

First GBU-24B/B Release off Super Hornet at NAVAIR China Lake

Nicolette Cormier

The first GBU-24B/B, precision guided weapon, was successfully released from a Super Hornet July 1, 2003, at NAVAIR, China Lake, Calif. The GBU-24B/B (PAVEWAY III) hard target penetrator utilizes the BLU-109A/B 2000 pound class bomb body, and is one of the largest precision guided weapons ever released from an F/A-18E/F. The test aircraft was equipped with the Advanced Targeting FLIR (ATFLIR) system which provided the target laser reflection spot needed for GBU-24B/B precision guidance. The ATFLIR recently achieved early operational capability in the fleet.

“Every one is pleased with the results,” said Denis Campbell, Flight Test Engineer: F/A-18A/B/C/D/E/F Advanced Weapons Lab, NAVAIR China Lake. “The laser guided weapon performed at the highest level. What makes this weapon so special is the incorporation of gyros, which accommodate for wind levels and stabilizes the system during flight.”

The incorporation of the gyros into the GBU-24B/B brings to the fleet a weapon of substantial stand up performance. When employed from the F/A-18E/F Super Hornet and used in conjunction with the ATFLIR the GBU-24B/B’s standoff capability from the target is greatly enhanced.

The GBU-24B/B weapon works in conjunction with the aircraft’s laser FLIR. “The ATFLIR system also performed extremely well during the test,” said Lt. Cmdr. Dave Swenson, VX-31 ATFLIR Project Officer. The combination of GBU-24B/B and ATFLIR allows for laser designation at extended ranges and expands the



Photo courtesy of China Lake

Successful release of GBU-24B/B from an F/A-18E/F shown in video sequence.

options of how the weapon is to be deployed; benefiting both the aircraft and the fleet.

There are two more Developmental Testing (DT) assist shots scheduled later this month at China Lake. Upon successful completion of the scheduled DT assist shots, and after detailed analysis has been completed/evaluated, the fleet will be given a flight clearance with limited employment capabilities. Aircraft envelope expansion testing is still on going at NAVAIR, Patuxent River to provide full employment capabilities. Testing is expected to be complete by October 2003.

Campbell said the NAVAIR Team played a significant role in working with the contractor Raytheon

to observe possible problems, and work out solutions.

“The combination of government and industry working closely together saved a lot of time and money in getting this product tested and ready for the fleet.”

Look Inside For ...

Command Change for F/A-18	2
Maj. Project on Spanish F/A-18	3
Super Hornet Arriving	3
Out and About	4
AFCEA Conference	5
1,000th Trap for Enterprise	6

Change of Command for F/A-18 Program

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“What a fine day this is, and what a celebration for the F/A-18 family,” said NAVAIR Commander Vice Adm. Joe Dyer, guest speaker at the F/A-18 Program Office Change of Command Ceremony. The May 30 ceremony held at the Hazelrigg Hanger, Patuxent River, Md. celebrated the tenure of Capt. Jeffrey A. Wieringa and welcomed Capt. Donald E. Gaddis as the F/A-18 program manager. The ceremony along with a reception, held in the Moffett Building Atrium, was well attended with around 400 people witnessing the event.

Much to the delight of the assembled company the U.S. Naval Academy Band kicked off the ceremony by playing a musical selection. After the Arrival of Principals and the Parade of Colors, Bill Fetters sang the national anthem.

Lt. Paul H. Evers gave the invocation, which was followed by remarks by Rear Adm. James B. Godwin III, Program Executive Officer Tactical Aircraft Programs, the reporting senior.

“It’s great to look out and see such a big crowd here today, and a great honor and pleasure to be standing here with these guys,” said Godwin. “It’s a special privilege to be here today with Rear Adm. (Sel) Jeff Wieringa and Capt. “BD” Gaddis. I’ve had a long history with these two guys so it’s an exciting time for me to be at this Change of Command. The F/A-18 has been one of the Navy’s most successful programs. It was on cost, on performance, and on schedule from the day the contract was signed.”

During his speech, Vice Adm. Dyer also praised the program and Wieringa’s many accomplishments during his three years as program manager.

