Central Command Releases Timeline of Mine Attack in Gulf of Oman

An unclassified slide provided by U.S. Central Command shows the damage from a June 13 explosion and a likely limpet mine on the hull of the M/V Kokuka Courageous in the Gulf of Oman.

ARLINGTON, Va. — The U.S. Central Command has published a timeline of the June 13 attacks on two commercial tankers in the Gulf of Oman.

The two motor tankers, the Norway-flagged M/TAltair and the Japan-flagged M/T Kokuka Courageous, were apparently damaged by limpet mines placed on their hulls. Ships and P-8 aircraft of the U.S. 5th Fleet responded to the incidents to render assistance and to investigate who launched the attacks.

Secretary of State Michael Pompeo later blamed Iran for the attacks, according to a June 13 report in Politico. "These attacks are a threat to international peace and security, a blatant assault on the freedom of navigation and an unacceptable escalation of tension by Iran," he is quoted as saying by the Politico report.

Video recorded by a U.S aircraft of an Iranian Gashti-class patrol boat and crew removing an unexploded limpet mine from the M/T Kokuka Courageous.

Pompeo said his assessment was based "on intelligence, the weapons used, the level of expertise needed to

execute the operation, recent similar Iranian attacks on shipping and the fact that no proxy group operating in the area has the resources and proficiency to act with such a high degree of sophistication," Politico reported.

The incidents followed covert attacks on May 12 on four tankers in the waters of the United Arab Emirates, apparently also with limpet mines.

The following is a timeline of the June 13 attacks provided by Capt. Bill Urban of U.S. Central Command public affairs:

- U.S. Naval forces in the region received two separate distress calls at 6:12 a.m. local time from the Altair and a second one at 7 a.m. from Kokuka Courageous.
- Both vessels were in international waters in the Gulf of Oman about 10 nautical miles apart at the time of the distress calls. USS Bainbridge was about 40 nautical miles away from Altair at the time of the attack and immediately began closing the distance.
- At 8:09 a.m., a U.S. aircraft observed an Iranian Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps Hendijan-class patrol boat and multiple IRGC fast attack craft/fast inshore attack craft (FAC/FIAC) in the vicinity of Altair.
- At 9:12 a.m., a U.S. aircraft observed the FAC/FIAC pull a raft from the Altair from the water.
- At 9:26 a.m., the Iranians requested that the motor

vessel Hyundai Dubai, which had rescued the sailors from the Altair, turn the crew over to the Iranian FIACs. The Hyundai Dubai complied with the request and transferred the crew of the Altair to the Iranian FIACs.

- At 11:05 a.m. local time, USS Bainbridge approached the Dutch tug Coastal Ace, which had rescued the crew of 21 sailors from the Kokuka Courageous who had abandoned their ship after discovering a probable unexploded limpet mine on their hull following an initial explosion.
- While the Iranian Hendijan patrol boat appeared to attempt to get to the tug Coastal Ace before Bainbridge, the mariners were rescued by Bainbridge at the request of the master of the Kokuka Courageous. The rescued sailors are currently aboard Bainbridge.
- At 4:10 p.m., an IRGC Gashti-class patrol boat approached the Kokuka Courageous and was observed and recorded removing the unexploded limpet mine from the Kokuka Courageous.

“The U.S. and our partners in the region will take all necessary measures to defend ourselves and our interests,” Urban said.

“Today’s attacks are a clear threat to international freedom of navigation and freedom of commerce. The U.S. and the international community stand ready to defend our interests, including the freedom of navigation. The United States has no interest in engaging in a new conflict in the Middle

East. However, we
will defend our interests.”

Bainbridge Answers Distress Call

Sailors aboard the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Bainbridge (DDG 96) render aid to the crew of the M/V Kokuka Courageous. Bainbridge is deployed to the U.S. 5th Fleet areas of operations in support of naval operations to ensure maritime stability and security in the Central Region, connecting the Mediterranean and Pacific through the western Indian Ocean and three strategic choke points. U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Jason Waite

GULF OF OMAN (NNS) – The Arleigh Burke-class
guided-missile destroyer USS Bainbridge (DDG 96) responded to a distress call
from the M/V Kokuka Courageous in the Gulf of Oman the morning of June 13.

