Contract Awarded to Sikorsky for 12 CH-53K Heavy-Lift Helos



A CH-53K King Stallion lifts a Joint Light Tactical Vehicle (JLTV) at Naval Air Station Patuxent River, Maryland. U.S. Marine Corps/Lance Cpl. Shannon Doherty

WASHINGTON – Naval Air Systems Command has awarded a $1.3 billion contract to Sikorsky for 12 U.S. Marine Corps CH-53K King Stallion helicopters, the command said in a release.

"The Marine Corps is very appreciative of the efforts by the Navy and our industry partners to be able to award the LRIP 2/3 contract," said Lt. Gen. Steven Rudder, deputy commandant for aviation. "This is a win for the Marine Corps and will secure the heavy-lift capability we need to meet future operational requirements and support the National Defense Strategy. I'm very confident in the success of the CH-53K program and look forward to fielding this critical capability."

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> *Lt. Gen. Steven Rudder, deputy commandant for aviation*

The Pentagon’s most powerful helicopter, the King Stallion is a new-build helicopter that will expand the fleet’s ability to move more material more rapidly throughout the area of responsibility using proven and mature technologies. The CH-53K is the only aircraft able to provide the Marines with the heavy-lift capability it needs to meet future operational requirements for the vertical-lift mission.

“This contract award reflects close cooperation and risk sharing between the government and industry teams to deliver critical capabilities to the Marine Corps,” said James Geurts, assistant secretary of the Navy for research, development and acquisition. “Working with our industry partners, the team ensured that solutions for technical challenges are incorporated into these production aircraft.”

The CH-53K carries triple the baseline CH-53E capability, having demonstrated the ability to lift nearly 14 tons at a mission radius of 110 nautical miles. The CH-53K has proven the ability to lift up to 36,000 pounds via an external cargo hook.

Sikorsky is a Lockheed Martin company based in Stratford, Connecticut.