CH-53K Helicopter Systems Engineering Team Receives DoD Top 5 Programs Award

STRATFORD, Connecticut - The CH-53K Helicopter Systems Engineering Team won the Department of Defense Systems Engineering Top 5 Programs Award today at the annual NDIA Systems Engineering Conference Award Luncheon in San Diego, Calif.

The National Defense Industry Association presented the prestigious award to the CH-53K Helicopter Systems Engineering Team, consisting of both Naval Air Systems Command and Sikorsky Aircraft Corporation engineers, in recognition of excellence in the application of systems engineering practices resulting in highly successful DoD programs, as exemplified by their 2010 performance.

“The evaluation team, made up of senior individuals from across the Department of Defense, felt that the CH-53K program's efforts are clearly in keeping with the award's intent to honor programs who ‘demonstrate successful implementation of systems engineering best practices resulting in program success,’ ” said Col. Donald W. Robbins, Chairman of the Top 5 Awards Evaluation Team.

“The CH-53K Systems Engineering Team worked hard over the past few years and we are seeing the benefits of a disciplined and systematic approach,” said Col. Robert Pridgen, USMC, H-53 Heavy Lift program manager. “The Systems Engineering Team set the foundation for us to deliver a marinized, heavy-lifting helicopter that meets the future war fighting requirements of the Marine Corps, sustains the expeditionary capabilities and is supportable, maintainable and reliable throughout its entire lifecycle.”

David Zack, Sikorsky’s CH-53K Helicopter Program Manager, said the recognition is extremely rewarding and validates the approach taken by the CH-53K Systems Engineering Team, including its government partners as well as its 150 industry partners, to integrate systems engineering process and principles from the program’s inception.

“It is an honor for the CH-53K helicopter program to be recognized with this award, particularly because it is the system engineering approach that has successfully established the key processes and procedures throughout each stage of the program,” Zack said. “These principles are deeply rooted within the joint Sikorsky/Navy integrated product teams. This close collaboration continues to create a solid foundation as the program moves forward and a balanced approach in bringing the best capability to the customer at the right cost.”

Dr. Michael Torok, Sikorsky Vice President and Chief Engineer for Marine Corps Programs, noted that focusing on requirements stability, functional and physical system integration, and risk management is essential to success. “We took lessons learned from other programs and existing system engineering processes and established an integrated program approach that has proven successful,” Torok said.

The CH-53K Helicopter Ground Test Vehicle, the first of five prototype aircraft to be built, is currently being built at Sikorsky’s Florida Assembly and Flight Operations facility in West Palm Beach, Fla.

The CH-53K heavy lift helicopter will replace the U.S. Marine Corps CH-53E helicopter. First flight is expected to occur during fiscal year 2014.

The CH-53K helicopter will maintain virtually the same footprint as its predecessor, the three-engine CH-53E SUPER STALLION™ helicopter, but will nearly triple the payload to 27,000 pounds over 110 nautical miles under “high hot” ambient conditions. The CH-53E helicopter is currently the largest, most powerful marinized helicopter in the world. It is deployed fromMarine Corps amphibious assault ships to transport personnel and equipment and to carry external (sling) cargo loads.

The CH-53K helicopter’s maximum gross weight (MGW) with internal loads is 74,000 pounds compared to 69,750 pounds for the CH-53E aircraft. The CH-53K’s MGW with external loads is 88,000 pounds as compared to 73,500 for the CH-53E helicopter.

Features of the CH-53K helicopter include: a modern glass cockpit; fly-by-wire flight controls; fourth generation rotor blades with anhedral tips; a low-maintenance elastomeric rotor head; upgraded engines; a locking cargo rail system; external cargo handling improvements; survivability enhancements; and improved reliability, maintainability and supportability.

Sikorsky Aircraft Corp., based in Stratford, Conn., is a world leader in helicopter design, manufacture, and service. It is a subsidiary of United Technologies Corp. (**NYSE: UTX**). United Technologies Corp. is based in Hartford, Conn., and provides a broad range of high technology products and support services to the aerospace and building systems industries.

This press release contains forward-looking statements concerning potential production and sale of helicopters. Actual results may differ materially from those projected as a result of certain risks and uncertainties, including but not limited to changes in government procurement priorities and practices, budget plans or availability of funding or in the number of aircraft to be built; challenges in the design, development, production and support of advanced technologies; as well as other risks and uncertainties, including but not limited to those detailed from time to time in United Technologies Corporation’s Securities and Exchange Commission filings.