

VFA-203

Lineage

Established as Attack Squadron TWO HUNDRED AND THREE (VA-203) on 1 July 1970.

Redesignated Strike Fighter Squadron TWO HUNDRED AND THREE (VFA-203) on 1 October 1989. The first squadron to be assigned the VA-203 and VFA-203 designation.

Squadron Insignia and Nickname



The squadron's one and only insignia, the Blue Dolphins. When the squadron was redesignated VFA the VA designation in the scroll was changed to VFA.

The squadron's insignia was approved by CNO on 24 October 1974. Colors for the blue dolphin are as follows: a dark blue border with the upper half of the background blue and the lower half red, separated by a dark blue line; dark blue dolphin with white markings; blue scroll with dark blue outlines and lettering.

Nickname: Blue Dolphins, 1971-present.

Chronology of Significant Events

1 Jul 1970: VA-203 was established as a reserve squadron under a new concept in the reorganization of the Naval Air Reserve Force. The reorganization was intended to make the reserves more compatible with active duty units and to increase the combat readiness of the Naval Air Reserve Force.

15–22 May 1972: The squadron deployed to NAS Oceana to participate in exercise Exotic Dancer V, designed to test multiservice operations under a unified command organization.

Feb 1980: The squadron participated in a combined NATO forces exercise conducted at NAS Bermuda called Safe Passage.

Home Port Assignments

Location	Assignment Date
NAS Jacksonville	01 Jul 1970
NAS Cecil Field	01 Dec 1977

Commanding Officers

	Date Assumed Command
CDR Walter N. Vance III	01 Jul 1970
CDR James S. Bassett	22 Jan 1972
CDR Bobby S. Morgan	29 Sep 1973
LCDR Jimmie W. Seeley	13 Sep 1975



A couple of squadron A-4L Skyhawks in flight, circa early 1970s.

Commanding Officers—Continued

	<i>Date Assumed Command</i>
CDR F. Francis Hughes, Jr.	20 Aug 1977
CDR A. Anthony Isgar	21 Jul 1979
CDR David A. Dollarhide	21 Feb 1981
CDR Jack C. Harris	21 Aug 1982
CDR George W. Weiler	1984

Commanding Officers—Continued

	<i>Date Assumed Command</i>
CDR Timothy G. Palmer	24 Apr 1985
CDR Thomas J. Verrengia	Jun 1986
CDR Ray K. Waddell	12 Dec 1987
CDR Richard A. Bailey	1989
CDR William C. Bailey	26 May 1990



A squadron A-7A Corsair II in flight, circa 1974–1977.

Aircraft Assignment

<i>Type of Aircraft</i>	<i>Date Type First Received</i>
A-4L	Jul 1971
A-7A	05 Apr 1974
A-7B	Aug 1977
A-7E	22 Sep 1983
F/A-18	05 Nov 1989

Air Wing Assignments

<i>Air Wing</i>	<i>Tail Code</i>	<i>Assignment Date</i>
CVWR-20	AF	01 Jul 1970

A squadron F/A-18A Hornet at NAS Fallon, Nevada, May 1990 (Courtesy Robert Lawson Collection).



VFA-204

Lineage

Established as Attack Squadron TWO HUNDRED FOUR (VA-204) on 1 July 1970.

Redesignation Strike Fighter Squadron TWO HUNDRED FOUR (VFA-204) on 1 May 1991. It is the first squadron to be assigned the VA-204 and VFA-204 designation.



The squadron's River Rattlers insignia was approved by CNO in 1970.



When the squadron was redesignated, the VA designation in the insignia scroll was changed to VFA.

Squadron Insignia and Nickname

The squadron's insignia was approved by CNO on 31 August 1970. Colors for the insignia are: a yellow background outlined in red; white scroll outlined in red with blue lettering; green bomb outlined in black, with a yellow band on the nose and white markings on the fin; tan snake with green diamond and white markings, the underside of the snake is yellow with black markings; white fangs outlined in black; a red tongue with a dark pink mouth, outlined in red and a yellow eye with a red pupil; the entire snake is outlined in black.

