

# Royal Air Force Deploys EH101 'Merlin' Helicopter To United States Inside C-17 Transport Aircraft

PRNewswire  
WASHINGTON

Britain's Royal Air Force has successfully air-transported an EH101 Merlin Mk.3 helicopter to the United States aboard a C-17 Globemaster transport aircraft. The deployment marks the first C-17 flight for an EH101 medium-lift helicopter, demonstrating rapid worldwide deployability.

Operated by 28 (AC) Squadron at RAF Benson in Oxfordshire, England, the EH101 Merlin Mk. 3 helicopter is a close variant of the US101 helicopter competing to transport the President of the United States. The Merlin arrived September 20 at an undisclosed military base on the west coast of the United States to conduct operational testing.

This event marks the first time an EH101 helicopter has been loaded into a C-17, flown thousands of miles, been offloaded, and then returned to flight operations. Previously, an EH101 air transportability demonstration was successfully conducted, but that demonstration did not include an actual flight aboard a C-17 aircraft.

By comparison, the US101 helicopter -- which, unlike the EH101 Mk3, is equipped with a folding tail -- can be prepared for flight aboard a C-17 faster and more easily. As a result, the US101 is readily air transportable in support of the Marine One and other U.S. Government missions.

From the time the transport aircraft's ramp opens, the US101 helicopter can be offloaded, prepared for flight, and airborne within two hours. The US101 also will be air transportable in the Lockheed C-5 Galaxy. Additionally, air transportability will give U.S. commanders the flexibility to deploy US101 aircraft anywhere in the world as part of a rapid reaction force for combat search and rescue.

Team US101 has chosen more than 200 suppliers in 41 states to support the US101 helicopter with key products and services necessary for the President's new Marine One helicopter fleet. The U.S. Navy is expected to announce the award winner during December 2004.

Team US101 is led by Lockheed Martin Systems Integration -- Owego, which serves as the prime contractor and systems integrator for the American-built US101 aircraft, an American variant of AgustaWestland's successful EH101 multimission helicopter. The US101 team collectively brings unmatched rotorcraft expertise and experience to this program: Lockheed Martin (prime contractor and systems integration), AgustaWestland (aircraft design) and Bell Helicopter (aircraft production), while General Electric will supply each helicopter's three engines.

Other leading American companies on Team US101 include General Electric, ITT, Northrop Grumman, Kaman and Palomar Products. During the course of the helicopter fleet's operational service life, 90 percent of the total life cycle costs will flow to Team US101's American suppliers, creating and sustaining thousands of jobs nationwide while building these new Marine One helicopters.

For additional information visit: <http://www.teamus101.com/>

SOURCE: Lockheed Martin Systems Integration -- Owego

Web site: <http://www.teamus101.com/>