The Bainbridge received a call from the
Kokuka Courageous crew advising that their ship was in distress approximately
30 nautical miles from Bainbridge’s location.

“This is what we’re out here for,” said Cmdr.
M. Kathryn Devine, commanding officer of Bainbridge. “Our mission is to ensure
maritime safety and to answer the call for aid when we can.”

All 21 crew members of the Kokuka Courageous
had evacuated to a tug boat and were transferred to the Bainbridge. One of the

Kokuka Courageous sailors suffered burns on his hands and was treated immediately by the Bainbridge medical team.

Once safely aboard Bainbridge, the Kokuka Courageous crew received medical check-ups, showers and clean clothes along with food and any other attention they required.

“I’m very proud of my crew and their quick response to the situation,” said Devine. “They’ve done an incredible job of making sure the crew of the tanker was safely brought aboard and taken care of.”

Bainbridge is underway as part of Abraham Lincoln Carrier Strike Group’s (ABECSG) deployment in support of maritime security cooperation efforts in U.S. 5th, 6th and 7th Fleet areas of operations.

With Abraham Lincoln as the flagship, deploying strike group assets include staffs, ships and aircraft of Carrier Strike Group 12 (CSG 12), Destroyer Squadron 2 (DESRON 2), USS Leyte Gulf (CG 55) and Carrier Air Wing 7 (CVW 7).

General Dynamics NASSCO to

Launch Largest Containership Ever Built in San Diego

The Lurline, the largest containership built in San Diego, at General Dynamics NASSCO.

SAN DIEGO – General Dynamics NASSCO will hold an event on June 15 to christen and launch the containership Lurline, the largest such ship ever built in San Diego, the company announced.

Lurline, constructed for Honolulu-based Matson Inc., is an 870-foot vessel that can hold 3,500 cargo containers – 20-foot-equivalent units (TEUs).

She has liquefied natural gas-capable engines and is designed for energy efficiency. Lurline is the lead ship of a two-vessel contract being built for Matson.

Thousands of people had roles in constructing the Lurline, which is designed to not only transport containers but also automobiles and rolling stock, including trailers. The construction and operation of the Lurline and its future sister ship are aligned with the Jones Act, which requires that goods transported between U.S. ports must go on ships that are built, owned and operated by U.S. citizens or permanent residents.

NASSCO is
the only major shipyard on the West Coast of the U.S. that is designing,
constructing and repairing ships for the U.S. Navy and commercial customers.

Ceremony participants will include General Dynamics NASSCO President Kevin Graney and Matson CEO Matt Cox. Constance Lau, CEO and director of Hawaiian Electric Industries and a Matson board member, will christen the ship with the traditional breaking of a champagne bottle on the hull.

The christening will be streamed live on June 15 starting at 6:30 p.m.

Corps Begins Fielding Mobile Satellite Communication System

U.S. Marine Corps Cpl. Frankie Garcia calls for a radio check using a PRC-117G at Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, California. U.S. Marine Corps/Lance Cpl. Jason Monty
MARINE CORPS BASE QUANTICO, Va. – The U.S. Marine Corps recently began fielding a next-generation narrowband satellite communication system that assists warfighters in connecting to networks on the battlefield, Marine Corps Systems Command (MCSC) said in a June 12 release.

Fielded in
the first quarter of 2019, the Mobile User Objective System provides satellite

communication capabilities to mobile or stationary Marines. The system enables the warfighter to leverage cellular technology to increase access to voice and data communication while using the MUOS network.

“MUOS is another way for warfighters to communicate in a tactical environment,” said Eddie Young, project officer of Multiband Radio II Family of Systems at MCSC. “The system brings [satellite communications] capabilities in various formats to Marines.”

The MUOS capability encompasses updated firmware to the AN/PRC-117G radio system and one of three antenna kits. The antennas help Marines simultaneously access satellite networks and gives them secure and nonsecure internet access. MUOS also improves overall reliability in urban environments, challenging vegetation and other arduous conditions.

> *“MUOS is another way for warfighters to communicate in a tactical environment. The system brings [satellite communications] capabilities in various formats to Marines.”*
>
> *Eddie Young, project officer, Multiband Radio II Family of Systems,*
> *Marine Corps Systems Command*

“MUOS is essentially software and an antenna capability augmenting existing hardware,” said Noah Slemp, systems engineer at MCSC. “It’s similar to

adding an application to a cellphone.”

