NAVAIR Orders Six VH-92 Presidential Helicopters From Sikorsky

Marine Helicopter Squadron One runs test flights of the new VH-92A over the south lawn of the White House in September 2018. U.S. Marine Corps/Sgt. Hunter Helis

ARLINGTON, Va. – Naval Air Systems Command has awarded Sikorsky a second production contract to build VH-92A helicopters for the U.S. Marine Corps, the company said in a release.

The VH-92A has been selected to provide transport for the president of the United States, the vice president and other high-level government officials. The helicopter will replace the 19 VH-3D Sea King and VH-60N "White Hawk" helicopters operated by Marine Helicopter Squadron One. The Corps plans to acquire a total of 23 VH-92As.

Under the $470.8 million low-rate initial production (LRIP) Lot II contract, Sikorsky, a Lockheed Martin company, will deliver six VH-92A helicopters in 2022 and 2023.

"All six of the production aircraft from the first [LRIP] contract are undergoing modifications at Sikorsky's Stratford, Connecticut, plant and are on schedule to begin deliveries in 2021," Sikorsky said in the release.

Five VH-92As have been assigned to government testing at Naval Air Station Patuxent River, Maryland, the release said. A sixth is going through modification and will enter the test program this spring. The modification includes a mature mission and communications system. Initial operational test and evaluation is scheduled for later this year.

Sikorsky said the aircraft in testing have accrued more than 1,000 test hours.

The company and the U.S. Navy integrate mature mission and communications systems into the aircraft.

“The program continues to progress on budget and within our planned acquisition timeline,” Marine Col. Eric Ropella, the Navy’s presidential helicopter program manager, said in the release.

“Now that we are ramping up production, the VH-92A program is gaining momentum,” Dave Banquer, Sikorsky VH-92A program director, said in the release.

“This second contract award demonstrates the confidence the U.S. Marine Corps has in Sikorsky’s proven ability to deliver and support the next-generation presidential helicopter. The men and women of Sikorsky treasure our legacy of building and providing helicopter transportation for every president and commander in chief since Dwight D. Eisenhower. We are proud to continue that legacy with the VH-92A helicopter.”