F/A-18 Super Hornet Passes 1,000 Flight Milestone

The F/A-18E/F Super Hornet flew its 1,000th flight Friday, Sept. 12, with F/A-18E/F Integrated Test Team (ITT) pilot Cdr. Rob Niewoehner at the controls. Earlier in the day, ITT pilots flew seven flights setting the stage for the one-hour 1,000th flight.

"The Super Hornet is a great airplane - one that will prove its value to naval aviation in the years ahead," said Capt. Gib Godwin, F/A-18 program manager for the U.S. Navy. "But it is the people of the Super Hornet -- government and contractor, F/A-18 program and the entire naval aviation system team -- who have contributed so much to make the F/A-18E/F a success. The credit for this achievement is all theirs."

Capt. (Select) Robert O. Wirt, Jr., F/A-18E/F ITT government flight test director, said, "The Super Hornet keeps proving that it is truly the right airplane at exactly the right time for naval aviation. This flight test program demonstrates every day that the Super Hornet will bring enormous capability to the fleet."

Nearly two years into the three-year flight test program at Naval Air Station Patuxent River, Md., the Super Hornet is on schedule and on budget, with the aircraft still well under specified weight.

During 1997, the Super Hornet has undergone a variety of flight tests, including high angle of attack and spin tests; flying qualities and performance tests; weapon delivery/accuracy tests; weapon separation tests; launch of air-to-air missiles (AIM-9 Sidewinder, AIM-7 Sparrow, AIM-120 AMRAAM); release of air-to-ground weapons (Harpoon, SLAM, GBU-10, HARM and Maverick); and release of free-fall air-to-ground bombs (Mk-76, BDU-48, Mk-82LD, Mk-83HD and Mk-84).

The Super Hornet is an all-weather, day/night, multi-mission strike fighter that gives the U.S. Navy greatly improved fuel and weapons-carrying capability, increased range and increased ability to survive in a wartime environment.

Seven flight test and three ground test articles have been produced. Production of the first operational Super Hornets began this month at Boeing facilities in St. Louis.

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