

Blue Angels Receive First Super Hornet



The U.S. Navy Flight Demonstration Squadron, the Blue Angels, have flown the legacy Hornet since 1986, when it replaced the A-4F Skyhawk on the team. U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Christopher Gordon

ARLINGTON, Va. – The Naval Flight Demonstration Squadron, the aeronautical team known as the Blue Angels, received its first F/A-18E Super Hornet strike fighter, marking the beginning of a new generation of aircraft for the world-renowned team.

The Super Hornet was delivered July 27 to the Blue Angels at their home base, Naval Air Station Pensacola, according to a spotter.

The Blues have flown the legacy Hornet since 1986, when it replaced the A-4F Skyhawk on the team. Single-seat F/A-18A and two-seat F/A-18B versions were used by the team and have been supplemented by single-seat F/A-18C and two-seat F/A-18D versions.

Boeing, the builder of the Super Hornet, was awarded a contract in August 2018 to convert nine single-seat [F/A-18Es](#) and two F/A-18F two-seater versions for the team.

The Super Hornets are receiving more than a new paint scheme. The internal M61 cannon is removed and replaced by a smoke generator is installed. An Artificial Feel Spring is installed on the flight controls to help the pilot in close formation flying. The modified flight software helps the pilot align the demonstration flight path to help give the watching airshow crowd the most advantageous view. The landing gear is modified to allow flight at higher speeds and increased Gs with the gear extended.

This year the Blue Angels also are receiving a new "Fat Albert," a transport aircraft that flies the team support personnel and equipment to its airshow destinations and also performs at the show demonstrating a Rocket-Assisted Takeoff. The old C-130T was retired and is being replaced by an ex-Royal Air Force C-130J.