Boeing Begins Final Assembly of Royal Australian Air Force F/A-18F Super Hornets

ST. LOUIS, Dec. 17, 2008 -- Boeing [NYSE: BA] began final assembly operations Dec. 9 in St. Louis on the first of 24 F/A-18F Super Hornets for the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF). The Super Hornet multirole fighter aircraft will be delivered to the RAAF from the first quarter of 2010 through late 2011.

"The Super Hornet is on schedule to deliver unmatched multirole capabilities for Australia," said Bob Gower, vice president of F/A-18 and EA-18 Programs for Global Strike Systems, Boeing Integrated Defense Systems. "The Block II Super Hornet's next-generation technologies -- including Active Electronically Scanned Array radar, fused sensors, and a network-centric data-sharing environment -- will provide wide-ranging air combat solutions for Australian Defence forces. Those capabilities will be delivered in a date-certain and cost-certain program."

Group Capt. Steve Roberton, Head Air Combat Transition Office, RAAF, said the Super Hornet will enable Australia to retain a regionally superior air combat capability. "The Super Hornet will bring Australia into a new generation of air power," Roberton said. "Its advanced, networked weapons system will deliver unprecedented air combat capability across the spectrum of air defense, strategic land attack and maritime strike. It is a true multirole aircraft and there's a lot of excitement on the ground in Air Combat Group about the arrival of the RAAF's Super Hornet."

The Super Hornet being produced for Australia is based on the F/A-18F operated by the U.S. Navy. The Block II Super Hornet is the first operationally deployed strike fighter that incorporates next-generation capabilities.

"The Super Hornet is a model acquisition program for the United States and the U.S. Navy, one that has continued to add capability while decreasing costs," said U.S. Navy Capt. James Kennedy, F/A-18 International Business deputy program manager. "The Super Hornet will provide our Australian partners with a powerful new weapon system. I'm certain they will find the unparalleled aircrew situational awareness and seamless execution of same-time air and ground missions to be as invaluable as our U.S. Navy aircrews do. The Super Hornet is delivering tomorrow's capabilities today."

The Australian government announced in March 2007 that it would acquire 24 F/A-18Fs, making Australia the first international Super Hornet customer.

The Block II F/A-18E/F Super Hornet is a multirole aircraft, able to perform virtually every mission in the tactical spectrum, including air superiority, day/night strike with precision-guided weapons, fighter escort, close air support, suppression of enemy air defenses, maritime strike, reconnaissance, forward air control and tanker missions. Boeing has delivered more than 375 F/A-18E/Fs to the U.S. Navy. Every Super Hornet produced has been delivered on or ahead of schedule.

A unit of The Boeing Company, Boeing Integrated Defense Systems is one of the world's largest space and defense businesses specializing in innovative and capabilities-driven customer solutions, and the world's largest and most versatile manufacturer of military aircraft. Headquartered in St. Louis, Boeing Integrated Defense Systems is a $32.1 billion business with 71,000 employees worldwide.
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