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.