



RHUMB LINES

Straight Lines to Navigate By



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Tactical Air Dominance

"When I look at today's investments to represent the strike fighter, airborne early warning, and electronic attack communities of tomorrow, I see important linkages between the future capabilities and contributions of TACAIR to future scenarios where national leadership will make critical strategic decisions on when and how to respond to crisis."

– Adm. Patrick M. Walsh, Commander, U.S. Pacific Fleet

The Navy's [F/A-18 Hornets](#), [Super Hornets](#), and [EA-18G Growlers](#) offer inherent flexibility as multi-mission aircraft. Coupled with the [E-2C Hawkeye's](#) superior battle management and command and control functions, they enable carrier strike groups to execute the full range of core capabilities defined in the Maritime Strategy. The interoperability of TACAIR assets within the strike group and joint forces, and with our allies at sea and ashore, reassures allies, deters potential adversaries, projects power and supports troops on the ground.

Seapower, Security and Stability

- F/A-18s from the Navy's carrier air wings were among the first aircraft to fly strike missions against the Taliban and Al Qaeda in the opening days of Operation Enduring Freedom in 2001. They continue to fly missions in support of troops on the ground in Afghanistan today, conducting roughly one-third of the close-air support.
- Navy strike fighter squadrons play key roles in building partnerships and increasing cooperation among allied maritime forces, from pilot exchange programs and bi-lateral training events to multi-national exercises. The future addition of the multi-national [F-35C Lightning II](#) will further enhance interoperability.

Unmatched Tactical Versatility

- With longer range, greater payload, capability to aerially refuel other aircraft, increased survivability/lethality and improved carrier suitability, F/A-18 E/F Super Hornets are highly capable across the full mission spectrum: air superiority, fighter escort, reconnaissance, aerial refueling, forward air controller (airborne), close air support, air defense suppression and day/night precision strike.
- The [EA-18G Growler](#), the replacement for the EA-6B Prowler, serves as the nation's foremost platform for tactical airborne electronic attack, a core competency of the Navy. Employing the Hornet airframe, its state-of-the-art weapons systems also bring greater efficiency through 90 percent parts commonality and reduced operational crew size.
- The E-2D Advanced Hawkeye provides maritime airborne early warning, airborne command and control, and communications relays to long-range ground surveillance and surveillance in the littorals, as well as to strike support overland. It also supports irregular missions, like drug interdiction, with capabilities two generations beyond those provided by the E-2C.

Key Messages

- A multi-mission capable aircraft, the F/A-18 provides carrier strike group commanders with an undeniably potent power projection capability.
- The F/A-18 has proven to be an ideal component of the carrier-based tactical aviation equation during three decades of operations.
- The development of the EA-18G Growler and F-35C Lightning II, combined with the E-2D Hawkeye's enhanced, network-enabled long-range sensors, will provide unmatched tactical air dominance to the fleet well into the future.

Facts & Figures

- F/A-18s currently operate in 37 tactical squadrons, from every carrier and from air stations worldwide.
- The EA-18G Growler recently began its first expeditionary deployment. This deployment will demonstrate the Growler's state-of-the-art electronic warfare system and multi-mission capabilities inherent to the Super Hornet.
- The first fleet [E-2D Hawkeye](#) was delivered to VAW-120 in July 2010. With initial operational capability in 2013, it will be a game-changer in the area of information dominance.