“What a wonderful program. Jeff’s tenure has been truly remarkable. As a former F/A-18 Program Manager it was the hardest and most demanding job I’ve ever had. For the past three years the program has been blessed with Jeff



Photo by Richard Gaskin

Newly appointed F/A-18 Program Manager Capt. Donald “BD” Gaddis, speaks during the F/A-18 Change of Command. Looking on from left to right Vice Adm. Joe Dyer, Rear Adm. James B. Godwin III, Rear Adm. (Sel) Jeff Wieringa and Navy Chaplain Lt. Paul H. Evers.

Wieringa. ... ‘Jeff you done good,’ ” said Dyer, who ended his speech with the presentation of the Legion of Merit award to Wieringa for his outstanding service as the F/A-18 Program Manager.

Outgoing program manager Capt. Jeff Wieringa took his turn at the podium for Remarks and Reading of Orders. In welcoming everyone to the ceremony Wieringa recognized family, friends, guests from the Office of the Secretary of Defense and former F/A-18 Program Managers. He also gave special recognition to Cmdr. Jeff Penfield, skipper of F/A-18E Super Hornet Squadron VFA-115. The squadron recently returned from deployment, serving with the USS *Abraham Lincoln* (CVN 72) during Operations “Enduring Freedom” and “Iraqi Freedom.” Wieringa reflected on his years as program manager and thanked the many people who were part of the team.

The last speaker was Capt. “BD” Gaddis, who began by wishing Wieringa good luck in his new assignment (Editors note: still TBD at time of printing).

After thanking his family for their love and support throughout the years, Gaddis said, “When I started to put together my speech for today I began by saying how humble I felt by this honor

the Navy has given me. Then I read this book that said, ‘Don’t be humble, you’re not that great,’ so instead I would like to say how grateful I am that the Navy leadership has given me this fantastic opportunity. We all pray to be part of something bigger than ourselves. The F/A-18 program is expanding. The F/A-18F derivative, the EA-18G is just one more opportunity for the program to excel.”

Gaddis was designated a Naval Flight Officer in 1981 and was re-designated an Aerospace Engineering Duty Officer in 1997.

Since arriving at NAVAIR Gaddis has served as Deputy Program Manager for F/A-18 Test & Evaluation, Operations Officer for Program Executive Officer Tactical Aircraft Programs, and as Executive Assistant to the Commander, Naval Air Systems Command.

As a graduate of the Navy Fighter Weapons School (TOPGUN), Gaddis has accumulated more than 2300 flight hours as a Radar Intercept Officer in the F-14A/ F-14B/ F-4S aircraft, including 523 traps in the F-14 Tomcat.

After the reading of the Orders, Lt. Evers gave the Benediction, the Colors were formally retired and the official party and guests departed to the Moffett Building for the reception.



NAVAIR Depot North Island Completes Major Project on Spanish F/A-18

By Bill Bartkus

NAVAIR Depot North Island

CORONADO, Calif. – The last two of 22 Spanish air force F/A-18's have left NAVAIR Depot North Island. Depot pilots landed safely in the Spanish-owned Canary Islands off the northwest coast of Africa.

The aircraft were the final two Spanish aircraft to go through a modification, corrosion and paint program, plus additional upgrades, that Depot teammates started in April 1998, according to Carolyn Sibley, with the Depot's F/A-18 Program Management Team Office.

A special team of engineers and artisans worked on the Spanish planes. "The key players in this project included Arthur Cardone, William Chappell, and Robert Hill Jr. Many, many other teammates were also involved. They all came together to work on this project," Sibley said.

"The Spanish air force was pleased with their aircraft," she said. "They looked like new when they landed at Gando Air Base in the Grand Canaries. NAVAIR North Island may be proud of a job well done!"



Regular or Premium? – A tail boom from a U.S. Air Force KC-135 out of March Air Force Base, Riverside, Calif., refuels a Spanish air force F/A-18 over Oklahoma en route to Oceana, Va. Cmdr. Dan Turner is flying the aircraft back to the Spanish-owned Canary Islands. Photo by Master Sgt. Bruce Garcia, USAF.



SUPER HORNET ARRIVING! – Artisans watch

Capt. Tim Trainer, NAVAIR Depot North Island executive officer, and Frank Widick, executive director of product management, cut a ribbon inducting the first F/A-18E/F Super Hornet to go through a post-cruise inspection at the Depot. Artisans and engineers will test the aircraft's resiliency. The scheduled turnaround time on the aircraft is 37 days, and a special team has been assigned to work on the E model belonging to Strike Fighter Squadron 115 at Naval Air Station Lemoore, Calif. This particular aircraft was deployed aboard USS Abraham Lincoln (CVN 72) and participated in Operation Iraqi Freedom. Photo by Joe Feliciano.

