Video: Navy's Electromagnetic Plane Launch

By Spencer Ackerman December 21, 2010 | 2:49 pm | Categories: Navy

Has the era of the steam-powered airplane catapult ended? The Navy released this video today to suggest that future of shipboard airplane launch is all electromagnetic.

As Danger Room first reported yesterday, the Navy successfully got an F/A-18E Super Hornet airborne using its new-model catapult, the Electromagnetic Aviation Launch System, or EMALS. To call the Navy stoked would be an understatement: not only is the new launch system supposed to be more efficient than steam, it's better capable to launch small drones as well as big planes, giving aircraft carriers a broader range of options. Any press release that begins "The Navy made history Saturday…" isn't playing around.

But the Navy wasn't just excited, it was also relieved. Had the previously-unproven EMALS failed, the next-generation *Ford* class aircraft carrier, a core service priority, would have to be re-designed to include steam catapults. In other words: screwed.

No matter now. Here's a clip of EMALS launching its first manned flight on Saturday at its Lakehurst, New Jersey test facility. Commented Lt. Daniel Radocaj, the test pilot who made the first launch, "I got excited once I was on the catapult but I went through the same procedures as on a steam catapult. The catapult stroke felt similar to a steam catapult and EMALS met all of the expectations I had."

See Also:

- Navy Launches Pilot With an Electromagnetic Shove [Updated …
- New Navy Carrier Sticker Shock
- Naval Aviation Gets Flapjacked – Wired News

Tags: EMALS, F/A-18
Post Comment | Permalink

Also on Wired.com

- Geeking Out About Word Lens
- Rumor: iPad 2 Has Bigger Speaker, Flat Back, Smaller Body
- Solar Vox, a Portable Sun-Powered Charging Station
- Firefox 4 Beta 8 Arrives With Faster Graphics, Better Sync
- Podcast Predictions: Tablets, High-Powered Processors and 3-D to Dominate CES
- Shadow Wars Get Big Bucks in Last-Minute Defense Bill

Related Topics:

- Launch Vehicles,
- Science and Technology,
- Space Technology,
- Technology,
- Armed Forces,
- Government and Politics

Comments (1)

Posted by: SpecialOpsGuy | 12/21/10 | 8:55 pm |

Impressive. This technology will prove itself in many uses on the battlefield.