Boeing F/A-18E/F Super Hornet completes AESA first flight

The Boeing [NYSE: BA] F/A-18E/F Super Hornet program moved closer to equipping the fleet with the latest in radar technology on July 30 at Naval Air Systems Command China Lake, Calif., when a test aircraft carrying the APG-79 Active Electronically Scanned Array radar system completed several test flights with the radar operating.

"We are continually increasing the capabilities that puts the 'super' in Super Hornet," said Naval Air Systems Command F/A-18 Program Manager Capt. B.D. Gaddis. "This is a major step toward making the F/A-18 all that we've planned it to be."

The AESA radar system replaces existing mechanically scanned antennas with a radar beam that can be steered at close to the speed of light. This rapid beam scan feature improves performance dramatically, and because the array is solid state, mechanical breakdowns will be virtually eliminated.

"The AESA radar system is part of a spiral development designed into the Super Hornet playing an important role in its promised leading-edge technology," said Tony Parasida, vice president, F/A-18 program, for Boeing. "The Super Hornet was designed with room for growth -- room to incorporate new technologies now and to enhance the aircraft's network centric capability."

AESA works with several existing elements of the Super Hornet weapon system, such as the stores management system, the gun director, and AIM-120 and AIM-9 missiles, to enhance the lethality, survivability and affordability of the F/A-18E/F. The radar system will increase situational awareness of the battlespace and reduce observability of the aircraft, as well as provide significantly improved operational capability in a weapons platform that already provides superior air and ground attack maneuverability and accuracy. Boeing expects to deliver the AESA radar system, built under a subcontract by Raytheon Corporation of El Segundo, Calif., as part of the F/A-18E/F by 2005.

A unit of The Boeing Company, Integrated Defense Systems is one of the world's largest space and defense businesses. Headquartered in St. Louis, Boeing Integrated Defense Systems is a $25 billion business. It provides systems solutions to its global military, government and commercial customers. It is a leading provider of intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance; the world's largest military aircraft manufacturer; the world's largest satellite manufacturer and a leading provider of space-based communications; the primary systems integrator for U.S. missile defense; NASA's largest contractor; and a global leader in launch services.

###

For further information:
Kathleen M. Cook
Naval Systems
(314) 233-681
kathleen.m.cook@boeing.com
Patricia Frost
Naval Systems
(314) 234-6996
patricia.a.frost@boeing.com