Nickname: River Rattlers, 1970s-present.

Chronology of Significant Events

1 Jul 1970: VA-204 was a reserve squadron established as part of a reorganization intended to increase the combat readiness of the Naval Air Reserve Force.

May 1972: The squadron participated in exercise Exotic Dancer V, designed to test multiservice operations under a unified command organization.

Feb 1980: VA-204 participated in a combined NATO forces exercise conducted near NAS Bermuda called Safe Passage.

Home Port Assignments

Location	Assignment Date
NAS Memphis	01 Jul 1970
NAS New Orleans	Jan 1978

Commanding Officers

	Date Assumed Command
CDR A. R. Scharff, Jr.	01 Jul 1970
CDR Theodore B. Hannah	01 Jul 1972
CDR Sidney C. Dabbs	12 Jan 1974
CDR Kenneth C. Juergens	12 Jul 1975
CDR James S. Greenwood	15 Feb 1977
CDR Norris J. Flagler	23 Sep 1978
CDR James A. Cook	22 Mar 1980
CDR Edwin R. Phelps III	24 Oct 1981
CDR Joseph A. Chronic	08 Jan 1983
CAPT Kenneth A. McCluskey	14 Apr 1984
CDR Donald R. Roesh	02 Mar 1985
CDR Robert O. Buschmann	13 Sep 1986
CDR Douglas R. Fischer	19 Mar 1988
CDR Keith R. LaFlair	Jul 1989
CDR Ronald J. Roshelli	Jul 1990
CDR D. L. Kloepfel	Jul 1991



A squadron A-4L Skyhawk comes in for a landing aboard Saratoga (CV 60).



A squadron A-7E Corsair II comes in for a landing, 1984.

Aircraft Assignment

<i>Type of Aircraft</i>	<i>Date Type First Received</i>
A-4C	01 Jul 1970
A-4L	Aug 1970
A-7B	15 Mar 1978
A-7E	Jun 1986
F/A-18A	Apr 1991

Air Wing Assignments

<i>Air Wing</i>	<i>Tail Code</i>	<i>Assignment Date</i>
CVWR-20	AF	01 Jul 1970

Unit Awards Received

<i>Unit Award</i>	<i>Inclusive Dates Covering Unit Award</i>	
NAVE	01 Jan 1984	31 Dec 1984



A squadron A-7E Corsair II flies over New Orleans, Louisiana, 1984.



A squadron F/A-18A Hornet, 1992 (Courtesy Robert Lawson Collection).

VFA-303

Lineage

Established as Attack Squadron THREE HUNDRED THREE (VA-303) on 1 July 1970.

Redesignated Strike Fighter Squadron THREE HUNDRED THREE (VFA-303) on 1 January 1984.

Disestablished on 31 December 1994. The first squadron to be assigned the VA-303 and VFA-303 designation.



The squadron's Golden Hawks insignia.

black markings and a red lightning bolt emanating from its beak; the Corsair II design is white; blue scrolls outlined in gold with gold lettering.

A modification to the above insignia was approved by CNO on 24 April 1984. The bridge design was replaced by brown mountains with white markings; the Corsair II design was replaced by a white hornet and the Attack Squadron 303 designation was changed to Strike Fighter Squadron 303. All the other colors remained the same as the previous insignia.



Following the redesignation of the squadron, the designation in the insignia scroll was changed to Strike Fighter Squadron 303.

Squadron Insignia and Nickname

The squadron's insignia was approved by CNO on 23 February 1972. Colors for the hawk insignia are: a blue background outlined by two gold circles with white diamonds between the gold circles; white and red bridge; gold hawk with black markings and a red lightning bolt emanating from its beak; the Corsair II design is white; blue scrolls outlined in gold with gold lettering.

Nickname: Golden Hawks, 1972–1994.

Chronology of Significant Events

1 Jul 1970: VA-303, a reserve squadron, established as part of a reorganization of the reserves intended to increase the combat readiness of the Naval Air Reserve Force.