The first service to widely employ MUOS, the Corps is deploying thousands of antenna kits for the AN/PRC-117G radio system and hundreds of diplexers that enable vehicular systems to access MUOS satellites.

“The Marine Corps is leading all services in terms of getting MUOS to warfighters,” Young said.

Satellite communication has become increasingly important for the Corps in the 21st century. According to the Department of Defense, more than 50 percent of DoD satellite communication involves narrowband communication. Yet, this form of communication accounts for less than 2 percent of the DoD’s bandwidth, making it an efficient way to transmit information.

MUOS is particularly important because the satellite communications infrastructure of the legacy system is nearing its expiration, Slemp said. As a result, the Corps intends to incrementally replace the older capabilities with the MUOS waveform, enabling more Marines to access ultra-high frequency tactical satellite communications.

Prior to fielding MUOS, MCSC had to demonstrate to the Milestone

Decision Authority that the system was safe, met technical performance and was ready for use by the warfighter. Since MUOS's Field User Evaluation in 2017, Marines have raved about the benefits of the system.

"Our Marines find MUOS useful in completing their missions," Young said. "We've received a lot of positive feedback thus far."

The efforts of Young's team in getting the system out to the warfighter have not gone unnoticed. In May 2018, at a Narrowband Working Group conference in Colorado Springs, Colorado, the Joint Staff J6 and the DoD Chief Information Officer recognized Young and Slemp for leading the services in employing MUOS.

The J6 and DoD CIO also emphasized the joint effort between the Multiband Radio II team and the Naval Information Warfare Center in using the Multiple Reconfigurable Training Systems, an interactive training aid that will be used to assist in the rapid fielding of MUOS.

"It was motivating to see that we were recognized for our efforts, because the team had put in a considerable amount of time and effort to make this happen," Young said. "We recognize the warfighter needs this capability, and we've done everything we can to get it to them in a timely manner."

U.S. Department of Transportation Launches Port Infrastructure Development Program

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) posted a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) to apply for $292.7 million in discretionary grant funding through the new Port Infrastructure Development Program, the department said in a June 12 release.

“This major investment in the Port Infrastructure Development Program will help strengthen, modernize, and improve our country’s maritime systems and gateway ports,” said U.S. Transportation Secretary Elaine L. Chao.

As the administration continues to invest in America’s infrastructure, this new program aims to support public coastal ports by improving the safety, efficiency, or reliability of goods movement into, out of, or within a port, according to the release.

Investments in port transportation infrastructure will be awarded on a

competitive basis
for projects located either within the boundary of a coastal seaport, or
outside the boundary of a coastal seaport, and directly relate to port
operations or to an intermodal connection to a port.

The department
will evaluate projects using criteria which include leveraging federal funds,
project costs and benefits, project outcomes, project readiness, and domestic
preference. The department will also
consider geographic diversity when selecting grant recipients.

The
Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2019 made available $292.7 million for the
Port Infrastructure Development Program, including $92.7 million for the 15
coastal seaports that handled the greatest number of loaded foreign and
domestic twenty-foot equivalent units of containerized cargo in 2016, as
identified by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.
The minimum award size is $10 million, with a federal cost share not to
exceed 80%.

Additionally,
the Department anticipates awarding funding to at least one project that
advances each of the following project outcomes:

- Advance technology supported safety,
design efficiency improvements.

- Improve state of good repair and

resiliency.

- Promote efficient energy trade.
- Promote manufacturing, agriculture or other forms of exports.
- For only the top 15 coastal ports, a project that supports the safe flow of agricultural and food products, free of pests and disease, domestically and internationally.

To provide technical assistance, DOT will host a series of webinars during the Port Infrastructure Development Program grant application process. Details and registration information regarding these webinars will be made available at www.transportation.gov/portgrants.

The deadline to submit an application for the Port Infrastructure Development Program is 8 p.m. EDT Sept. 22, 2019.

Coast Guard Cutter Dauntless Returns from 58-Day Patrol

The crew of Coast Guard Cutter Dauntless returned to their homeport in Pensacola, Florida, June 12 after a 58-day patrol in the Gulf of Mexico. U.S. COAST GUARD.