Out and About With The Fleet

Philippine Sea (June 5, 2003) – Landing signal officers watch as an F/A-18C Hornet from the “Fighting Redcocks” of Strike Fighter Squadron VFA-22 prepares for an arrested landing on the flight deck aboard USS *Carl Vinson* (CVN 70). The *Carl Vinson* Carrier Strike Force has been extended on deployment in the Western Pacific, while the USS *Kitty Hawk* (CVN 63) is conducting scheduled maintenance at her forward-deployed operating location in Yokosuka, Japan. U.S. Navy photo by Photographer's Mate 2nd Class Inez Lawson.



The Arabian Gulf (July 1, 2003) – An F/A-18F Super Hornet assigned to the “Black Aces” of Strike Fighter Squadron VFA-41 launches off the flight deck aboard USS *Nimitz* (CVN 68). USS *Nimitz* Strike Force and Carrier Air Wing CVW-11 are currently deployed in support of “Operation Iraqi Freedom.” U.S. Navy photo by Photographer's Mate 3rd Class Yesenia Rosas.

The Arabian Gulf (July 1, 2003) – Flight deck handlers direct an F/A-18E Super Hornet assigned to the “Top Hatters” of Strike Fighter Squadron Fourteen VFA-14 into position for launch, from the flight deck aboard USS *Nimitz* (CVN 68). USS *Nimitz* Strike Force and Carrier Air Wing CVW-11 are currently deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. U.S. Navy photo by Airman Angel G. Hilbrands.



AFCEA Holds Conference for Military and Industry

Nicolette Cormier

Sea Strike: Forging the Sword, a conference held June 3 at the Southern Maryland Higher Education Center in Hollywood, Md., was well attended by military, government and industry members.

The Southern Maryland Chapter of the Armed Forces Communications and Electronics Association (AFCEA), sponsors of the conference, lined up speakers throughout government and industry. These included NAVAIR Commander, Vice Adm. Joe Dyer; Rear Adm. James B. Godwin III, Program Executive Officer Tactical Aircraft Programs, as well as squadron commanders and military program managers.

Jack Pappas, president of the local AFCEA chapter, gave welcome and introductory remarks before introducing the first speaker, Rear Adm. Godwin. Godwin gave an overview on the conference agenda, touching on the combined military mission of NAVAIR program managers (PMA) the F/A-18 Hornet, the F-14 Tomcat and EA-6B Prowler squadrons. He also discussed the mission of the industry personnel who supported them during recent world events.

"The time is now critical for targeting Sea Power 21, he said. "We need to work together focusing on the network arena."

Godwin then introduced Vice Adm. Dyer, crediting him as the person, "whose idea it was to network the many NAVAIR PMAs and industry in order to get a better product."

Dyer set the pace of the conference, speaking directly about the service of the warfighter during recent world events.

"I want to thank everyone in this room for their input in today's

defense," Dyer said. "Most of the people in this room have contributed to the nation's military success in recent months and we couldn't ask for a better set of folks behind the guys in combat."

Dyer went on to illustrate the challenges facing the warfighter today. "There are great opportunities in both technology and logistic fields. We should quickly build a networking force that will enable us to become more efficient in a joint warfare and combined battle arena."

**"In my mind, as we move towards network centric warfare, the F/A-18 and the EA-18G are going to be the backbone of our carrier strike forces."
Capt. "BD" Gaddis.**

Capt. "BD" Gaddis, the newly appointed F/A-18 program manager, was among the guest speakers. Gaddis talked about the present and future developments of the F/A-18 Program.

"In my mind, as we move towards network centric warfare, the F/A-18 and the EA-18G are going to be the backbone of our carrier strike forces," said Gaddis. "It is important for the program managers to move from product centric to a network centric perspective. We are ready for the future - the F/A-18 has all the systems necessary to go. The challenge is not the development of the platform architecture and systems - we have already done that. The challenge now is to transition our

thinking to network centric and get on with it."

Up to the present time Gaddis said new F/A-18 systems have been fielded on the existing F/A-18C/D models and then forward fitted to the F/A-18E/F models as resources permitted. Gaddis stated that he intends to challenge this process.

"We need to reassess all of our business processes, from requirements generation all the way through operational testing."

