

Navy Accepts Delivery of First TH-73A Training Helicopter



A TH-73 helicopter from Leonardo Helicopters. The first operational TH-73A was presented to the Navy on June 10.

LEONARDO HELICOPTERS

PHILADELPHIA – The first operational TH-73A helicopter was presented to the U.S. Navy June 10 during a ceremony at the AgustaWestland Philadelphia Corp. (Leonardo) plant in Philadelphia, the Naval Air Systems Command announced in a release.

“The TH-73A will be instrumental in providing higher fidelity training to our future rotary-wing and tilt-rotor aviators for the Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard,” said Vice Adm. Kenneth Whitesell, commander, Naval Air Forces. “The cutting-edge technology and advanced avionics within the Advanced Helicopter Training System (AHTS) will enable a more seamless transition from the training aircraft to fleet aircraft, this in turn allows more focus on high end warfighting development and training.”

Eventually, the Navy will have 130 TH-73A helicopters total, with deliveries continuing through 2024. The new helicopters will meet the capability and capacity gaps of the aging TH-57 Sea Ranger training platform.

The TH-73As are fully Federal Aviation Administration certified prior to delivery, thus bringing a ready-made solution that will transition the TH-57 platforms out of service by 2025. The TH-57 is scheduled to begin sundown in fiscal year 2022.

“This delivery signifies a new era for Naval Aviation

training,” said Rear Adm. Robert Westendorff, chief of Naval Aviation Training. “By using current cockpit technologies and a new training curriculum, the TH-73A will improve pilot training and skills and ensure rotary wing aviators are produced more efficiently at a higher quality and are ready to meet the fleet’s challenges.”

In addition to new helicopters, the full AHTS includes aircrew training services that provide availability on new simulators, a modernized curriculum and a new contractor logistics support contract for the maintenance and flight line support requirements of the new helicopter.

Using the first TH-73A, the team will train the cadre of instructor pilots and validate the modernized curriculum efforts, a requirement prior to training Student Naval Aviators with the new curriculum in the new system. The helicopters will ensure the Navy has capacity to train several hundred aviation students per year for Chief of Naval Aviation Training at Naval Air Station (NAS) Whiting Field in Milton, Florida.

The AHTS accounts for the training needs of all of the Fleet Replacement Squadrons, thus students will be highly trained and fully capable of succeeding, regardless of which platform they select.

“The combined government and contractor team set new standards to meet much needed requirements in the fleet,” said Capt. Holly Shoger, Undergraduate Flight Training Systems Program (PMA-273) program manager. “We are proud to develop and provide these new capabilities that will improve pilot training for many years to come.”

The aircraft is scheduled to arrive at Naval Air Station Whiting Field, Florida, following final DoD inspections. A total of 32 TH-73As are scheduled for delivery to the U.S. Navy this calendar year and 130 total over the contract

period. The new TH-73As will be housed in a temporary hangar at NAS Whiting Field, Florida, with construction to begin in 2023 on a new helicopter maintenance hangar.

The PMA-273 at Naval Air Systems Patuxent River, Maryland, oversees the AHTS and TH-73A.