

General Atomics EMALS and AAG Systems Aboard Ford Reach Over 8,000 'Cats and Traps' Milestone



An F/A-18F Super Hornet, assigned to Air Test and Evaluation Squadron (VX) 23, lands on USS Gerald R. Ford's (CVN 78) flight deck in early 2020. Ford was conducting aircraft compatibility testing to further test its Electromagnetic Aircraft Launch Systems (EMALS) and Advanced Arresting Gear (AAG). *U.S. NAYV / Mass Communication Specialist Seaman Jesus O. Aguiar*

SAN DIEGO – General Atomics Electromagnetic Systems (GA-EMS) announced in a May 24 release that the Electromagnetic Aircraft Launch System (EMALS) and Advanced Arresting Gear (AAG) system aboard the USS Gerald R. Ford (CVN 78) achieved the Navy's target of 8,000 successful aircraft launches and recoveries during the ship's 18-month post-delivery test and trial (PDT&T) period.

"The last 18-months have been very exciting and challenging. We are proud of the record number of critical "firsts" EMALS and AAG achieved during this period to bring the systems into real-time operational readiness," said Scott Forney, president of GA-EMS. "Navy leadership set a clear goal of completing 8,000 catapult launches and arrestments during PDT&T. EMALS and AAG met and exceeded that goal with a 100% safety record."

During the January 2020 through April 30, 2021 PDT&T period, CVN 78 conducted 18 independent steaming events (ISE) involving night and day, all weather, and various sea state operations. Within the first three months, EMALS and AAG completed critical aircraft compatibility testing, flight deck

certification and more than 2,000 successful aircraft launch and recovery cycles involving F/A-18E/F Super Hornets, E-2C/D Hawkeyes and Advanced Hawkeyes, C-2A Greyhounds, EA-18G Growlers, and T-45C Goshawks. By the 17th ISE in March 2021, EMALS and AAG had successfully completed 7,879 cats and traps aboard CVN 78. During the 18th and final ISE in April 2021, EMALS and AAG broke 8,000 by over 150 launches and recoveries.

“What is also notable is that CVN 78 was the only East Coast carrier available for student aviator carrier training and pilot certification during this period,” Forney said. “EMALS and AAG played a critical role in helping over 400 pilots, including new student aviators, achieve their initial carrier qualifications or recertify their proficiency. The confidence placed in EMALS and AAG capabilities to safely launch and arrest both seasoned pilots as they sharpen their skillsets, and future naval aviators as they earn their wings of gold, is something we are extremely proud of.”

GA-EMS is also delivering EMALS and AAG for the future USS John F. Kennedy (CVN 79) and USS Enterprise (CVN 80). EMALS and AAG will provide greater flexibility over legacy systems to accommodate the current air wing, as well as future manned and unmanned aircraft.