

Newest VH-71 Presidential Helicopter Begins Mission Systems Integration

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The third VH-71 helicopter built for the Presidential Helicopter Program, Test Vehicle 3 (TV-3), has arrived in the U.S. and will be the first VH-71 to receive final assembly and mission systems integration at Lockheed Martin Systems Integration in Owego, NY.

The Navy-owned Test Vehicle was transported aboard a U.S. Air Force C-17 cargo plane from AgustaWestland's facility in Yeovil, England, to Naval Air Station Patuxent River, MD, before flying to Owego.

The industry team has started installing and integrating the test helicopter with the advanced mission systems that will enable the VH-71 to be used as a command and control platform by the White House.

As a missionized aircraft, TV-3 will be able to validate systems in-flight performance, which has previously only been evaluated in laboratories. Once missionized TV-3 will join the other two test vehicles, TV-2 and TV-5, already in flight testing. Including TV-1, a leased asset which will complete its required testing in May 2008, the program has accumulated nearly 700 total hours of flight test. TV-4, the final test aircraft of the program's first increment of helicopters, made its initial flight March 19 and will arrive at NAS Patuxent River in April.

"TV-3 is the first of two mission test vehicles that will test the Presidential Communication Suite. It's urgent that we press forward with this much-needed operational requirement to replace the aging VH-3D and VH-60N," said Capt. Donald Gaddis, Presidential Helicopters program manager. "With attention focused on the Increment 2 restructure and the FY09 budget request, let's not forget that Increment 1 Test and Evaluation is well underway. We have three helicopters on the flight schedule conducting fuel system, satellite communications and high-powered FM Radio testing, with tail rotor and flight load survey testing on the horizon."

The industry team of Lockheed Martin and principal subcontractor AgustaWestland completed a number of significant program accomplishments in 2007, including bringing systems integration labs online in New York and Maryland, and completing 94 percent of the mission systems software for the VH-71 Increment One aircraft.

"It's very satisfying to see the visible proof that we are successfully executing this program," said Jeff Bantle, VH-71 vice president. "We're excited that the test vehicle is now undergoing final assembly and mission systems integration to bring the command and control capabilities to this aircraft."

"The delivery of TV-3 reflects our vested commitment and dedication to the VH-71 entering service," said Stephen C. Moss, chief executive officer of AgustaWestland North America, Inc. "We have much to look forward to in 2008 with the shipment of all Increment One helicopters."

AgustaWestland has shipped three VH-71 helicopters by cargo aircraft to NAS Patuxent River as part of the program. All remaining aircraft, including the five Increment One helicopters that will enter operational service are scheduled to be in the U.S. by year's end.

Lockheed Martin Systems Integration - Owego is the prime contractor and systems integrator for the U.S. Navy's VH-71 Presidential Helicopter program with overall responsibility for the program and total aircraft system performance. The VH-71 is based on the US101 helicopter, a variant of AgustaWestland's successful AW-101 multimission helicopter. 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. The Corporation reported 2007 sales of \$41.9 billion.

AgustaWestland, a Finmeccanica company, is the global leader in designing, manufacturing and supporting the world's most technologically advanced helicopters. With more than 100 years of experience in the aerospace industry, AgustaWestland provides a full range of rotorcraft for every commercial, government and military application, and an unrivalled capability in training and support solutions.

First Call Analyst:
FCMN Contact: monica.hallman@lmco.com

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