First Production VH-71 Presidential Helicopter Arrives At Lockheed Martin To Start Final Production Phase

The first Lockheed Martin pilot production VH-71 presidential helicopter to begin the integration and final production process arrived at the company's Owego, NY, facility today. Six of nine helicopters that make up the first phase of the VH-71 presidential helicopter program are now in the U.S., including four test-configured aircraft and two production aircraft.

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

"The arrival of this production aircraft to the Lockheed Martin facility here is a great start to the new year, after a very successful year for the program in 2008," said Jeff Bantle, Lockheed Martin VH-71 vice president and general manager. "Four years into the program, six aircraft are in the U.S. undergoing flight testing or integration, systems integration laboratories are fully functional and the helicopter is meeting or exceeding all key performance parameters."

The helicopter, pilot production aircraft number three (PP-3), will now be integrated with mission systems, outfitted with a cabin interior, painted in presidential livery and flight tested before being delivered to the U.S. Navy and ultimately to Marine Helicopter Squadron One. Two VH-71 test aircraft are also at the facility, undergoing mission systems installation. At Naval Air Station Patuxent River, MD, two additional test helicopters are conducting flight testing, while production aircraft PP-1, which joined the test program November 24, is conducting ground vibration testing, after which it will also be flown to Lockheed Martin's Owego facility for integration and completion.

The VH-71 program is divided into two phases, or increments. Increment One provides five helicopters on an accelerated schedule with improved capabilities over the current fleet. Increment Two will provide a fleet of 23 helicopters that complete the White House requirements for a command and control platform.

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.

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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