An F/A-18 launches a Harpoon Block II+ missile during a test flight over Point Mugu Sea Test Range in California.

Point Mugu Sea Test Range, Calif. -- The Navy is closer to delivering the new Harpoon Block II+ missile to the fleet after completing a flight test Jan. 22 at Point Mugu Sea Test Range.

The test demonstrated the missile’s ability to talk with the newest F/A-18’s software upgrade as the interface becomes operational on the F/A-18 Super Hornet system.

The upgrade, known as System Configuration Set H12E, and its installation culminates years of planning, designing, engineering and testing by a team comprised of several entities across the U.S. Navy enterprise, said Harpoon Deputy Program Manager Cmdr. Jon Schiffelbein.

“We are extremely proud to deliver precision targeting to the warfighter with a flexibility to stay ahead of threats,” he said.

The Harpoon Block II+ provides a rapid-capability enhancement for the Navy that includes a new GPS guidance kit, reliability and survivability of the weapon, a new data link interface that enables in-flight updates, improved target selectivity, an abort option and enhanced resistance to electronic countermeasures. It can be launched from multiple air and surface platforms.

“The Harpoon Block II+ expands on a legacy of over 40 years of service,” said Capt. John Dougherty, Precision Strike Weapons program manager. “Using a proven product and expanding its capability ensures the Navy has a viable weapon that is lethal, flexible and accessible at a low cost to address the growing maritime threat.”

This test marks a series of Harpoon advancements in the last few years as part of a rapid weapon integration effort supporting the US Navy’s strategy of distributed lethality. The Navy plans to deploy this capability in late FY18.