



Sikorsky Archives News

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VH-34



VH-3



Sikorsky Aircraft has provided helicopters for the Presidential Fleet for over half a century.

VH-3 and VH-53D



VH-60



The Sikorsky fleet has provided safe and secure transportation for all the United States presidents from Dwight D. Eisenhower to the current president Barack H. Obama.



VH-53E

IGOR I. SIKORSKY HISTORICAL ARCHIVES, INC.



(203) 386-4356 | (203) 386-4218

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Contact us at iisha@snet.net

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Marine Helicopter Squadron One (HMX -1) was commissioned at Quantico, Virginia on December 1, 1947. The squadron was established to test and evaluate the concept of transporting Marines to strategic areas by helicopter.

September 1957 marked the beginning of a mission which made HMX-1 truly unique. President Dwight D. Eisenhower, while vacationing in Newport, Rhode Island, had to return to the Capital. He made this return trip by means of a UH-34 to Quonset Point Naval Air Station to board his aircraft to a flight to Washington. This was the first time that a President of the United States had ever flown in a Marine helicopter. President Eisenhower found the helicopter to be a timely , fast and safe means of transportation. HMX -1 became “The Squadron of the President”.



The Army and the Marine Corps shared the presidential helicopter duties from 1958 until 1976. President Eisenhower is exiting the



Army aircraft shown in the photo on the left and the Marine aircraft shown in the photo on the right.

The aircraft is designated as Marine One when the President is on board

President Ford disbanded the Army's Executive flight Detachment in 1976, leaving the Marine Corps pilots with the responsibility for the executive transportation mission.



VH-34

As the executive mission became established, a special model of UH-34, the VH-34 was developed for use. The VH model was also equipped with a VIP passenger interior, improved instrumentation and navigation equipment, and emergency flotation devices.

The Marine One distinctive color scheme dates back to the Eisenhower Administration, when the aircraft did not have air conditioning. The top of the aircraft was painted white to reflect heat and reduce interior temperatures. The presidential helicopters continue to be referred as the "White Tops".

The U.S. Navy HSS-2/SH-3A was developed in the early 1960s for anti-submarine warfare and search and rescue missions. The aircraft earned the reputation for safety and reliability. The VH-3A/D for the presidential transportation mission evolved from the SH-3 success.



HSS-2/SH-3 Versions

The VH-3A/D aircraft incorporated sound proofing, air conditioning, a larger cabin, and improved navigational and communications equipment. The VH-3s provided the Presidential mission with increased safety, reliability, comfort, speed, and range.



VH-3D

VH-3D Features:

- Aircraft is 72 feet, 8 inches long and 16 feet, 10 inches high.
- Maximum gross weight is 20,500 pounds
- Two G.E. T-58 gas turbine engines
- 62 foot diameter 5 bladed main rotor
- The VH-3D cruises at speeds up to 140 nautical miles per hour
- Range is 600 miles without refueling
- Maximum number of passengers is 16

President John F. Kennedy was the first to fly in the VH-3A in May, 1962. The VH-3D is currently the primary presidential carrier. The aircraft has transported the president’s family and U.S. and foreign government officials.



VH-3D hovering in front of White House



VH-3D flying over Washington, D.C.



John F. Kennedy



Lyndon B. Johnson



Richard Nixon



Gerald & Betty Ford and Robert Dole.



James & Rosalynn Carter



Ronald & Nancy Reagan



George H.W. Bush



George W. Bush



William Clinton



Barack Obama



VH-3D at Windsor Castle



VH-60N & VH-3D Over N.Y.



VH-3D on Wall Street Pier



VH-3D over Brooklyn Bridge



VH-3D Approaching the Washington Monument



VH-3D in the Reagan Library

The Naval Hawk derivative, VH-60N entered the presidential fleet on November 30, 1988 - The reliability and safety of the Hawk family and current VH presidential helicopters is reflected in the warm thank you letter forwarded by President Ronald Reagan to Sikorsky Aircraft commemorating the first production VH-60 delivery.



VH-60N Features

- T700-GE-401 engines
- SH-60B improved durability gearbox
- HH-60A rotor brake
- 125 gallon internal auxiliary fuel tank
- SH-60B modified AFCS
- Folding stabilator
- Cabin soundproofing
- Cabin radio operator station
- Electromagnetic pulse hardening
- Air transportable by C-130, C-141, C-5
- Extensive avionic upgrades
- VIP cabin interior

THE WHITE HOUSE

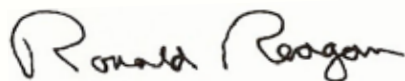
Washington

November 18, 1988

I am delighted to send warm congratulations to Sikorsky Aircraft on the occasion of the delivery of the first production VH-60 to HMX-1 on November 30, 1988.

I am proud to have this unique helicopter delivered to the Presidential Helicopter Squadron while I am still in office. For more than 25 years, Sikorsky helicopters have been flying presidents of the United States. You can take pride in your commitment to excellence and in a job well done.

You have my best wishes for continued success in the future. God bless you.




Pope John Paul II in the VH-60N

The VH-60N increases the long range distance capabilities of the presidential fleet, due to the folding capabilities for being transported into

Air Force cargo transport aircraft. The Marines can prepare a VH-60N aircraft for C-5 loading in less than 2 hours.

The Sikorsky heavy lift helicopters, CH-53D and CH-53E support the Marine One Presidential Executive fleet. The S-92 remains a viable aircraft for future presidential aircraft requirements.



VH-3D and CH-53D



VH-53E Presidential Aircraft over the Sikorsky Helipad

President Reagan landing on the USS John F. Kennedy at the Statue of Liberty in the VH-53D to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the statue.



S-92 Presidential Marine One - Candidate for the Future



HMX -1 has established a record of safety and reliability with the Sikorsky VH Presidential Helicopters for over 50 years. HMX -1 continues to provide helicopter transportation for the President and Vice President of the United States, as well as Cabinet members and foreign dignitaries as authorized by the Director of the White House military Office. The Squadron also supports the President on

overseas visits and has operated in over fifteen foreign countries.

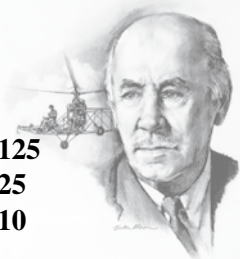
The helicopters that HMX -1 fly are the finest and most meticulously maintained in the world. The Sikorsky VH-3D and VH - 60N will continue to be the primary means to transport the President and his team for the foreseeable future.

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A WINNING COMBINATION



Designed and edited by Lee Jacobson, John Kowalonek and John Daniell



“The list of impossibles, for aviation could go on an on, and only as time and the unexpectedly brilliant development of flying progressed, was it finally recognized that the most dangerous forecast in aviation is to predict the impossibility of something.”

Igor I. Sikorsky

