



United States Navy

Fact File

U.S. Navy Fact Sheet

F/A-18 *Hornet* strike fighter

Description

All-weather fighter and attack aircraft. The single-seat F/A-18 Hornet is the nation's first strike-fighter. It was designed for traditional strike applications such as interdiction and close air support without compromising its fighter capabilities. With its excellent fighter and self-defense capabilities, the F/A-18 at the same time increases strike mission survivability and supplements the F-14 Tomcat in fleet air defense. F/A-18 Hornets are currently operating in 37 tactical squadrons from air stations world-wide, and from 10 aircraft carriers. The U.S. Navy's Blue Angels Flight Demonstration Squadron proudly flies them. The Hornet comprises the aviation strike force for seven foreign customers including Canada, Australia, Finland, Kuwait, Malaysia, Spain and Switzerland.



The newest model, Super Hornet, is highly capable across the full mission spectrum: air superiority, fighter escort, reconnaissance, aerial refueling, close air support, air defense suppression and day/night precision strike. Compared to the original F/A-18 A through D models, Super Hornet has longer range, an aerial refueling capability, increased survivability/lethality and improved carrier suitability. [Capability of precision-guided munitions: JDAM (all variants) and JSOW. JASSM in the future]

Features

The F/A-18 Hornet, an all-weather aircraft, is used as an attack aircraft as well as a fighter. In its fighter mode, the F/A-18 is used primarily as a fighter escort and for fleet air defense; in its attack mode, it is used for force projection, interdiction and close and deep air support.

Background

The F/A-18 demonstrated its capabilities and versatility during Operation Desert Storm, shooting down enemy fighters and subsequently bombing enemy targets with the same aircraft on the same mission, and breaking all records for tactical aircraft in availability, reliability, and maintainability.

Hornets taking direct hits from surface-to-air missiles, recovering successfully, being repaired quickly, and flying again the next day proved the aircraft's survivability. The F/A-18 is a twin engine, mid-wing, multi-mission tactical aircraft. The F/A-18A and C are single seat aircraft. The F/A-18B and D are dual-seaters. The B model is used primarily for training, while the D model is the current Navy aircraft for attack, tactical air control, forward air control and reconnaissance squadrons. The newest models, the E and F were rolled out at McDonnell Douglas Sept. 17, 1995. The E is a single seat while the F is a two-seater.

The F/A-18 E/F acquisition program was an unparalleled success. The aircraft emerged from Engineering and Manufacturing Development meeting all of its performance requirements on cost, on schedule and 400 pounds under weight. All of this was verified in Operational Verification testing, the final exam, passing with flying colors receiving the highest possible endorsement.

The first operational cruise of Super Hornet, F/A-18 E, was with VFA-115 onboard the USS Abraham Lincoln (CVN 72) on July 24, 2002, and saw initial combat action on Nov. 6, 2002, when they participated in a strike on hostile targets in the "no-fly" zone in Iraq.

Super Hornet, flew combat sorties from Abraham Lincoln during Southern Watch, demonstrating reliability and an increased range and payload capability. VFA 115 embarked aboard Lincoln expended twice the amount of bombs as other squadrons in their airwing (with 100% accuracy) and met and exceeded all readiness requirements while on deployment. The Super Hornet cost per flight hour is 40% of the F-14 Tomcat and requires 75% less labor hours per flight hour.

All F/A-18s can be configured quickly to perform either fighter or attack roles or both, through selected use of external equipment to accomplish specific missions. This "force multiplier" capability gives the operational commander more flexibility in employing tactical aircraft in a rapidly changing battle scenario. The fighter missions are primarily fighter escort and fleet air defense; while the attack missions are force projection, interdiction, and close and deep air support.

The F/A-18C and D models are the result of a block upgrade in 1987 incorporating provisions for employing updated missiles and jamming devices against enemy ordnance. C and D models delivered since 1989 also include an improved night attack capability. The E and F models have built on the proven effectiveness of the A through D aircraft. The Super Hornet provides aircrew the capability and performance necessary to face 21st century threats.

Service

Navy and Marine Corps

Point Of Contact

Naval Air Systems Command
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General Characteristics, *Super Hornet*, E and F models

Primary Function: Multi-role attack and fighter aircraft.

Contractor: McDonnell Douglas.

Date Deployed: First flight in November 1995. Initial Operational Capability (IOC) in September 2001 with VFA-115, NAS Lemoore, Calif. First cruise for VFA-115 is onboard the USS Abraham Lincoln.

Unit Cost: \$57 million

Propulsion: Two F414-GE-400 turbofan engines. 22,000 pounds (9,977 kg) static thrust per engine.

Length: 60.3 feet (18.5 meters).

Height: 16 feet (4.87 meters).

Wingspan: 44.9 feet (13.68 meters).

Weight: Maximum Take Off Gross Weight is 66,000 pounds (29,932 kg).

Airspeed: Mach 1.8+.

Ceiling: 50,000+ feet.

Range: Combat: 1,275 nautical miles (2,346 kilometers), clean plus two AIM-9s

Ferry: 1,660 nautical miles (3,054 kilometers), two AIM-9s, three 480 gallon tanks retained.

Crew: A, C and E models: One

B, D and F models: Two.

Armament: One M61A1/A2 Vulcan 20mm cannon; AIM 9 Sidewinder, AIM-9X (projected), AIM 7 Sparrow, AIM-120 AMRAAM, Harpoon, Harm, SLAM, SLAM-ER (projected), Maverick missiles; Joint Stand-Off Weapon (JSOW); Joint Direct Attack Munition (JDAM); Data Link Pod; Paveway Laser Guided Bomb; various general purpose bombs, mines and rockets. See the [F/A-18 weapons load-out](#) page.

General Characteristics, C and D models

Primary Function: Multi-role attack and fighter aircraft.

Contractor: Prime: McDonnell Douglas; Major Subcontractor: Northrop.

Date Deployed: November 1978. Operational - October 1983 (A/B models); September 1987 (C/D models).

Unit Cost: \$29 million.

Propulsion: Two F404-GE-402 enhanced performance turbofan engines. 17,700 pounds static thrust per

engine.

Length: 56 feet (16.8 meters).

Height: 15 feet 4 inches (4.6 meters).

Wingspan: 40 feet 5 inches (13.5 meters).

Weight: Maximum Take Off Gross Weight is 51,900 pounds (23,537 kg).

Airspeed: Mach 1.7+.

Ceiling: 50,000+ feet.

Range: Combat: 1,089 nautical miles (1252.4 miles/2,003 km), clean plus two AIM-9s

Ferry: 1,546 nautical miles (1777.9 miles/2,844 km), two AIM-9s plus three 330 gallon tanks.

Crew: A, C and E models: One

B, D and F models: Two

Armament: One M61A1/A2 Vulcan 20mm cannon; AIM 9 Sidewinder, AIM 7 Sparrow, AIM-120 AMRAAM, Harpoon, Harm, SLAM, SLAM-ER, Maverick missiles; Joint Stand-Off Weapon (JSOW); Joint Direct Attack Munition (JDAM); various general purpose bombs, mines and rockets. See the [F/A-18 weapons load-out](#) page.

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