

**FIRST WOMAN BLUE ANGELS JET DEMO PILOT**  
**CURRENTLY A SINGLE-SHIP SUPER HORNET DEMO PILOT, LT AMANDA LEE HAS**  
**ENLISTED ROOTS AND IS NOW ABOUT TO MAKE HISTORY WITH THE BLUE ANGELS**

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U.S. Navy Lt. Amanda Lee, who goes by the callsign "Stalin," has been selected to become the first woman to join the famed Blue Angels as a pilot on its core six-ship jet demonstration team. *The War Zone* was the first to report that a female naval aviator had been selected for the high-profile role, as you can read more about in our initial reporting, but did not name Lee.

The Blue Angels, first formed in 1946 and officially known as the U.S. Navy Flight Demonstration Squadron, made the announcement official Monday morning.

"Among those team members selected this year is the squadron's first woman F/A-18E/F demonstration pilot," according to a post on the Blue Angels official Facebook page. "For over 55 years, hundreds of women have served with the Blue Angels representing the very best of the Navy and Marine Corps. Come the start of the 2023 show season, these six selectees will join the ranks of the U.S. Navy's most elite aviation officers, ground support officers, and enlisted maintenance personnel already serving on the team."

"We had an overwhelming number of applicants from all over the globe this year," Capt. Brian Kesselring, the commanding officer and flight leader of the Blue Angels, said in a statement. "We look forward to training our fantastic new team members, passing on the torch, and watching the incredible things this team will accomplish in 2023."

The Navy's elite Blue Angels aerial demonstration team announced that Lt. Amanda Lee has been selected to join the core six-ship unit.



Lt. Lee is currently an F/A-18 Super Hornet demo pilot with Strike Fighter Squadron 106's (VFA-106) Rhino Demo Team and also a Super Hornet instructor. She grew up in Mounds View, Minnesota, according to the Navy. While attending the University of Minnesota in Duluth and working at UPS, she decided to enlist in the Navy, graduating from Recruit Training Command in Great Lakes, Illinois in 2007.



F/A-18 SUPER HORNET

A previous official Navy bio for Lee says:

Her successful enlisted career as an Aviation Electronics Technician led to her selection into the Seaman-to-Admiral (STA-21) Commissioning Program. Lee received a Bachelor of Science in Biochemistry at Old Dominion University, and earned her commission in August 2013. She was designated a Naval Aviator in April 2016 and recently completed a deployment aboard the aircraft carrier USS *Harry S. Truman*, in support of Dynamic Force Employment, Operation Inherent Resolve, as well as numerous exercises with NATO Allies.

Selecting a pilot who already has experience as a demo pilot in the Super Hornet and is familiar with the air show grind is certainly logical. The fact that Lee was also an enlisted sailor and took everything the Navy had to offer to accomplish her dream is also a huge plus as the Blue Angels represent far more than just Navy pilots. Still, flying the Blue Angels demo is a far cry physically compared to the single-ship demo. You can read all about why in our previous reporting.



In January 2019, Lee was interviewed by the Navy ahead of the first all-woman pilot flyover to honor the life and legacy of retired Navy Captain, Rosemary Mariner, a woman pioneer in Naval aviation.

Lee said she is "a pilot first, person second and my gender isn't really an issue." She credited Mariner, who died Jan. 24, 2019 at the age of 65, for having "paved that way for us. So it's really a huge honor. I'm super humbled to be a part of this flyover in her honor."

Mariner, she said, "really was the starting point of female aviation. She's one of the first original female pilots allowed in the naval pipeline. Young kids growing up and not thinking whether they can do something or not because of their race, gender, ethnicity - they just go out say, 'this is what I want to do.' And that question isn't really in their mind kind of all starts back with Captain Mariner and some of the doors that she broke down."

All new Blue Angels team members, including Lee, are now expected to report to the unit in September, where they will go through a two-month turnover period. The team's 2022 show season ends in November, concluding with the Blue Angels Homecoming Air Show at Naval Air Station Pensacola in Florida. After that, the entire squadron will go through a five-month training period, conducted in parts at NAS Pensacola and Naval Air Facility El Centro in California. While the team is very diligent in its selection process, it isn't unheard of for new pilots to not click with the unique demands of the demo and end up having to head back to their squadrons. Once again, this is rare, but it has happened as safety is the team's top priority, always.



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