

## **Boeing Delivers Final OPEVAL Super Hornet to U.S. Navy**

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Boeing delivered the seventh production model F/A-18E/F Super Hornet to the U.S. Navy June 25. The aircraft, a single-seat E model, ferried from St. Louis to Naval Air Weapons Station China Lake, Calif., where it joined the first six production Super Hornets already engaged in operational evaluation (OPEVAL). The aircraft was delivered a month ahead of schedule.

Air Test and Evaluation Squadron Nine began OPEVAL at China Lake last month with the Super Hornet. Delivery of this final OPEVAL aircraft brings 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 five months of testing. 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 seven production aircraft have been delivered on or ahead of their contractual delivery dates.

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. manufactures the radar.

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