VH-71 Presidential Helicopter Completes Initial Vibration Testing Phase On Schedule

The first Lockheed Martin production VH-71 Presidential Helicopter has completed initial ground vibration testing on schedule at the end of January at the Navy's Presidential Helicopter Support Facility in Patuxent River, MD. The testing was conducted on a pre-missionized aircraft to test the basic airframe.

(Photo: http://www.newscom.com/cgi-bin/prnh/20090226/NY75702)

Pilot Production One (PP-1) spent roughly six weeks undergoing a series of tests intended to assess the airframe's vibration characteristics. As a production representative aircraft, the results will be used as a baseline measurement for all five VH-71 production helicopters that make up the first phase, or Increment One, of the VH-71 Presidential Helicopter Program, and to refine models used for structural analysis.

"Basically we lift the aircraft off the ground and vibrate it," said Naval Air Systems Engineer Bob Riser. "An accelerometer measures vibration and we see how the aircraft responds. In this case, it responded very well, and the PP-1 aircraft completed the initial Ground Vibration Test with no issues."

The aircraft was then flown to Lockheed Martin's Owego, NY, facility for integration of mission systems and installation of the cabin interior. PP-1 will undergo a second ground vibration testing period as a fully missionized aircraft to validate modeling results.

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 146,000 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 2008 sales of $42.7 billion.

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