16 October 1952. On 20 January 1953, the unit was redesignated as the 309th Strategic Fighter Squadron. Between 7 November 1953 and 9 February 1954, the squadron deployed at Misawa Air Base, Japan. Between 5 January and 9 February 1957, the 309th deployed to Eielson Air Force Base, Alaska, and was attached to Alaskan Air Command. In 1957, the squadron converted to the North American F-100 Super Sabre and was redesignated as the 309th Fighter-Bomber Squadron on 1 April 1957. On 1 July 1958, the squadron was redesignated as the 309th Tactical Fighter Squadron. On 15 March 1959, the squadron moved to George Air Force Base, California. From 9 July-15 November 1960, the squadron deployed at Aviano Air Base, Italy, and attached to an unknown organization.

Between 9 October and 26 November 1961, the unit deployed at Spangdahlem Air Base, Germany, and was attached to an unknown organization. On 1 October 1962, the squadron moved to Homestead, Air Force Base, Florida. Between 7 July and 22 December 1962, the unit was deployed at Kadena Air Base, Japan, and attached to 18th Tactical Fighter Wing. Between 26 September and 31 December 1963, the squadron deployed at Itazuke Air Base, Japan, was attached to the 18th Tactical Fighter Wing. Between 5 August and 27 November 1964, the unit deployed to Cigli Air Base, Turkey, and was attached to 7231st Combat Support Group. Between 18 January and 24 April 1966, the 309th deployed to Cigli Air Base, and was attached to 7231st until 1 April 1966 when it was attached to the 41st Combat Support Group.

On 13 December 1966, it left Homestead, and three days later arrived at Tuy Hoa Air Base, South Vietnam. In October 1970, the squadron left Tuy Hoa Air Base, and around 9 October 1970 arrived at England Air Force Base, Louisiana, and was assigned to the 4403d Fighter Wing. In Southeast Asia, the squadron flew combat missions. During the war in Southeast Asia, the 309th earned a Presidential Unit Citation, 10 campaign streamers, and a Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross with Palm. On 30 October 1970, it moved to Homestead Air Force Base, Florida, reassigned to the 31st Tactical Fighter Wing, and began flying the McDonnell Douglas F-4 Phantom II. In 1970, the squadron became a replacement training unit for undergraduate and navigator graduates in F-4 tactical fighter aircraft. On 1 July 1982, the squadron was redesignated as the 309th Tactical Fighter Training Squadron.

During 1986, the squadron converted to the Lockheed F-16 Fighting Falcon and retained its training mission. On 1 October 1986, the unit was redesignated as the 309th Tactical Fighter Squadron. On 1 November 1991, the squadron was redesignated as the 309th Fighter Squadron and reassigned to the 31st Operations Group. On 24 August 1992, Hurricane Andrew devastated Homestead Air Force Base, Florida. On 23 August 1992, the squadron began operating from Shaw Air Force Base, South Carolina, and was attached to the 363d Operations Group. On 1 October 1992, the move to Shaw Air Force Base was made permanent. On 20 November 1992, the unit was assigned to 363d Operations Group. On 31 December 1993, the squadron inactivated.
On 1 April 1994, the squadron reactivated at Luke Air Force Base, Arizona, and was assigned to the 56th Operations Group. During this time, the 309th conducted qualification training for USAF student pilots and transition training for pilots in F-16 aircraft. On 30 May 2014, the squadron was unmanned and re-manned on 2 July 2014. Since re-manning, the squadron conducted qualification training for USAF and Partner Nation student pilots and transition training for pilots in F-35A aircraft.

Locally Updated on 20 February 2020

Locally Updated by Rick Griset