Boeing, US Navy Mark Delivery of 500th Super Hornet/Growler

All aircraft delivered on budget and ahead of schedule

F/A-18E/F and EA-18G will operate through 2035 and beyond

ST. LOUIS, April 21, 2011 -- Boeing [NYSE: BA] and the U.S. Navy celebrated a milestone delivery on April 20 in St. Louis: 500 F/A-18E/F Super Hornets and derivative EA-18G Growlers have joined the Navy's tactical aircraft fleet.

The Super Hornet Block II is the Navy's frontline strike fighter, deploying leading-edge technology and multirole strike capability around the globe. The EA-18G is now the premier airborne electronic attack platform in the Navy's arsenal and the United States' newest tactical aircraft, providing the ability to block enemy radar and electronic systems.

"The Super Hornet and Growler, both combat-deployed, have continuously increased capability for the warfighter while reducing cost for the Navy and the taxpayer," F/A-18 and EA-18 Programs Vice President Kory Mathews said at the ceremony. "Boeing has delivered every F/A-18E/F and EA-18G to the U.S. Navy on budget and ahead of schedule."

"Today is another significant milestone for a program that has by any measure exceeded expectations for cost, schedule and performance," said Capt. Mark Darrah, F/A-18 and EA-18G program manager (PMA-265). "The PMA-265/Hornet Industry Team has consistently delivered capable and reliable aircraft to our fleet customer."

The F/A-18E/F and EA-18G will operate from U.S. Navy aircraft carriers through 2035 and beyond, with the flexibility to seamlessly operate from land-based airfields.

"These aircraft were designed with extensive growth capacity, enabling evolutionary technology to be added throughout the life of the aircraft to expand capabilities and remain well ahead of changing threats," said Mathews.

The Boeing 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. The Super Hornet Block II achieved Initial Operational Capability in 2007.

Boeing is on contract to deliver 24 two-seat F/A-18F Super Hornets to the Royal Australian Air Force. The Super Hornet also is a competitor in ongoing fighter competitions in Brazil, India, Malaysia and Japan.

The Boeing EA-18G Growler is the only air combat platform that delivers full-spectrum airborne electronic attack (AEA) capability along with the targeting and self-defense capabilities derived from the Block II Super Hornet. A derivative of the two-seat F/A-18F Block II, the EA-18G's highly flexible design enables warfighters to operate either from the deck of an aircraft carrier or from land-based airfields. It is replacing the Navy's current AEA platform, the EA-6B Prowler, which has been in service since 1971. The EA-18G joined the Navy's aircraft fleet in 2008, when it was introduced to fleet training squadron VAQ-129. The EA-18G achieved Initial Operational Capability in 2009.

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