Topics throughout the day ranged from Joint/Combined Operating Forces: Strategic and Operational Implementation, The Warfighter Perspective: Lessons from Iraqi Freedom, and Reach out and Touch Someone: Air-to-Air Missile programs.

Capt. (Sel) Jeff Penfield, commanding officer of the VFA-115 Eagles, told the audience that the first deployment of the Super Hornet could not have gone any better.

"We had a long successful cruise," Penfield said. "Although we were the new guys aboard the carrier, and new to the air wing, it was a successful integration ... as if we had always been there."

During the afternoon, Mark Ronald, CEO BAE Systems, gave the industry perspective on tactical aviation. Capt. Bob LaBelle, E-2C program manager, gave an overview of E-2C - Looking out for the fleet. Capt. John Scheffler discussed the ICAP III program and Capt. Scott Stewart gave the Air-to-Air Missile perspective.

The conference ended with a panel of 10 military commanders who answered questions on Defining the Future of Tactical Aviation and Joint Environment. Dr. John Fischer, Director of NAVAIR S&T, moderated this discussion.



Hornet Makes 1,000th Trap for Current Enterprise Cruise

Chief Journalist (SW/AW) Mark O. Piggott, USS Enterprise Public Affairs

Most aircraft carriers usually achieve their 1,000th arrested landing a few weeks after starting an overseas deployment. USS *Enterprise* (CVN 65) achieved this milestone nine days after completing sea trials.

The 1,000th arrested landing, or trap, happened on arresting gear wire #3, with aircraft "Joker" 204, an F/A-18C Hornet from Fighter Attack Squadron (VFA 34) "Blue Blasters," piloted by Lt. Cmdr. Doug Verissimo.

Lt. Dave C. Baker, detachment officer-in-charge for the VFA-81 "Sunliners," representing the squadrons aboard the USS *Enterprise* during this Carrier Qualifications phase, congratulated the "gear dogs" on their accomplishment.

"It is important for us (pilots) to get this training, to keep current on our qualifications," said Baker, a native of East Hampton, N.Y. "We really appreciate the work you do."

Capt. Eric C. Neidlinger, USS *Enterprise* commanding officer,

echoed his sentiments.

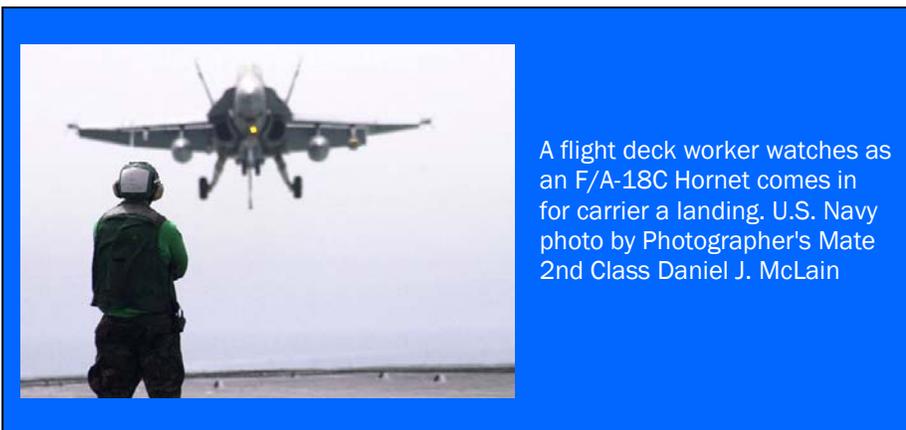
"As a young lieutenant, I didn't realize all the hard work that goes into every arrested landing," he said. "It's amazing the amount of maintenance and hard work that goes into maintaining the gear, day in and day out. "The work is dirty and hard, and they do it great!"

The ship's Reactor Officer, Cmdr. Matthew Sharpe, came up to congratulate the arresting gear team on this amazing accomplishment. "The reason we exist is to fly airplanes," he said. "You guys do it better and better every day."

Capt. Mike Barea, the USS *Enterprise* air boss, put it simply, "Let history remember the name *Enterprise*."

Neidlinger credited the training done during the USS *Enterprise's* 16-month shipyard period to the level of readiness demonstrated by the entire air department.

"The training you did made the difference," he stated. "It set the tone for the USS *Enterprise* coming back to sea."



A flight deck worker watches as an F/A-18C Hornet comes in for carrier a landing. U.S. Navy photo by Photographer's Mate 2nd Class Daniel J. McLain