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PIMA AIR & SPACE MUSEUM UNVEILS SLEEK BLUE ANGEL F-18 HORNET

Tucson—Aug. 1, 2013. Pima Air & Space Museum unveiled its recently-acquired McDonnell-Douglas (Boeing) F/A-18A Hornet, with the paint scheme of a U.S. Navy Blue Angel.

The Hornet was developed in the mid-1970s as a replacement for the F-4 Phantom and the A-7 Corsair that were then in use by the U.S. Navy and Marines as ground attack aircraft. The F/A-18 was derived from the YF-17 that had competed for the U.S. Air Force contract that resulted in the F-16 Fighting Falcon. The YF-17 was redesigned to add more fuel, folding wings, and strengthened landing gear among other changes to adapt it for use from aircraft carriers. The first production versions of the Hornet went into service with the Navy and Marines in 1983. Most of the early F/A-18A Hornets have been retired but some continue to fly with Navy and Marine training squadrons. The F/A-18C and the newest F/A-18E and F Super Hornets are the primary fighters and attack aircraft for the US Navy and Marines. Hornets have been sold to several foreign nations including Australia, Canada, Spain, Switzerland, Finland, Kuwait, and Malaysia.

The F/A-18 was adopted by the U.S. Navy's Blue Angels aerial demonstration team in 1986 and still is flying today. It has now served with the team for 26 years. That makes it the longest serving aircraft type to fly with the Navy's aerial demonstration team.

The plane, a model caricaturized by two of Disney's main characters—Echo and Bravo— in the new animated movie, "Planes," is placed prominently in the row of U.S. Naval Fighters (enabling Flight Grill restaurant patrons to admire it while dining).

James Stemm, Pima Air & Space Museum Curator of Collections, commented, "We have been working long and hard to secure the F/A-18A. It truly enhances our collection. We are grateful to our partners, the U.S. Navy, for this aircraft."

Current Markings: U.S. Navy Blue Angels, 2012

Service History:

Built by McDonnell-Douglas Aircraft, St. Louis, Missouri and delivered to the U.S. Navy.
(Service history not yet available.)

Technical Specifications:

Wingspan: 40 ft.

Length: 56 ft.

Height: 15 ft. 4 in.

Weight: 36,970 pounds (loaded)

Maximum Speed: Mach 1.8

Service Ceiling: 50,000 ft.

Range: 1,089 miles

Engines: Two General Electric F404-GE-400 turbofans with 16,000 pounds of thrust

Crew: 1

Attachment: PASMf-18.jpg; Photo by John Bezosky.

