

## **U.S. Navy Says Boeing Super Hornet is Operationally Effective and Suitable**

The Boeing F/A-18E/F Super Hornet garnered the highest possible rating coming out of operational evaluation when it was declared operationally effective and operationally suitable. That was the official finding of the U.S. Navy's Operational Test and Evaluation Force announced by the Navy today.

"This is truly outstanding," said Pat Finneran, Boeing vice president for the F/A-18 program. "This is the best grade we could receive for OPEVAL, and it's a reflection of the teamwork and dedication put forth by all the members of the Hornet Industry Team, the U.S. Navy and a host of suppliers nationwide. We couldn't be happier about receiving this successful grade."

Naval aviators from Air Test and Evaluation Squadron Nine (VX-9) at Naval Air Warfare Center-Weapons Division China Lake, Calif., conducted OPEVAL of the Super Hornet. After flying more than 850 sorties and putting the aircraft through a complex variety of tactical missions representing the operational arena, VX-9 pilots drafted their official report for Navy leadership. As is the case with all such reports, details other than the overall conclusion are classified.

OPEVAL began in May 1999 and concluded two weeks ahead of schedule on Nov. 16.

The National Aeronautic Association recently announced that it had selected the Super Hornet to receive the Collier Trophy recognizing the top aeronautical achievement in the United States for 1999. The Boeing Company, the Hornet Industry Team and the U.S. Navy were recognized for, "designing, manufacturing, testing and introducing into service the F/A-18E/F multi-mission strike fighter aircraft, the most capable and survivable carrier-based combat aircraft."

A successful OPEVAL is one of several requirements for the Super Hornet program to get Milestone III approval to start full-rate production and multi-year procurement.

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