PENSACOLA,

Fla. – The crew of Coast Guard Cutter Dauntless returned to their homeport in Pensacola, Florida, June 12 after a 58-day patrol in the Gulf of Mexico, the Coast Guard 8th District said in a release of the same date.

During its two-month patrol, the cutter supported several 8th Coast Guard District mission areas, including search and rescue, enforcement of domestic living marine resource regulations and illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing activity near the U.S. and Mexico maritime border.

The crew deterred three Mexican vessels caught illegally fishing in U.S. waters and recovered three miles of long line fishing gear, preventing the illegal harvesting of red snapper and other regulated Gulf of Mexico fish species.

They also conducted five safety boardings of U.S. flagged commercial fishing vessels to ensure the proper safety equipment was onboard and crewmembers were properly trained in safe seamanship practices.

The crew's employment in south Texas waters supported Operation Patriot Curtain, which addressed threats to border security and U.S. sovereignty near the maritime boundary line.

During the

patrol, the crew collaborated with the Mexican Naval Warship Arm Independencia
to share operational best practices. This beneficial exchange allowed the
Dauntless crew to demonstrate effective interoperability with a key
international maritime partner while conducting a shared mission of combating
transnational threats.

The crew
stopped in Galveston, Texas, the ship's homeport from 1995 to 2018, and hosted
over 400 tours for the Galveston community. The ship was honored by the city
council with a proclamation declaring May 15th, "Sin Miedo" Day in
honor of Dauntless's motto, "Sin Miedo," meaning, "Without Fear."

Coast Guard Repatriates 18 Migrants to the Dominican Republic

The Coast Guard Cutter Winslow Griesser rendezvous with a D.R. Navy patrol boat June 10, just off Samaná, Dominican Republic. The cutter Griesser repatriated 18 Dominican migrants, from a group of 24, who were interdicted June 10 offshore Aguadilla, Puerto Rico. U.S. COAST GUARD.

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico – The Coast Guard Cutter Winslow
Griesser (WPC-1116) repatriated 18 Dominican migrants to a

Dominican Navy patrol vessel June 11 near Samana, Dominican Republic, following the interdiction of an illegal migrant voyage Monday just off the coast of Aguadilla, Puerto Rico, the Coast Guard 7th District said in a June 12 release.

Six other Dominican migrants traveling in the group remain in federal custody facing possible prosecution by the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Puerto Rico on potential charges of attempted illegal reentry into a U.S. territory.

The interdictions are the result of ongoing efforts in support of Operation Unified Resolve, Operation Caribbean Guard and the Caribbean Border Interagency Group (CBIG).

"I'm glad that our crew was able to safely recover all the migrants and provide them with the humanitarian assistance they required," said Lt. Luke A. Walsh, USCGC Winslow Griesser commanding officer. "This group is very fortunate. The dangers in the Mona Passage are quite real, as migrants risk losing their lives at the hands of ruthless smugglers whose vessels are ill equipped with little or no emergency and lifesaving equipment onboard."

A team of Ramey Sector Border Patrol agents detected the 20-foot migrant vessel, transiting without navigational lights, approximately a mile and a half off the coast of Aguadilla.

Coast Guard watchstanders in Sector San Juan diverted

cutter Winslow Griesser to interdict the suspect vessel. As the Winslow Griesser arrived on scene, a responding Puerto Rico Police Joint Forces of Rapid Action marine unit stopped the migrant vessel. The Winslow Griesser crew embarked from the makeshift vessel all 24 migrants, 23 men and a woman, who claimed Dominican nationality.

Once aboard a Coast Guard cutter, all migrants receive food, water, shelter and basic medical attention.

The cutter Winslow Griesser transferred custody of the six migrants facing federal prosecution to Ramey Sector Border Patrol agents in Mayaguez, Puerto Rico.

The Caribbean Border Interagency Group unifies efforts between U.S. Customs and Border Protection, the U.S. Coast Guard, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, the United States Attorney’s Office for the District of Puerto Rico, and Puerto Rico Police Joint Forces of Rapid Action. These agencies share a common goal of securing the maritime border of Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands against illegal migrant and drug smuggling threats.

The Winslow Griesser is a 154-foot fast-response cutter homeported in San Juan, Puerto Rico.

