

Sikorsky Celebrates 30 Years Of Black Hawk Helicopter Operations In Latin America

Continued production and new mission capabilities ensure the Black Hawk helicopter will remain operational around the world for decades

SANTIAGO, Chile, April 3, 2018 /[PRNewswire](#)/ -- 2018 marks 30 years of operations for the Black Hawk helicopter in Latin America, since the Colombian Air Force took delivery of its first five UH-60A aircraft in 1988. Designed and manufactured by Sikorsky, now a Lockheed Martin company (NYSE: LMT), the twin engine medium-lift Black Hawk has become synonymous with the successful defense of territorial sovereignty, providing humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, combatting drug trafficking, performing search and rescue missions, surveilling coastlines and borders, and transporting heads of state.

"We congratulate and thank the 11 government agencies and armed forces across Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, and Mexico for showing the world how to adapt and operate the Black Hawk helicopter for critical missions that serve and protect their citizens," said Adam Schierholz, Sikorsky regional executive for Latin America. "Continued confidence in the Black Hawk by these countries during the past three decades stems from the aircraft's unequaled rugged military design, which translates to predictable reliability and performance in flight, effectiveness in combat, and the availability of strong product support to ensure high operational readiness."

"The Black Hawk has proven to be a unique and strategic tool for the Colombian Air Force that has allowed us to perform some of the most challenging missions in very extreme conditions," said Gen. Carlos Eduardo Bueno, Chief of the Colombian Air Force. "We join in celebrating this milestone anniversary, and look forward to many more years of effective utilization of these fine machines with the help and support of our friends at Sikorsky."

Since 1988, Sikorsky has delivered 174 Hawk aircraft to the region, which includes six Seahawk[®] variants to the Brazil Navy. The total will climb to 180 during 2018 when the Chilean Air Force takes delivery of six S-70i Black Hawk aircraft for military and humanitarian missions.

A Look Back

Country-specific operations include:

- **Colombia:** As the largest Black Hawk customer in Latin America, the Colombian Air Force, Colombian Army and Colombian National Police have collectively taken delivery of 103 aircraft, including seven S-70i digital cockpit variants in 2013. Carrying out diverse combat missions such as attack, MEDEVAC, CASEVAC, and Air Assault, these aircraft have played an essential role to defend and regain territorial control during the Colombian Conflict.
- **Mexico:** With the region's second largest Black Hawk fleet, Mexico has acquired 48 aircraft — UH-60L and UH-60M variants — since 1991 for its Navy, Air Force and Federal Police to fight drug traffickers and crime syndicates. In 2011, the State of Jalisco took delivery of one S-70i.
- **Brazil:** In 2017, two Air Force squadrons — the 7/8 'Harpia' air group based in Manaus, and the 5/6 'Pantera' air group in Santa Maria — achieved 30,000 flight hours for all 16 UH-60L aircraft. The same year, the Exército Brasileiro commemorated its 20th anniversary operating four S-70A Black Hawk aircraft. The Brazil Navy operates six S-70B Seahawk aircraft.
- **Chile:** The Chile Air Force has operated one S-70A aircraft since 1998 in a multirole

capacity.

- **Argentina:** Argentina's Presidencia has operated one S-70A for head of state transport since 1994.

A Look Ahead

Sikorsky continues to build UH-60M Black Hawk aircraft for the U.S. Army, which is expected to operate the platform into the 2070s. In March, Sikorsky began production of the HH-60W Combat Rescue Helicopter designed for long-distance missions.

Sikorsky continues to build the S-70i, a digital Black Hawk variant customized to the preferences of international militaries.

In 2018, Sikorsky will field two new mission capabilities for the Black Hawk:

- An aerial firefighting system, complete with belly tank, which can be easily retrofitted to the region's existing UH-60L and S-70i fleets
- A sophisticated weapons system for the S-70i and S-70M models that enables either pilot to engage static or moving targets with high accuracy using forward firing guns, rockets and laser-designated air-to-ground missiles

Further out, Sikorsky is developing an optionally piloted capability for the digital Black Hawk with the intelligence and autonomy to carry out missions with two, one or zero crew on board.

About Lockheed Martin

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