

U.S. Navy Awards Sikorsky Contract To Build Six More CH-53K Heavy Lift Helicopters

The CH-53K has flown more than 2,000 flight hours validating the aircraft's performance, including testing on a ship and in both hot and cold environments. This year, the helicopter completed air-to-air refueling with a 27,000-lb. external load demonstrating its ability to enable heavy-lift transport from sea to shore.

STRATFORD, Conn., Oct. 28, 2020 /PRNewswire/ -- Sikorsky, a Lockheed Martin company (NYSE: LMT) will build six additional production [CH-53K King Stallion helicopters](#) under a new contract for the U.S. Navy. The aircraft will further support the U.S. Marine Corps in its mission to conduct expeditionary heavy-lift assault transport of armored vehicles, equipment and personnel to support distributed operations deep inland from a sea-based center of operations.

The six helicopters are part of 200 aircraft Program of Record for the U.S. Marine Corps, and their addition makes a total of 24 CH-53K production aircraft now under contract. Under the terms of this most recent contract – known as Low Rate Initial Production (LRIP) Lot 4 – Sikorsky will begin deliveries of the six aircraft in January 2024.

"This contract award is a testament to the government's confidence in the CH-53K platform. This award shows that we are working hard to make the aircraft more affordable," said Major General Greg Masiello, program executive office, air ASW, assault and special mission programs. "The capability and affordability of the CH-53K is important to ensure that we provide a valuable addition to the United States Marine Corps and our friends and allies."

King Stallion Production Marches Ahead

The CH-53K program has five aircraft on the line at Sikorsky facilities in Connecticut and over two dozen in various stages of production. The program will deliver the first low rate initial production aircraft in September 2021.

Sikorsky and its suppliers have made significant investments in facilities, machinery, tooling, and workforce training to ramp up production required for the CH-53K program. For example, for the first time, newly installed 10-ton cranes lifted a 12,000 lb. gearbox into a CH-53K production aircraft.

"The production of this CH-53K helicopter represents a new era in capabilities, technologies, safety and mission flexibility for the U.S. Marine Corps. Sikorsky is committed to supporting the Marine Corps to maximize the benefits of this all new helicopter," said Bill Falk, Sikorsky CH-53K program director.

"Pilots are already training on state-of-the-art flight training devices to prepare in a safe, cost-effective manner for operational deployment," Falk said.

CH-53K Proving Capabilities

The CH-53K is also nearing the conclusion of the developmental flight test events in preparation for Initial Operational Test & Evaluation (IOT&E), having flown more than 2,000 flight hours validating the aircraft's performance on a ship and in both hot and cold environments. This year, the aircraft completed:

- [Air-to-air refueling with an external load](#)
- Initial sea trials
- Flight tests in extremely hot and dusty conditions at U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground in Yuma, Arizona

Other accomplishments include:

- Maximum weight single-point cargo hook sling load of 36,000 pounds (16,329 kilograms)
- Forward flight speed of over 150 knots
- 60-degree angle-of-bank turns
- Altitude of 18,500 feet mean sea level (MSL)
- 12-degree slope landings and takeoffs
- External load auto-jettison

- Gunfire testing

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