

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.