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Mary E Emich
Director of Marketing, Sales
and Visitor Services
Arizona Aerospace Foundation
6000 East Valencia Rd
Tucson, AZ 85756
Phone (520) 618-4805
memich@pimaair.org

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 caricatured 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

ABOUT PIMA AIR & SPACE MUSEUM

Be wowed at Pima Air & Space Museum, one of the largest aviation museums in the world and the largest non-government-funded in the U.S. Its significant collection, 300 strong from around the globe, covers commercial, military and civil aviation alongside more than 125,000+ artifacts, including a moon rock donated by Tucsonan and Astronaut Frank Borman. Be amazed by many all-time great aircraft: the SR-71 Blackbird (the world's fastest spy plane); a B-29 Superfortress (the WWII bomber that flew higher, farther and faster plus carried more bombs); the world's smallest bi-plane; the C-54 (the Berlin Airlift's star flown by the famous "Candy Bomber" Col. USAF (Ret.) Gail Halvorsen, a Tucson-area winter resident); plus planes used as renowned-contemporary-artists' canvases, including Brazilian graffiti artist Nunca. Explore five large hangars totaling more than 177,000 indoor square feet—almost four football fields—of air/space craft, heroes' stories and scientific phenomena including the largest paper airplane (our work). Two+ hangars are dedicated to WWII, one each to the European and Pacific theaters. Pima Air & Space even maintains its own aircraft restoration center. The museum also operates exclusive tours of the "Boneyard," aka the 309th Aerospace Maintenance and Regeneration Group (AMARG) on Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, plus offers a docent-led tram tour of its 80 acres (additional fees apply). Pima Air & Space Museum is located at 6000 E. Valencia Rd., just off I-10 exit 267, in Tucson. More information can be found at www.pimaair.org, on Facebook www.facebook.com/PimaAirAndSpace, or by calling 520 574-0462.

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

