EA-18G Growler

The Boeing EA-18G Growler is the most advanced airborne electronic attack (AEA) aircraft, capable of operating either from an aircraft carrier or from land-bases. It was first developed as a replacement for the United States Navy EA-6B Prowler aircraft which entered service in 1971 and retired in March 2019.

The Growler is a specialised version of the combat-proven two-seat F/A-18F Super Hornet. The aircraft began production in 2007 and entered operational service with the US Navy in late 2009.

The aircraft's primary missions are electronic attack (EA) and suppression of enemy air defences (SEAD), particularly at the start and ongoing early stages of hostilities. The Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) fleet assists both the Australian Army and the Royal Australian Navy to deliver a networked joint force able to manoeuvre and fight in the electromagnetic spectrum.

It has 11 weapon stations for carrying electronic mission systems and weapons and can be used to carry out conventional strike missions when the requirements for EA and SEAD sorties are reduced. The Australian Growlers are uniquely equipped with the AN/ASQ-228 Advanced Targeting Forward-Looking Infrared (ATFLIR) targeting pod and also have additional air-to-air weapons in the form of the AIM-9X missile.

The Growler's in-country history was set in motion in May 2013, when the Australian Government announced it would order 12 new-built EA-18G Growlers – a momentous decision which marked the RAAF as the only military other than the U.S. to operate the aircraft's electronic jamming equipment.

After contract award in June 2014, the RAAF took delivery of the first two aircraft at RAAF Base Amberley, home of No. 6 Squadron, in February 2017. The aircraft entered service that same year.

The fleet grew to 12, but one aircraft was written-off following an engine fire in January 2018.

Today, the RAAF's Growlers are sustained under Boeing's Air Combat Electronic Attack Sustainment Program (ACEASP) until 2025.

The aircraft are tied in with the United States Navy (USN) spiral development program – ensuring the platforms keep their capability edge – with significant hardware and software enhancements delivered to the fleets on a two-yearly cycle.

TECHNICAL DATA: Boeing EA-18G Growler

Power plant	Two F414-GE-400 engines
Span	13.7m (45 feet)
Length	18.3m (60 feet)
Height	4.9m (16 feet)
Empty weight	15,011kg (34,000 pounds)
Loaded weight	29,964kg (66,000 pounds)
Maximum speed	1,960kph (1,218 mph)
Range	1,570km fully armed with external fuel tanks (976 miles)
Service ceiling	15,240m (50,000 feet)
Armament	AGM-88 Anti-Radiation missiles, AIM-120 air-to-air missiles and AIM-9X "Sidewinder" short range air-to-air missile