First Production F/A-18E/F Fuselage Joined

Final assembly of the first production F/A-18E/F Boeing Super Hornet began here today when the center/aft fuselage and the forward fuselage were joined.

The forward fuselage is built at Boeing facilities here while the center/aft fuselage is produced by Northrop Grumman in their El Segundo, Calif., facilities. The mating of the two fuselage sections is accomplished using laser technology provided by a Nicholson splice tool. This process not only decreases the time required to mate the two sections, but also enhances the accuracy of the fit, resulting in a near seamless splice.

The Super Hornet is approximately 25 percent larger than the current F/A-18C/D Hornet, with greater internal fuel capacity providing increased range and endurance. It also has additional weapons stations for increased flexibility, greater carrier recovery payload, improved survivability and growth margin to accommodate new systems as they evolve.

Seven developmental Super Hornets are conducting flight testing as part of Engineering and Manufacturing Development at the Naval Air Warfare Centers in Patuxent River, Md., and China Lake, Calif. Some improvements developed during testing have already been incorporated on these first Low-Rate Initial Production aircraft. The U.S. Navy plans to procure between 548 and 785 Super Hornets.

###

98-93

For further information:
George Sillia
(314) 232-6496