Cutter Stratton Heads to Western Pacific

The Cutter Stratton sails under the Golden Gate Bridge. The cutter is headed back out on a months-long deployment in the Western Pacific. U.S. Coast Guard/Petty Officer 2nd Class Garrett Raitt

ALAMEDA, Calif. – The U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Stratton is scheduled to depart June 12 from its homeport in Alameda, California, for a months-long deployment to the Western Pacific in support of the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command, which oversees military operations in the region, the Coast Guard Pacific Area announced.

The Stratton will be the second cutter deployed to the Western Pacific this year. The crew aboard the Coast Guard Cutter Bertholf left Alameda Jan. 20 and remain in the region.

Operating under the tactical control of the U.S. 7th Fleet commander, the cutter is scheduled to engage in professional exchanges and capacity-building exercises with partner nations and to patrol and operate as directed.

As both a federal law enforcement agency and an armed force, the Coast Guard is positioned to conduct defense operations in support of combatant commanders on all seven

continents. The service routinely provides forces in joint military operations worldwide, including the deployment of cutters, boats, aircraft and deployable specialized forces.

The Coast Guard's role in the Indo-Pacific goes back more than 150 years. The service's ongoing deployment of resources to the region supports U.S. foreign policy and national security objectives as outlined in the National Security Strategy.

"The United States is a Pacific nation," said Vice Adm. Linda Fagan, commander, Coast Guard Pacific Area, who oversees the cutter.

"We have deep and long-standing ties with our partners in the region and, more importantly, we share a strong commitment to a free and open Indo-Pacific, governed by a rules-based international system that promotes peace, security, prosperity and sovereignty of all nations."

Commissioned in 2012, Stratton is one of four Coast Guard Legend-class national security cutters homeported in Alameda. NSCs are 418 feet long, 54 feet wide and have a 4,600 long-ton displacement. They have a top speed in excess of 28 knots, a range of 12,000 nautical miles, endurance of up to 90 days and can hold a crew of up to 170.

The Coast Guard is scheduled to commission its seventh and eighth national security cutters, Kimball and Midgett, in August. Both will be homeported in Honolulu.

“Security abroad equals security at home,” Fagan said. “Enhancing our partners’ capabilities is a force multiplier in combating transnational criminal and terrorist organizations and deterring our adversaries.”

Top HASC Republican Says His Vote Hinges on GOP’s 2020 Budget Add-Ons

An E-2D Hawkeye lands on the flight deck of the aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln (CVN-72). The House Republican version of the 2020 National Defense Authorization Act calls for the purchase of two more of the early-warning aircraft. U.S. Navy/Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Jeff Sherman

The House Armed Services Committee’s ranking Republican says his vote to pass the fiscal 2020 National Defense Authorization Act will depend on whether the final bill continues the recent progress is preparing the military to confront Russia and China or slides back into the readiness crisis that started with the 2011 Budget Control Act and sequestration.

To ensure continued gains in readiness and future capabilities, Rep. Mac Thornberry (R-Texas) said June 11 that he will offer an amendment to increase the bill's funding by $17 billion, which includes about $4 billion for additional U.S. Navy and U.S. Marine Corps aircraft, ships, unmanned vessels, weapons and emergency repairs of hurricane damage to two East Coast Marine bases. Thornberry said he also will propose restoring cuts made by the majority Democrats in strategic nuclear programs, ballistic missile defense and personnel issues.

> *"As I look at this year's bill, the question is for me, does this continue the gains we have made in rebuilding our military and in being in a competitive position with Russia and China?"*
>
> *Rep. Mac Thornberry (R-Texas), ranking member, house armed services committee*

But for national defense to receive even the $733 billion total offered by Democrats – let alone the $750 billion Thornberry and Republicans seek – Congress and the Trump administration would have to approve a budget bill to override Budget Control Act spending caps, which would take nearly $90 billion from 2020 defense spending.

Some conservative Republicans and Trump aides oppose raising the caps for domestic issues, which the Democrats insist must accompany higher defense spending. But in a breakfast meeting with defense writers, Thornberry

said he would remind fellow Republicans that the first job of the federal government is to defend the country. And “if we are going to fulfill our duties, we will have to take some things that we don’t necessarily like or want.”

When Republicans fully controlled Congress, they agreed with the Obama administration on a bill that waived the caps for fiscal years 2018 and 2019, which allowed substantial increases in defense spending and some growth in domestic programs. So far, no such agreement has been reached for fiscal 2020 and 2021, which are the last two years covered by the Budget Control Act limits.

