

1 March 2026

Lieutenant Colonel Patricia Nguyen

457th Fighter Squadron

1 Lightning Way

NAS Fort Worth JRB, TX 12345

Dear Lieutenant Colonel Nguyen:

Every F-35A that leaves our final assembly line in Fort Worth gets a serial number, a fresh coat of paint, and eventually, a squadron patch. For the last four years, I've been one of the structures engineers who signs off on that airplane before it goes anywhere, and for at least a dozen of those jets, the patch on the tail has belonged to the 457th. I've spent four years making sure your airplanes are structurally sound enough to do the mission. Now I'd like the chance to be the one flying them.

Four years at Lockheed have given me plenty of chances to lead, just not from a cockpit. I currently lead a team of 12 engineers and technicians accountable for fleet health across more than 450 aircraft, and I own a \$2.1M annual budget that has delivered every scheduled milestone on time or early for three years running. When a fleet-wide grounding issue came in under a 60-day Air Force-mandated deadline, I was the one accountable for coordinating six depots and getting more than 30 aircraft back in the air two months ahead of schedule. I currently mentor three junior engineers through their first independent certifications, and I was selected for Lockheed's Emerging Leaders Program, which put me in a room with the top five percent of our engineering workforce company-wide. I'm used to being the person whose people, budget, and deadline other people are counting on, and I think that same instinct for accountability translates directly to flying an airplane instead of just repairing one.

I've spent the last two years building my flight time on purpose. I currently hold a private pilot certificate with 95 hours logged, including solo cross-country flying, with my instrument rating nearly complete. Working inside the F-35 program has given me an unusually deep understanding of the systems, aerodynamics, and mission planning behind the jet before I've ever flown it, which I believe will shorten my learning curve at UPT rather than lengthen it. More than anything, four years of engineering discipline, checklists, technical orders, and zero tolerance for shortcuts, has prepared me for a training pipeline that rewards exactly that kind of precision.

I know the 457th will see plenty of strong applicants for this board, many with more flight hours than I have today. What I bring is four years of literally building the airplane you fly, a genuine understanding of its systems and limitations, and the engineering discipline to match. I'd welcome the opportunity to visit the squadron again and to formally interview with your board whenever the timing works. I'm easy to reach at (555) 555-5555 or michael.collins@fake.com, and Fort Worth is a short drive from the squadron whenever you'd like to talk in person.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Michael R. Collins