Systems Integration Labs Now Online For Presidential Helicopter Program

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Lockheed Martin has brought online a Systems Integration Lab (SIL) in the Navy's Presidential Helicopter Support Facility at Naval Air Station Patuxent River, MD, in preparation for the arrival of the first aircraft built for the VH-71 program.

(Logo: http://www.newscom.com/cgi-bin/prnh/20070705/LOCKHEEDLOGO)

Test Vehicle 2 (TV-2) is scheduled to arrive at Patuxent River in mid- November to commence a comprehensive testing program that will validate the VH-71's complex systems. The new SIL at Patuxent River and a larger facility at Lockheed Martin Systems Integration in Owego, NY, will allow engineers to test VH-71 avionics and mission systems prior to installation aboard the aircraft. The Owego SIL, which became operational in August, includes a master systems bench full-scale functional mockup of the VH-71 cockpit and cabin.

"This brings online a critical capability needed to support flight testing at Patuxent River," said Jeff Bantle, Lockheed Martin's VH-71 vice president. "This lab will improve the effectiveness and efficiency of flight test by performing crew training scenario testing, avionics flight clearance and trouble shooting. Having this capability at Pax will reduce actual flight hours while ensuring the thorough checkout of critical VH-71 systems."

"A Systems Integration Lab at the Presidential Helicopter Support Facility will enable the Marine Corps to test the integrated systems more quickly during the flight test phase," said Capt. Don Gaddis, the U.S. Navy's Presidential Helicopters program manager. "Having this on-site test capability is critical to meeting our requirements."

The SIL at Patuxent River consists of test benches to evaluate individual subsystems currently in development, while the master systems bench in Owego allows the Navy-Lockheed team to run mission scenarios of the final integrated systems. Lockheed Martin engineers and Marine pilots already are testing mission scenarios that would require the president to communicate with several government agencies simultaneously.

In addition to TV2's planned arrival in November, three additional test vehicles are scheduled for delivery to the U.S. this winter, followed by five production aircraft during 2008.

The Systems Integration Labs were developed with support from Lockheed Martin Maritime Systems and Sensors in Syracuse, NY.

The VH-71 industry team, led by Lockheed Martin, is building a fleet of 28 "Marine One" helicopters in two phases, known as increments. Five Increment 1 pilot production aircraft will answer the urgent need for a new air vehicle with enhanced performance. The follow-on Increment 2 aircraft will see a significant increase in aircraft performance, and will feature technical enhancements designed to give the president Oval Office-equivalent command and control capability while in flight.

The VH-71 is based on the US101 helicopter, a variant of AgustaWestland's successful AW101 multimission helicopter. AgustaWestlandBell, the principal subcontractor to Lockheed Martin, has responsibility for the basic air vehicle design, production build and basic air vehicle support functions. More than 200 suppliers in 41 states support the VH-71 program.

Headquartered in Bethesda, MD, Lockheed Martin employs about 140,000 people worldwide and is principally engaged in the research, design, development, manufacture, integration and sustainment of advanced technology systems, products and services.

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