

## **Boeing Demonstrates Maintenance Data Downlink on Super Hornet**

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Boeing (NYSE:BA) officials successfully demonstrated the transmission of a Super Hornet's systems' status data July 7 from an airborne F/A-18F to the ground based Automated Maintenance Environment (AME).

The demonstration is the latest example of using network centric capabilities to increase the effectiveness of an existing weapon system. By using an existing tactical data link aircrews can transmit data to base operations while in-flight. Upon receipt, the ground station automatically routes the data to sea- or land-based operational maintenance centers. The data enables maintenance personnel to respond with parts and equipment as soon as the aircraft lands, decreasing aircraft turnaround times.

"Maintenance data downlink transforms maintenance," said Chris Chadwick Boeing vice president for F/A-18. "Because maintenance crews receive the data before the aircraft lands, they can be ready and waiting with the right support equipment, the right part, and the right technical data to quickly return the aircraft to flight status. That rapid response capability enhances maintenance and operations planning and increases the efficiency of the maintenance cycle, and more importantly the Super Hornet's already fleet-leading readiness rate."

No hardware or structural changes are required as the enhanced maintenance capability is provided by software changes to the aircraft and ground equipment. The software-only nature of this change allows this capability to be easily transitioned to the operational fleet.

Boeing conducted demonstrations in 2003 to validate emerging technology for the warfighter. In 2004, Boeing continues to explore and demonstrate technologies that will result in greater connectivity, enhanced situational awareness and fleet readiness.

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