Second Presidential Helicopter Production Aircraft Takes Flight

The VH-71 presidential helicopter replacement program marked another milestone last Saturday with the maiden flight of the second VH-71 production aircraft. The aircraft is scheduled to arrive at U.S. Naval Air Station Patuxent River, MD, later this month.

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

The VH-71 program's first production aircraft arrived at the Navy's facility November 24, and is conducting ground vibration testing.

Five production and four test helicopters make up the program's first phase, or Increment One. The Increment One helicopters provide more capability than the current fleet which is scheduled to begin phasing out of operational service at a rate of three per year beginning in 2017.

Of the four test aircraft, two are in flight testing with a joint testing team made up of Navy, Marine Corps and industry pilots. The other two are undergoing mission systems integration at Lockheed Martin's facility in Owego, NY.

Lockheed Martin Systems Integration-Owego is the prime contractor and systems integrator for the VH-71 program with overall responsibility for the program and aircraft system. AgustaWestland, the principal subcontractor, has responsibility for the basic air vehicle design, production build, and basic air vehicle support functions. Lockheed Martin and AgustaWestland have partnered for more than 17 years with a worldwide record of excellence dating back to the Royal Navy's EH101 Merlin Mk1 program.

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.

Headquartered in Bethesda, MD, Lockheed Martin is a global security company that 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.

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