

Boeing Inducts 20th U.S. Navy F/A-18 Into Service Life Modification



An F/A-18F lands on the flight deck of the USS Ronald Reagan while conducting operations in the South China Sea. U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Codie L. Soule
ST. LOUIS – Boeing has inducted its 20th F/A-18 Super Hornet into service life modification (SLM), supporting U.S. Navy readiness needs for mission-capable aircraft, the company said in an Aug. 17 release. Two SLM jets already have been returned to the Navy.

Initially, SLM will extend the life of Super Hornets from 6,000 to 7,500 flight hours. Future modification plans in 2022 will enable the jets to fly 10,000 hours and incorporate Block III capabilities.

“The Super Hornet is the workhorse fighter for the U.S. Navy,” said Steve Wade, vice president of F/A-18 and EA-18G programs. “SLM is critical because it gives the Super Hornet a new life and next-generation Block III capabilities. The combination of Block III Super Hornets coming out of SLM and new builds off the production line will enable the Navy to maintain the force structure necessary to meet its mission needs.”

The Block III conversion will include enhanced network capability, conformal fuel tanks, an advanced cockpit system, signature improvements and an enhanced communication system. The updates are expected to keep the F/A-18 in active service for decades to come.

Boeing is on contract for the modernization of 24 aircraft. An additional contract award covering inductions through 2022 is expected later this year. SLM consists of two production lines

in St. Louis and San Antonio, Texas.