



# Backgrounder

Boeing Defense, Space & Security  
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## EA-18G Growler

### Description and Purpose:

The EA-18G Growler is a variant of the combat-proven F/A-18F Super Hornet Block II, and conducts airborne electronic attack missions. The EA-18G combines the capability of the combat-proven Super Hornet with the latest AEA avionics suite evolved from the Improved Capability III (ICAP III) system. The EA-18G's vast array of sensors and weapons provides the warfighter with a lethal and survivable weapon system to counter current and emerging threats.

### Customer:

The EA-18G Growler is the U.S. Navy replacement for its current AEA aircraft, the EA-6B Prowler. The program of record for the Navy is 114 EA-18G Growler aircraft.

### General Characteristics:

<b>Length:</b>	60.2 ft (18.3 m)
<b>Height:</b>	16 ft (4.9 m)
<b>Wing Span:</b>	44.9 ft (13.7 m)
<b>Weight Empty:</b>	33,094 lbs (15,011.2 kg)
<b>Recovery Weight:</b>	48,000 lbs (21,772.4 kg)
<b>Internal Fuel:</b>	13,940 lbs (6,323.1 kg)
<b>Max External Fuel:</b>	9,744 lbs (4,419.8 kg)
<b>Engines</b>	(2) F414-GE-400
<b>Thrust</b>	44,000 lbs
<b>Spot Factor</b>	1.23
<b>Crew</b>	One Pilot, one Weapon Systems Officer

The AEA suite provides state-of-the-art selective-reactive and pre-emptive jamming capability. The majority of the AEA-unique avionics are installed on a pallet in the gun bay and in two wingtip pods. Nine weapon stations provide unique flexibility for carriage of weapons, jamming pods, and other stores to meet the needs for standoff jamming, escort jamming, time critical strike, or communications countermeasures. The AEA communications receiver and jamming system provide electronic suppression and attack

against communication threats. These systems, combined with the F/A-18F Super Hornet air-to-air and air-to-ground capabilities, yield a formidable and flexible capability with significant growth capability for the future.

The EA-18G advanced cockpit combines with its onboard sensors and weapons to enable superior Suppression of Enemy Air Defense (SEAD) capability. The active electronically scanned array APG-79 AESA radar offers increased electronic warfare support and is capable of precision targeting utilizing cues from the ALQ-218 precision receiver system. Integrating these systems with advanced weapons yields a more formidable SEAD capability than previously possible.

### **Background:**

The EA-18G Airborne Electronic Attack (AEA) system was selected by the U.S. Navy to replace the EA-6B Prowler aircraft. Boeing and the U.S. Navy signed a five-year System Development and Demonstration contract on Dec. 29, 2003. Northrop Grumman is the major supplier to Boeing for the AEA subsystem. The SDD contract encompassed all laboratory, ground and flight tests from component level testing through full-up EA-18G weapons system performance flight testing. The program leverages proven processes developed by the Super Hornet program to provide a low-risk executable program, on schedule, under weight, and on cost – the same best practices that enabled the Super Hornet to win the 1999 Collier Trophy, Department of Defense Acquisition Award, and the Aviation Week Program Excellence Award in 2005. The EA-18G has earned two awards to date: the 2006 David Packard Excellence in Acquisition Award and the 2007 Flight Award as the Defense Product of the Year.

Assembly of the first EA-18G flight test aircraft began in October 2004, and the first flight test aircraft moved into modification in late April 2005, ahead of schedule. The first production aircraft made its first flight on Sept. 10, 2007, and was delivered to the U.S. Navy on Sept. 24, 2007, almost one month ahead of schedule. The first production aircraft was delivered to Fleet Readiness Squadron VAQ-129 at Naval Air Station Whidbey Island, Wash., on June 3, 2008, and the aircraft began its initial sea trials in August 2008. The Growler completed initial sea trials onboard the USS *Dwight D. Eisenhower* in August 2008. The Growler completed Initial Operational Test and Evaluation in May 2009 and achieved initial operational capability in September 2009. The Department of Defense authorized the EA-18G to enter into Full Rate Production in November 2009. The EA-18G's initial combat deployment occurred in late 2010 and concluded in mid-2011, supporting operations in Iraq and Libya.

### **Miscellaneous:**

- The EA-18G Growler is based at Naval Air Station Whidbey Island, Wash.
- Boeing is currently delivering Super Hornets and Growlers to the U.S. Navy under a third multi-year contract through 2015. The contract includes 58 Growlers.

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