Navy Completes First Captive Carry Flight on F/A-18 of Extended Range Missile



The Navy conducts the first captive carry flight test of an AARGM-ER missile on an F/A-18 Super Hornet June 1 at the Naval Air Station Patuxent River test range in Maryland. U.S. Navy
PATUXENT RIVER, Md. – The U.S. Navy completed the first captive carry flight test of an Advanced Anti-Radiation Guided Missile-Extended Range (AARGM-ER) missile on an F/A-18 Super Hornet on June 1 at the Patuxent River test range, Naval Air Systems Command said in a release.

During the test, the F/A-18 Super Hornet conducted a series of aerial maneuvers to evaluate integration and structural characteristics of the AARGM-ER. Test points were completed across a range of flight conditions to demonstrate carriage compatibility of AARGM-ER with the F/A-18 Super Hornet.

“This first flight represents a significant step in the AARGM-ER engineering and manufacturing development phase,” said Capt. Mitch Commerford, who oversees the Direct and Time Sensitive Strike program office (PMA-242). “Data collected from this testing will inform the planned build-up and overall expansion of flight testing with AARGM-ER.”

Testing will continue over the next few years in preparation for initial operational capability in fiscal year 2023, he said.

The extended range variant, which leverages the AARGM program that is currently in full rate production, has been upgraded with a new rocket motor and warhead. It will provide advanced capability to detect and engage enemy air defense systems.

AARGM-ER is being integrated on the F/A-18E/F and EA-18G and will also be compatible for integration on the F-35A/B/C.