Boeing F/A-18 Hornets Surpass 4 Million Flight Hours

Squadrons around the world commemorated the 4 millionth flight hour of the F/A-18 Hornet earlier today. The U.S. Navy designated noon Eastern Standard Time as the ceremonial flight hour enabling any Hornet or Super Hornet squadron airborne at that time to participate.

Traditionally, one aircraft and its crew log milestone flight hours. In a break from tradition, the U.S. Navy invited the entire Hornet community to take part in this historic event.

One of the many squadrons that participated was VFA-82 based at Marine Corps Air Station Beaufort, S.C. Four VFA-82 Hornets were airborne, piloted by Cdr. Mark Hunter, Lt. Cdr. Tom Hole, Lt. Joe Guerrein and Lt. Israel Harden.

"It is an honor to be part of this incredible milestone," said Cdr. Hunter. "Having flown the Hornet into the millennium on deployment - it just keeps getting better."

More than 1,200 A, B, C and D model Hornets are deployed with the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps, and the air forces of Australia, Canada, Finland, Kuwait, Malaysia, Spain and Switzerland. The first F/A-18 Hornets entered service with the U.S. Navy more than 17 years ago. The combat-proven aircraft are expected to remain in service for another 20 years operating alongside the newest addition to the family, the F/A-18E/F Super Hornet. To date, 30 E and F model Super Hornets have been delivered to the U.S. Navy.

The Super Hornet will continue the tradition of safety, reliability, maintainability and mission performance that pilots have come to expect from the Hornet. Fleet readiness squadron VFA-122 at Naval Air Station Lemoore, Calif., is now training the first class of Super Hornet pilots. Pilots will graduate in early 2001 and enter the first fleet squadron of Super Hornets. First fleet deployment is scheduled for spring of 2002.

An industry team led by Boeing builds the Hornet and Super Hornet. Boeing builds the forward fuselage and wings, and completes 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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