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

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.
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.
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”.

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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.

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.
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.
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

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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.

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.

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.

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

Pope John Paul II in the VH-60N
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.

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

“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

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