Apr 1971: VA-303 was the first reserve squadron to transition to the A-7A Corsair II.

Nov 1975: The squadron deployed aboard *Ranger* (CV 61) for the annual active duty training and as part

of CVWR-30's tactical air mobilization test and the operational readiness exercise/inspection to ensure the squadron was seaworthy and combat ready.

19 Oct 1985: VFA-303 was the first reserve squadron to transition to the F/A-18 Hornet.

25 Sep–20 Nov 1990: A detachment of the squadron's F/A-18 Hornets and personnel, along with VFA-305, joined CVW-11 aboard *Abraham Lincoln* (CVN 72) for her transit from Norfolk to Alameda, via Cape Horn.

Nov 1990: A detachment of squadron aircraft and personnel deployed to NWC China Lake in direct support of Operation Desert Shield. Provided critical real world electronic warfare test and evaluation missions requiring aircraft fully functional with electronic warfare, Harm missile and electronic countermeasure suites.

1993: In early 1993 the squadron added the roles of Adversary and Fleet Support to its primary mission.



A squadron A-4C Skyhawk, April 1971 (Courtesy Robert Lawson Collection).

Home Port Assignments

Location	Assignment Date
NAS Alameda	01 Jul 1970
NAS Lemoore	01 Jan 1984

Commanding Officers

	Date Assumed Command
CDR William E. Nelson	01 Jul 1970
CDR Philip H. Benz	17 Jul 1971
CDR Olin A. Gray	21 Jan 1973
CDR Reid T. Melville	14 Dec 1974
CDR Alfred F. Talley	19 Jun 1976
CDR Thomas E. Gehman	17 Jun 1978
CDR Donald P. Smith	21 Jun 1980
CDR Harold Shorr	1982
CDR Richard A. Banks	23 Jul 1983
CDR Robert R. Greathouse	1984
CDR Jon L. Green	Oct 1985
CDR Scott H. Davis	11 Apr 1987



Two squadron A-7A Corsair IIs in flight, 1977.

Commanding Officers—Continued

	<i>Date Assumed Command</i>
CDR John S. Wood	22 Oct 1988
CDR Charles B. Askey	19 May 1990
CDR Barry C. Douglas	18 May 1991
CDR Ronald J. Smeltzer	19 Sep 1992
CDR Jeffrey L. Schram	08 Jan 1994

Aircraft Assignment

<i>Type of Aircraft</i>	<i>Date Type First Received</i>
A-4C	01 Jul 1970
A-7A	05 Apr 1971
A-7B	11 Aug 1977
F/A-18A	19 Oct 1985

Air Wing Assignments

<i>Air Wing</i>	<i>Tail Code</i>	<i>Assignment Date</i>
CVWR-30	ND	01 Jul 1970

Unit Awards Received

<i>Unit Award</i>	<i>Inclusive Dates Covering Unit Award</i>	
NAVE	01 Jul 1971	31 Dec 1972
	01 Jan 1987	31 Dec 1987
	01 Jan 1989	31 Dec 1989
	01 Jan 1991	31 Dec 1991



A squadron F/A-18A Hornet comes in for a carrier landing, circa 1986.

VFA-305

Lineage

Established as Attack Squadron THREE HUNDRED FIVE (VA-305) on 1 July 1970.

Redesignated Strike Fighter Squadron THREE HUNDRED FIVE (VFA-305) on 1 January 1987.

Disestablished on 31 December 1994. The first squadron to be assigned the VA-305 and VFA-305 designation.



The dagger design was the squadron's first insignia.



In 1974, the squadron adopted a the wolf head insignia. The designation in the scroll was changed from Attack Squadron 305 to Strike Fighter Squadron 305 in 1987.

Squadron Insignia and Nickname

The squadron's first insignia was approved by CNO on 29 June 1971. Colors for the dagger insignia were: a gray background outlined in green; green diagonal stripes; gold dagger outlined in black; gray scroll outlined in green with black lettering.

