Boeing Debuts Super Hornet with Advanced Radar System

Boeing [NYSE: BA] will debut the F/A-18E/F Block II Super Hornet equipped with the revolutionary APG-79 Active Electronically Scanned Array (AESA) radar system at a ceremony at Boeing's St. Louis facilities today.

The AESA radar will provide Super Hornets with significantly improved reliability, situational awareness, target detection and tracking range.

"AESA will revolutionize the Super Hornet's warfighting capability," said Capt. Donald "BD" Gaddis, the F/A-18/EA-18G program manager for the U.S. Navy. "This will dramatically enhance the force commander's ability to prosecute targets, support our troops and protect our facilities and ships."

Featuring a fixed array with an agile beam that scans near the speed of light, the AESA will, for the first time, enable aircrews to conduct simultaneous air-to-air and air-to-surface operations with independent dual-cockpit operation. In air-to-air mode, the radar allows targets to be engaged at very long ranges, permitting weapons launch at maximum range and enhancing warfighter survivability and lethality. The system also offers high-resolution ground mapping at long standoff ranges for air-to-surface tracking.

"The AESA-equipped Super Hornet represents a quantum leap in operational technology and capability," said Chris Chadwick, Boeing vice president for F/A-18 programs. "With the integration of the APG-79 radar, the Super Hornet today has unsurpassed precision strike capability and situational awareness."

This milestone marks the latest step in the block upgrades designed into the Super Hornet. This method of procuring weapons systems ensures the Navy has the latest technology to continuously improve the aircraft's capabilities for today's battlefield.

The aircraft will be used as part of the AESA radar flight test program prior to entering Operational Evaluation (OPEVAL) in 2006.

The AESA radar, built by the Raytheon Corporation of El Segundo, Calif., is part of the F/A-18E/F Block II upgrade, which includes integration of advanced mission computers, high speed data network, cockpit controls and displays, environmental control system upgrade and forward fuselage affordability improvements. It works with several existing elements of the 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 AESA radar and the Block II upgrades are being delivered under two multiyear contracts, providing the Navy increasing capability at a decreasing price.

A unit of The Boeing Company, Boeing Integrated Defense Systems is one of the world's largest space and defense businesses. Headquartered in St. Louis, Boeing Integrated Defense Systems is a $30.5 billion business. It provides network-centric system solutions to its global military, government, and commercial customers. It is a leading provider of intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance systems; 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 sustainment solutions and launch services.

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