Boeing Delivers Sixth Production Super Hornet

The Boeing Company delivered the sixth production model F/A-18E/F Super Hornet to the U.S. Navy June 12. The aircraft, a single-seat E model, ferried from St. Louis to Naval Air Station Key West, Fla. where it joined the other production Super Hornets for the first of three detachments planned during operational evaluation.

Air Test and Evaluation Squadron Nine began OPEVAL at Naval Air Weapons Station China Lake. Calif., last month with the first five production Super Hornets. A total of seven production model Super Hornets will take part in OPEVAL. Delivery of the seventh and final OPEVAL aircraft will bring the total for VX-9 to three E-models and four two-seat F-models.

The OPEVAL team will complete about 700 sorties in the Super Hornet during the next six months of testing. When OPEVAL is completed, a full evaluation will be forwarded to Navy leadership with recommendations as to whether the Super Hornet is operationally effective and suitable.

The Navy has ordered 62 Super Hornets and plans to buy a minimum of 548 of the aircraft. All six 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.

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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