

Long-range sensor system demonstrated production readiness on Super Hornet

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The F/A-18 Super Hornet infrared search and track (IRST) system, developed and integrated by Boeing [NYSE: BA] and Lockheed Martin, received approval from the U.S. Navy to enter low-rate initial production.

The IRST system consists of Lockheed Martin's IRST21 sensor, the GE Aviation FPU-13 Fuel Tank Assembly and the Meggitt Defense Industry Environmental Control unit. The system demonstrated its production readiness through a series of extensive assessments and reviews, including flight tests.

"This 'see first, strike first' capability can be used in a variety of threat environments and is a game changer for our warfighters as we combat future adversaries," said U.S. Navy F/A-18 program manager Capt. Frank Morley. IRST is expected to deploy on the F/A-18 Super Hornet in 2017.

IRST21 is the next generation of Lockheed Martin's legacy IRST sensor system, which accumulated more than 300,000 flight hours on the U.S. Navy's F-14 and international F-15 platforms. The long-range IRST21 sensor uses infrared search and track technology to detect, track and enable the Super Hornet to engage threats with air-to-air weapons.

"Lockheed Martin and Boeing have proven the maturity of the IRST21 sensor and the IRST system and are poised to get this advanced capability out to the fleet to support Navy carrier strike group

objectives," said Ken Fuhr, fixed wing program director at Lockheed Martin Missiles and Fire Control.

In addition to detecting airborne threats,IRST significantly enhances multiple target resolution compared to radar, providing greater discrimination of threat formations at longer ranges. Data from the IRST21 sensor is fused with other on-board F/A-18 sensor data to provide maximum situational awareness to the warfighter.

"The IRST system is another example of how we continue to evolve Super Hornet capabilities to ensure it outpaces future adversaries," said Tim Adrian, F/A-18 IRST program manager at Boeing.

Provided by Lockheed Martin

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