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ST. LOUIS, Feb. 18, 2014 -- The U.S. Navy recently tested, for the first time on a Boeing [NYSE: BA] F/A-18 Super Hornet aircraft, the Infrared Search and Track (IRST) sensor that will find hard-to-detect targets over long distances.

Boeing and Lockheed Martin [NYSE: LMT] are developing and integrating IRST, an essential upgrade to the combat capability of the Navy's Super Hornets.

"Adding an advanced infrared sensor to the Super Hornet broadens the Navy's warfighting ability," Navy F/A-18 Program Manager Capt. Frank Morley said. "Combined with the Super Hornet's advanced radar and the Growler's electronic attack radar jamming ability, IRST will allow the fleet to dominate the skies in all threat environments."

"We continually evolve the aircraft to outpace future adversaries," says Tim Adrian, IRST F/A-18 program manager. "When radar isn't an option, this upgrade allows operators to locate targets and deploy the best weapon for the mission."

The IRST system is being developed under a \$135 million contract awarded in 2011 and is currently planned to be deployed by 2017. The technology was initially tested last year on a [Boeing King Air test aircraft](#), which helped reduce costs by advancing the technology before installation on Super Hornets.

"The success of this first flight and the test flights before it highlights the maturity of the next-generation IRST system that Lockheed Martin and Boeing are delivering to the U.S. Navy today to support Navy Carrier Strike Group objectives," said Ken Fuhr, director of fixed wing programs at Lockheed Martin Missiles and Fire Control.

The combat-proven Super Hornet provides unequalled air dominance and precision strike capability. The EA-18G Growler, derived from the Super Hornet, is the United States' newest and most advanced airborne electronic attack platform. The Navy plans to fly these aircraft until about 2040.


Headquartered in Bethesda, Md., Lockheed Martin is a global security and aerospace company that employs approximately 115,000 people worldwide and is principally engaged in the research, design, development, manufacture, integration and sustainment of advanced technology systems, products and services. The Corporation's net sales for 2013 were \$45.4 billion.

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