

Boeing Brings Advanced Targeting FLIR to F/A-18E/F Fleet for Greater Lethality, Safety

The U.S. Navy has declared initial operational capability for the ASQ-228 Advanced Targeting Forward Looking Infrared (ATFLIR) pod for the Boeing [NYSE: BA] F/A-18E/F Super Hornet. The ATFLIR offers greater targeting accuracy from further distances, which will boost the Super Hornet's lethality while minimizing the aircraft's exposure to enemy fire.

Initial operating capability is defined as having 10 Block 1 ATFLIR pods, plus aircrew training, sufficient support personnel, maintenance support and logistical support to sustain operations throughout an extended deployment. The ATFLIR program reached the milestone with a Navy Super Hornet squadron, VFA-102, at Naval Air Station, Lemoore, Calif.

"Now our Navy team has the most advanced targeting forward looking infrared available in the world," said Tony Parasida, vice president of the F/A-18 program for Boeing. "ATFLIR supports the autonomous delivery of existing laser-guided weapons and emerging standoff weapons, which is essential as part of the Super Hornet's key role in network centric operations today and in the future."

The ATFLIR replaces existing separate navigation forward looking infrared and targeting pods with a single pod, freeing one weapon station. The ATFLIR also includes a visible light camera (electro-optic sensor), which enhances long-range target recognition and weapons delivery. Both infrared and electro-optical cameras expand the F/A-18E/F's standoff range, making it even more survivable. Functional during day and night operations, the ATFLIR pod provides geopoint accuracy and assures minimal collateral damage for air-to-air and air-to-surface targeting. The ATFLIR pod recently was deemed "operationally effective and operationally suitable," the highest grade possible, its operational evaluation (OPEVAL).

Boeing awarded a contract for development of the ATFLIR to Raytheon in 1998. The contract, potentially worth more than \$900 million over its life, is expected to produce 574 units.

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