Third VH-71 Presidential Production Helicopter Completes Initial Flight

The VH-71 presidential helicopter program set another milestone with the maiden flight of the third pilot production helicopter today. This is the seventh presidential helicopter built for the program by manufacturer AgustaWestland under prime contractor Lockheed Martin.

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

After completion of required acceptance testing, the pilot production helicopter will be shipped to Lockheed Martin Systems Integration, Owego, NY, for its final production and systems integration phases. It will then become part of the aircraft fleet used for operational testing and "Marine One" deployment by the HMX-1 squadron.

Over the past four years, the program's accelerated schedule has produced four test aircraft and three production aircraft. The helicopter that flew today and two remaining pilot production aircraft will arrive in the U.S. over the next four months to undergo mission systems integration and flight testing. To date, the program has recorded more than 800 combined flight test hours.

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.

For additional information, visit our website: http://www.lockheedmartin.com/

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