Boeing Delivers Super Hornets With Lower Life-Cycle Costs and Redesigned Forward Fuselage

Boeing [NYSE:BA] has delivered the first F/A-18E/F Super Hornet with a redesigned forward fuselage which will improve producibility, minimize acquisition and life cycle costs, and pave the way for incorporating advanced mission system upgrades to the aircraft.

"The redesigned forward fuselage is key to the incorporation of spiral development systems in the F/A-18E/F Block II configuration," said Tony Parasida, vice president of the F/A-18 program for Boeing. "These systems include the Advanced Electronically Scanned Array radar, advanced mission computer and displays, fibre-channel network and a redesigned F/A-18F aft cockpit. These systems ensure the Super Hornet remains the future of naval aviation."

The new forward fuselage has 40 percent fewer parts, 51 percent fewer fasteners and takes 31 percent less time to build -- all leading to lower costs for Boeing, the U.S. Navy and U.S. taxpayers. By utilizing composite skins, the Super Hornet team has increased frame spacing while reducing skin splices, eliminating 58 percent of the outer mold line fasteners.

The redesigned forward fuselage is designed to last three times longer than required to ensure low life cycle cost and high operational readiness. In addition, the skins contain conductive features that are protected from maintenance-induced damage. The addition of composite skins to the proven corrosion control processes for metallic substructure will improve the corrosion resistance of this environmentally exposed structure.

Continuing the F/A-18's tradition of high reliability and maintainability, the new outer mold line access doors are identical to or larger than the existing designs, but with fewer fasteners.

A Boeing tool suite, Design for Manufacture, and Producibility Simulation was utilized from conceptual design, through detail design, and into recurring production. The toolset is built around parametric, three-dimensional solid models and includes feature-based design tools for structure and subsystems, integrated structural analysis tools, manufacturing simulation, and virtual reality models.

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.

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