









## CF-18 188761 History

CF-18 Hornet aircraft 188761 was produced by McDonnell Douglas in St Louis, Missouri as part of Block 18 of the initial F/A-18A production run. Initially assigned to 439 Tactical Fighter Squadron at CFB Baden-Sollingen, Germany, it flew without incident until 20 October 1987. That afternoon when departing RAF Alconbury, England, in a formation take-off with CF-18 188748 following Dissimilar Air Combat Training against RAF aircraft, 761 (call sign 'X-Ray 2') failed to rotate as quickly as the lead aircraft and a takeoff abort was initiated.

Consequently, the aircraft veered off the runway and tore through both wood and barbed wire fences before coming to rest in a farmer's field, broken in half at the cockpit section, the pilot having successfully ejected before the aircraft left the runway. 761 was repaired by MBB in Germany and would ultimately become the last Canadian CF-18 to return to Canada following the closure of Canadian Forces Europe, with Major Lee Obst (formerly of 421 Squadron, Baden) at the controls for the ferry flight.

The aircraft flew without incident for several more years before being selected for the ECP-583 Hornet modernization program to fit it with Have Quick jam resistant radios, Hughes AN/APG-73 multimode radar, and the AIM-120 AMRAAM missile. Following the upgrade, 761 was assigned to 441 Tactical Fighter Squadron (the first Canadian unit equipped with modernized Hornets) where it continued to fly without incident until June 2004. On the morning of 19 June, three CF-18s, including 761, were landing in Yellowknife en route to Inuvik, NWT in support of northern sovereignty operations when 761 failed to decelerate as normal and emergency brakes were selected. Eventually leaving the runway after a 270-degree skidding turn during which the pilot ejected successfully, the aircraft eventually came to rest where it was found that, apart from minor damage to its landing gear and AIM-7 and AIM-9 missiles, it had escaped from the incident relatively unscathed.

Returned to service following repairs, in June 2006, it became the flagship for the newly reformed 409 "Nighthawk" Tactical Fighter Squadron as depicted by the artwork that adorns the aircraft tail.

Note: "Nightmare 01" is the call sign of 188761 flown by LCol Balfe.

Special thanks to 409 squadron for providing this biography.

