

> F/A-18A/B/C/D Hornet Upgrade

DESCRIPTION

The F/A-18 Hornet is a twin-engine, supersonic, strike-fighter aircraft. It fulfills both air-to-air and air-to-ground mission requirements and can operate from conventional airfields and aircraft carriers. The F/A-18Cs delivered since FY 1990 have increased night and marginal-weather capability, including a color moving-map



display, night-vision-goggle-compatible lighting and a navigation forward-looking infrared (NAVFLIR) sensor. The two-seat version, F/A-18D, incorporates all warfighting capabilities of the F/A-18C and includes a tactical reconnaissance capability. This aerial reconnaissance capability, Advanced Tactical Air Reconnaissance System (ATARS), provides near real-time aerial imagery to the MAGTF and began deployments with three systems per VMFA (AW) squadron in FY 2000.

OPERATIONAL IMPACT

The F/A-18C provides modern, multi-mission offensive and defensive anti-air and offensive air support capability. The F/A-18D provides the MAGTF with a platform capable of tactical air control and reconnaissance, while retaining the combat capabilities of the F/A-18C. Both aircraft provide powerful and flexible air support and the ability to suppress enemy air defenses. The maintainability and multi-mission capabilities of the F/A-18 make it well suited to the needs of the MAGTF in an austere expeditionary environment.

PROGRAM STATUS

The Marine Corps has initiated the upgrade of 46 F/A-18As (with a program objective of 76) to Lot XVII F/A-18C aircraft standards. These aircraft will also receive digital communications and tactical data link. The Marine Corps anticipates programmed upgrades to enhance the current capabilities of the F/A-18C/D with digital communication, tactical data link, and tactical reconnaissance systems. This upgrade ensures that our F/A-18s remain viable and relevant in support of TacAir Integration and Expeditionary Maneuver Warfare until replaced by the STOVL Joint Strike Fighter.

PROCUREMENT PROFILE: **FY03** **FY04**

Quantity: *various* *various*

DEVELOPER/MANUFACTURER

The Boeing Company
Northrop Grumman Hughes