

U.S. Marine Corps Awards Contract To Lockheed Martin To Begin CH-53K Helicopter Production

Connecticut plant to build heavy lift helicopters

STRATFORD, Conn., Sept. 1, 2017 /[PRNewswire](#)/ -- Naval Air Systems Command, Patuxent River, Maryland, has awarded Lockheed Martin (NYSE: LMT) a Low Rate Initial Production (LRIP) Lot 1 contract to build two production [CH-53K King Stallion](#) helicopters. This contract follows the April 4, 2017, Milestone C decision by the Defense Acquisition Board (DAB) approving LRIP production.

"Gaining the U.S. Marine Corps approval to enter into production and the award of the first contract are milestones made possible by the tremendous achievements of the joint Sikorsky, Naval Air Systems Command (NAVAIR) and U.S. Marine Corps team," said Dr. Mike Torok, vice president, CH-53K programs. "This is what we have been striving for - to deliver this amazing capability to the U.S. Marine Corps."

Under the \$303,974,406 contract, Sikorsky will deliver two production aircraft to the U.S. Marine Corps in 2020 along with spares and logistical support. Aircraft assembly will take place at Sikorsky's headquarters in Stratford, Connecticut.

"We have just successfully launched the production of the most powerful helicopter our nation has ever designed. This incredible capability will revolutionize the way our nation conducts business in the battlespace by ensuring a substantial increase in logistical throughput into that battlespace. I could not be prouder of our government-contractor team for making this happen," said [Col Hank Vanderborcht](#), U.S. Marine Corps program manager for the Naval Air Systems Command's Heavy Lift Helicopters program, PMA-261.

The CH-53K King Stallion provides unmatched capability with three times the lift capability of its predecessor, the CH-53E Super Stallion. The helicopter cabin, a full foot wider, gives increased payload capacity to internally load 463L cargo pallets, High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicles (HMMWV) or a European Fenneck armored personnel carrier while still leaving the troop seats installed. The CH-53K's external hook system provides the capability to lift three independent external loads simultaneously. These true heavy lift internal and external cargo improvements give the Marine Corps tremendous mission flexibility and efficiency in delivering combat power in support of the Marine Air Ground Task Force or in delivering humanitarian assistance or disaster relief to those in need.

The King Stallion also brings enhanced safety features for the warfighter. Full authority fly-by-wire flight controls and mission management reduce pilot workload enabling the crew to focus on mission execution. Features include advanced stability augmentation, flight control modes that include attitude command-velocity hold, automated approach to a stabilized hover, position hold and precision tasks in degraded visual environments, and tactile cueing. These features permit the pilot to focus confidently on the mission at hand while operating in degraded environments.

The CH-53K's internal health monitoring systems with fault detection/fault isolation, coupled with a digital aviation logistics maintenance system that interfaces with the Fleet Common Operating Environment for fleet management, provides improved combat readiness for the Marine Corps.

The U.S. Department of Defense's Program of Record remains at 200 CH-53K aircraft. The U.S. Marine Corps intends to stand up eight active duty squadrons, one training squadron, and one reserve squadron to support operational requirements.

About Lockheed Martin

Headquartered in Bethesda, Maryland, Lockheed Martin is a global security and aerospace company that employs approximately 97,000 people worldwide and is principally engaged in the research, design, development, manufacture, integration and sustainment of advanced technology systems, products and services.

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