Boeing Delivers Fourth and Fifth Production Super Hornets

The Boeing Company delivered the fourth and fifth production model F/A-18E/F Super Hornet aircraft to the U.S. Navy April 30. Both F model Super Hornets, two-seat versions of the aircraft, ferried from St. Louis to Naval Air Station China Lake, Calif.

The first seven production model Super Hornets are slated to begin operational evaluation (OPEVAL) with Navy Air Test and Evaluation Squadron (VX-9) at China Lake this month. During the six months of OPEVAL, VX-9 pilots and crews will test the aircraft in all mission areas.

The Navy has ordered 62 Super Hornets and plans to buy a minimum of 548 of the aircraft. To date, Boeing has delivered one E model, or single-seat version of the Super Hornet, and four F models. All five production aircraft have been delivered on or ahead of the contractual delivery date.

Congress is considering authorizing the Navy to enter into a multi-year contract for the purchase of 222 F/A-18E/F aircraft over five years -- fiscal years 2000 through 2004. The proposed multi-year contract would save U.S. taxpayers about $700 million.

The Super Hornet engineering and manufacturing development flight-test program concluded April 30 at Naval Air Station Patuxent River, Md. The government-industry integrated test team completed 3,172 flights and 4,673 flight hours.

An industry team led by Boeing builds the Super Hornet. Boeing builds the forward fuselage and wings, and conducts final assembly. Northrop Grumman Corp. is the principal airframe subcontractor, supplying the center and aft fuselage. General Electric Co. produces the engines, and Raytheon Co. manufacturers the aircraft's radar.

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