Advanced Arresting Gear on USS Gerald R. Ford Ready for Propellers and Jets



An F/A-18F Super Hornet performs an arrested landing aboard USS Gerald R. Ford. U.S. Navy/Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Elizabeth Thompson

PATUXENT RIVER, Md. – The U.S. Navy's newest aircraft carrier Advanced Arresting Gear (AAG) system received the green light to recover all props and jets, according to an Aircraft Recovery Bulletin (ARB), the Program Executive Office (Tactical Aircraft Programs) public affairs office said Aug. 13.

The ARBs enable propeller aircraft – C-2A Greyhounds, E-2C Hawkeyes and E-2D Advanced Hawkeyes – and jet aircraft – F/A-18E/F Super Hornets and E/A-18G Growlers – to perform flight operations aboard the aircraft carrier USS Gerald R. Ford.

"The entire team did a tremendous job accelerating the schedule and working through challenges," said Capt. Ken Sterbenz, program manager for the Aircraft Launch and Recovery Equipment program office (PMA-251). "This achievement is another significant step toward ensuring the system can support the ship's full air wing."

ARBs are official Navy instructional documents identifying the weights and engaging speeds authorized for shipboard arrestments of specific aircraft.

“Release of the ARBs signifies Naval Air Systems Command’s ‘stamp of approval’ for the AAG system to safely recover these type/model/series aircraft aboard the Navy’s newest class of aircraft carriers,” said Jeff Mclean, deputy program manager for AAG system design and development.

The team, in collaboration with prime contractor General Atomics, continues to perform requisite system development and demonstration testing at land-based test sites located at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, New Jersey. Comprehensive testing of new systems like AAG is critical because it ensures the technology meets Navy requirements and that it is safe for use in the fleet, Mclean added. The team conducted more than 2,500 dead-load arrestments at the Jet Car Track Site and 1,420 manned aircraft arrestments at the Runway Arrested Landing Site.

“The pace of system testing was consistently demanding and required numerous team members to perform their duties in difficult conditions and in all types of weather in order to meet critical program milestones leading up to these ARB releases,” Mclean said. USS Gerald R. Ford is the lead ship in the Ford-class of aircraft carrier, the Navy’s first new class of aircraft carriers in more than 40 years.

The AAG system is designed to arrest a range of aircraft, reduce fatigue to the aircraft and provide higher safety margins while reducing manpower and maintenance. AAG is one of more than 20 new systems incorporated into the design of the Ford class.