A new insignia was adopted and approved by CNO on 3 January 1974. Colors for the wolf insignia are: a white background outlined in brown; green diagonal stripes outlined in brown; brown and white wolf's head, white and red eye, white mouth and teeth with a red tongue; white scroll outlined in brown with brown lettering.

Nicknames: The Hackers, 1971–1974.
Lobos, 1974–1994.

Chronology of Significant Events

1 Jul 1970: VA-305, a reserve squadron, established as part of a reorganization of the reserves intended to increase the combat readiness of the Naval Air Reserve Force.

Nov 1976: The squadron deployed aboard *Ranger* (CV 61) for the annual active duty training and as part of CVWR-30's tactical air mobilization test and the operational readiness exercise/inspection to ensure the squadron was seaworthy and combat ready and as part of a congressional ordered Reserve Air Test.

25 Sep–20 Nov 1990: The squadron's deployment with CVW-11 aboard *Abraham Lincoln* (CVN 72) was the first total integration of a reserve squadron with an active duty air wing for a long deployment in support of a direct fleet operational requirements. Squadron personnel participated in exercises and officer exchanges with the armed forces of Argentina and Chile and also flew drug interdiction missions during the deployment.

1993: In 1993 the squadron added the roles of Adversary and Fleet Support to its primary mission.



A line of squadron A-4C Skyhawks, 1971.

Home Port Assignments

Location	Assignment Date
NAS Los Alamitos	01 Jul 1970
NAS Point Mugu	Jan 1971

A squadron A-7A Corsair II on a training flight, circa early 1970s.



Commanding Officers

	<i>Date Assumed Command</i>
CDR Steven B. Daggett	01 Jul 1970
CDR Louis F. Carson, Jr.	09 Jan 1972
CDR Earl L. Jackson, Jr.	08 Jul 1973
CDR Donald B. Norris	1975
CDR Ronald V. Boch	1976
CDR Louis E. Jones	21 Jan 1978
CDR Paul G. Giberson	30 Sep 1979
CDR Douglas L. Bailey	25 Apr 1981
CDR Jerry R. DeGiorgio	24 Oct 1982
CDR Robert W. Lind	23 Jul 1984
CDR Dennis J. Sapp	23 Feb 1986
CDR John P. Hazelrig	19 Sep 1987
CDR Jan D. Janiec	23 Oct 1988

Commanding Officers—Continued

	<i>Date Assumed Command</i>
CDR John K. McGuire, Jr.	21 Jul 1990
CDR P. B. Sanwick	20 Jul 1991
CDR Steven R. Sewell	14 Nov 1992
CDR Barry E. Rainey	12 Feb 1994

Aircraft Assignment

<i>Type of Aircraft</i>	<i>Date Type First Received</i>
A-4C	01 Jul 1970
A-4E	Dec 1971
A-7A	26 Jun 1972
A-7B	1978
F/A-18A	Jan 1987



A formation of squadron A-7E Corsair IIs, 1984.

Major Overseas Deployments

<i>Date of Departure</i>	<i>Date of Return</i>	<i>Air Wing</i>	<i>Carrier</i>	<i>Type of Aircraft</i>	<i>Area of Operation</i>
25 Sep 1990	20 Nov 1990	CVW-11	CVN-72	F/A-18A	East to West Coast Transit via Cape Horn



A squadron F/A-18A Hornet touches down on Abraham Lincoln's (CVN 72) deck, October 1990.

Air Wing Assignments

<i>Air Wing</i>	<i>Tail Code</i>	<i>Assignment Date</i>
CVWR-30	ND	01 Jul 1970
CVW-11		Sep 1990
CVWR-30	ND	Dec 1990

Unit Awards Received

<i>Unit Award</i>	<i>Inclusive Dates Covering Unit Award</i>	
NAVE	01 Oct 1976	30 Sep 1978
	01 Jan 1983	31 Dec 1983
	01 Jan 1990	31 Dec 1990
MUC	Nov 1976	Jan 1980



A squadron F/A-18A Hornet at Naval Air Warfare Center Weapons Division Point Mugu, California, 1993.