F/A-18 and EA-18G Surpass 12 Million Flight Hours

A formation of Air Test and Evaluation Squadron (VX) 31 “Dust Devils” aircraft, including an EA-18G Growler, AV-8B Harrier II+, an F/A-18E Super Hornet, and an F/A-18D Hornet, flies over Point Mugu’s Sea Range in Californation during a photo exercise. These aircraft demonstrate the Naval Air Warfare Center Weapons Division’s commitment to advancing fleet capabilities through rigorous testing and operational support.

RELEASE FROM NAVAL AIR SYSTEMS COMMAND

NAS PATUXENT RIVER, Md. – The U.S. Navy’s F/A-18 and EA-18G aircraft fleet has surpassed 12 million flight hours, marking an important milestone for one of the most enduring families of aircraft in modern naval aviation. This achievement underscores the capability, reliability and availability of these aircraft, which have served as the backbone of the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps air power for decades.

Put into perspective, the aircraft have completed the equivalent of 500,000 days, or nearly 1,370 years, of nonstop

flight defending national interests and ensuring global security.

“When you call the roar of these aircraft ‘the sound of freedom,’ it holds real weight,” said Capt. Michael Burks, program manager for the F/A-18 and EA-18G program office (PMA-265). “Throughout their service, the F/A-18 and EA-18G family has supported nearly every major U.S. military conflict of the past 40 years and continues to adapt to rapidly changing threat environments. From the initial deployment of the Hornet to the advanced capabilities of the Super Hornet and Growler, these aircraft have delivered forward presence, tactical airpower and critical electronic warfare capabilities around the globe.”

Since the F/A-18 Hornet was first introduced in the 1980s, it has quickly become a versatile and capable fighter and attack aircraft. Its successor, the F/A-18E/F Super Hornet, and its electronic warfare counterpart, the EA-18G Growler, introduced significant advancements in radar, avionics, payload capacity and electronic attack.

Key modernization efforts include Super Hornet Service Life Modification (SLM), which extends Super Hornet service life from 6,000 to 10,000 flight hours, and the delivery of Block III Super Hornets, which are equipped with advanced sensors, enhanced survivability and a redesigned cockpit for improved pilot performance. Growler Block II modifications will enhance mission systems, enable future capability growth and strengthen the Navy’s electronic warfare superiority.

“This milestone is a significant achievement and a reflection of the generations of Sailors, Marines and civilians who sustain, fly and innovate these platforms every day,” said Burks. “Twelve million flight hours demonstrates our commitment to delivering world-class capability, enabling our warfighters to execute their missions with an asymmetric advantage and return home safely.”

The flight hour milestone comes at a notable time for naval aviation, coinciding with the 30th anniversary of the Super Hornet's first flight in November, and as the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps prepare to celebrate 250 years of service to the nation this year.

As part of Program Executive Office for Tactical Aircraft Programs (PEO(T)), PMA-265 supports, sustains and advances the F/A-18A-D Hornet, F/A-18E/F Super Hornet and EA-18G Growler, delivering critical capabilities to ensure naval aviators succeed in dynamic and contested operational environments.