Boeing, US Navy Conduct Successful F/A-18E/F Satellite Communications Test

New capability designed to provide 2-way secure SATCOM for Super Hornet aircrews

ST. LOUIS, June 13, 2012 -- Boeing [NYSE: BA] and the U.S. Navy have successfully completed an in-flight demonstration of a satellite communications (SATCOM) system that, if implemented, will enable F/A-18E/F Super Hornet aircrews to conduct two-way, secure voice and data communications with other SATCOM-enabled aircraft, ships, ground forces and command centers.

The test took place May 23-30 at the Naval Air Warfare Center Weapons Division's Advanced Weapons Lab at China Lake, Calif., and was conducted by Air Test and Evaluation Squadron VX-31.

The SATCOM system was installed on a Navy EA-18G Growler -- a variant of the F/A-18F that includes a SATCOM antenna.

During the flight testing, the VX-31 aircrew conducted satellite-enabled secure voice and data transmissions with a ground-based team at China Lake and at Naval Air Station Patuxent River, Md.

"Using the existing EA-18G architecture allowed Boeing and the Navy to demonstrate this capability less than 90 days after the initial request," said Mike Gibbons, Boeing F/A-18 and EA-18 Programs vice president. "This approach significantly reduced risk, cost and testing schedule, while demonstrating this important communications capability for the Navy."

The Boeing F/A-18E/F Super Hornet is a low observable, multirole aircraft that performs 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 480 F/A-18E/Fs to the U.S. Navy. The F/A-18E/F has logged more than 166,000 combat flight hours supporting operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.

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