PMA-226 Strengthens Alliance by Returning Historic Helicopter to Service



An iconic VH-3A Sea King returns to the skies after a modernization by Adversary and Specialized Aircraft Program Office (PMA-226) and industry partners. Now, this historic aircraft is ready to continue its service with the Egyptian Air Force, strengthening a decades-long alliance.
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NAS Patuxent River, Md. – In a powerful demonstration of its commitment to international partners, the Adversary and Specialized Aircraft Program Office (PMA-226) has successfully returned a historically significant VH-3A Sea King to the skies for the Egyptian Air Force. The project, completed in February, modernizes a key aviation asset and reinforces a

strategic partnership built on decades of cooperation.

The effort, managed by the PMA-226 H-3 Integrated Product Team in partnership with NAVAIR’s Security Cooperation Office and industry partner Clayton International, successfully merged a legacy airframe with modern technology.

“This milestone is a testament to the teamwork and dedication of our program office, contracting teams, and industry partners,” said Capt. Jason Pettitt, PMA-226 program manager. “Together, we’ve delivered a modernized aircraft that strengthens our partnership with the Egyptian Air Force and highlights the value of collaboration with our allies.”

The aircraft itself, BuNo 150615, has a rich history. It was originally delivered to the U.S. Marine Corps to support presidential missions for John F. Kennedy, Lyndon B. Johnson, and Richard Nixon. Its role pivoted from executive transport to diplomatic symbol during Nixon’s 1974 visit to Egypt, when he gifted the helicopter to Egyptian President Anwar Sadat as a gesture of goodwill.

The recent refurbishment included installing a revitalized electrical backbone and a modern “glass panel” avionics suite, alongside upgraded communication and navigation systems. On Feb. 2, the Egyptian Air Force conducted an Acceptance Check Flight, validating the aircraft’s renewed performance.

“The Egyptian Air Force’s active involvement and commitment to quality were key to the success of this program,” Pettitt added.

Following the final installation of a custom VIP interior, the aircraft will be prepared for transport back to Egypt, where it will resume service as a flying symbol of an enduring partnership.