The aircraft carrier USS Gerald R. Gerald R. Ford (CVN 78) is maneuvered by tugboats in the James River. The Republican draft of the 2020 NDAA criticizes the Navy’s handling of the Gerald R. Ford, the ship’s technical and mechanical issues and its cost overruns. U.S. Navy/Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Ryan Seelbach

Thornberry said one of the “greatest accomplishments” of the last two years was “to rebuild our military after it was deeply damaged by sequestration. … We have seen the consequences of cutting our military, in accident rates and other things. It’s not like these are just number on a spread sheet. These are real lives, life-and-death decisions that we make.

“As I look at this year’s bill, the question is for me, does this continue the gains we have made in rebuilding our military and in being in

a competitive position with Russia and China?”

Within the $17 billion spending increase Thornberry’s amendment would authorize is funding for four additional Navy F-35Cs Lightning II strike fighters; two Marine vertical-lift F-35Bs; one more E-2D Hawkeye early-warning aircraft; more funding for aircraft carrier construction; 38 long-range missiles and additional mission modules for Littoral Combat Ships; the second fleet oiler and unmanned surface vessels cut by the Democrats; $748.8 million for Navy hypersonic research; $211 million for the overhaul of the aircraft carrier USS John C. Stennis (CVN-74); $1.2 billion for various personnel programs; and $2.3 billion for emergency repairs of hurricane damage to Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point and Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune in North Carolina.

> *HASC's Mac Thornberry has geared up two amendments to thwart House Dems two big objections to new defense bill: https://t.co/uqLTOXUnOz*
>
> *— Breaking Defense (@BreakingDefense) June 11, 2019*

The Republican funding plan also would restore authority to field the low-yield nuclear warhead for the submarine-launched Trident D-5 ballistic missiles and funding for modernization and expansion of the nuclear weapons production facilities.

Their draft NDAA also sharply criticizes the Navy’s handling

of the new USS Gerald R. Ford aircraft carrier (CVN-78), which ran far past its planned budget and production schedule and, due to numerous mechanical and technical problems, is not expected to be ready for operations until this fall – more than two years after the Navy accepted it. The NDAA protests that the Gerald R. Ford is not capable of fully supporting operations of the F-35C Lightning IIs and it would bar the Navy from accepting the second ship in the class, USS John F. Kennedy (CVN-79), currently under construction, until it is made compatible with the F-35C.

Thornberry would not say if he supports the restrictive language on the Kennedy but said: "Sometimes we need to put things in the bill to get their attention."

Presidential Helicopter Program Approved for Production of 6 Aircraft

Marine Helicopter Squadron (HMX) 1 conducts test flights of the new VH-92A helicopter over the South Lawn of the White House in Washington last September. U.S. Marine Corps/Sgt. Hunter Helis

PATUXENT RIVER, Md. – The U.S. Navy's presidential helicopter program

awarded a $542 million contract to Sikorsky, a Lockheed Martin company, on June 10 to build six VH-92A aircraft, spares and support equipment, the Program Executive Office for Assault and Special Missions announced in a release.

“The team has efficiently leveraged a proven platform with cutting-edge government mission systems for rapid agile development of the next helicopters to fly presidential missions,” said James F. Geurts, assistant secretary of the Navy for research, development and acquisition. “I am proud of the combined government and contractor team who has worked so hard to transition this program into initial production and did so at over $1 billion less than the program’s cost baseline.”

“The presidential lift mission is a no-fail mission for the Marine Corps,” said Lt. Gen Steven Rudder, the deputy commandant for Marine Corps aviation. “We deliver helicopters and MV-22 transportation across the globe to support the requirements of the presidency. The authorization to move forward with procurement of the VH-92A will allow the Marine Corps to deliver the next generation of presidential helicopter support.”

The VH-92A aircraft will increase performance and payload over the current presidential

helicopters, VH-3D and VH-60N, that have been serving more than 40 years. The VH-92A will provide enhanced crew coordination systems and communications capabilities plus improve availability and maintainability.

Government testing will continue to validate system performance and prepare for initial operational test and evaluation planned for mid-2020 and initial operational capability (IOC) in late 2020.