

Secret Service's New Trainer Courtesy of Presidential Helicopters Program Office



VH-3D helicopter, bureau number 159351, officially welcomed to the United States Secret Service James J. Rowley Training Center in South Laurel, Md. on January 12. (L to R) Col. Ryan Shadle, Commanding Officer, Marine Helicopter Squadron One, Mr. Milton Wilson, United States Secret Service Assistant Director, Office of Training, and Col. Erica Mantz, Program Manager, Presidential Helicopters Program Office. Photo courtesy of United States Secret Service.

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LAUREL, Md. – In June 2025, the Presidential Helicopters Program Office (PMA-274) delivered and installed a retired and refurbished VH-3D helicopter, bureau number 159351 (BUNO 351), to the United States Secret Service (USSS). The agency received the aircraft at the James J. Rowley Training Center

(JJRTC) in South Laurel, Maryland, fulfilling its need for a new training aircraft to continue effectively training its agents.

A team of industry and contract support assisted in the seamless transfer of the aircraft and ensured it was treated with top-shelf inspection, maintenance, demilitarization, and white-glove care. The aircraft was delivered to the USSS in quintessential showroom appearance with all tactical features needed for up-to-date training for President and Vice President of the United States (POTUS/VPOTUS) safety and protection.

The aircraft will be used by the USSS to conduct threat reaction and other tactical procedural training, improving agents' skills to optimize their important protective mission.

BUNO 351's journey began years before this delivery, in 2022, when the USSS and United States Marine Corps (USMC) started discussions about upgrading the organization's training asset. Earlier in 2025, initial demilitarization efforts on BUNO 351 were performed by the PMA-274 maintenance department at the Presidential Helicopter Support Facility. The aircraft spent weeks in refurbishment along with having ground training features installed as requested by the USSS. Upon completion the aircraft was shipped to the JJRTC, where it replaced an unserviceable training aircraft.

The USSS explained that the unserviceable training asset was no longer equipped to safely provide needed space and layout for new members who were in training for protective details within the Secret Service. The old training aircraft, now removed from the JJRTC, was a retired U.S. Navy asset. It was painted to resemble Marine One, which is the call sign, or name, of the helicopter when POTUS is aboard.

Trainees can now work both inside and outside of the mock

Marine One safely and more accurately for the Presidential and Vice Presidential protection missions they will provide. BUNO 351 also provides the added value of the proper seating configuration in alignment with the VH-92A Patriot helicopter, the latest model flown by Marine Helicopter Squadron One (HMX-1) in support of the presidential lift mission.

“Our teams have collaborated diligently to make this transfer possible,” said Col. Erica Mantz, PMA-274 program manager. “This effort to deliver BUNO 351 has greatly strengthened our partnership with the U.S. Secret Service and contract support team.”

The old U.S. Navy training helicopter was manufactured in October 1963 and has been used by countless special agents and Uniformed Division officers to practice protective movements. It has since been transported to Arizona for shredding and recycling.

“Not only is VH-3D BUNO 351 a significant improvement for our training requirements, our visitors to JJRTC have the opportunity to view a Marine One on tours of the training facility,” said Deputy Special Agent In Charge Troy Sarria. “The new helicopter draws even more attention as an officially retired and demilitarized VH-3D – once flying Presidents and Vice Presidents.”

PMA-274 not only transported the aircraft with industry partners, the program logistics and sustainment teams worked to ensure a comprehensive demilitarization and transfer process was complete end-to-end. An important step is to properly account for all government inventory with a seamless, clear transfer of possession to the USSS.

“We are grateful for the helicopter’s capability and awed by the quality of the final product,” added Sarria.

During the January dedication ceremony officially inducting the retired VH-3D as the USSS training asset, Mantz shared

with attendees, "This aircraft served nearly 50 years, supporting nine U.S. Presidents throughout its distinguished history. Now 351 will continue to serve our great nation in a different, but equally important capacity."

The retired 159351 VH-3D sits just feet away from half a mock Air Force One, dubbed Air Force One Half, aboard JJRTC. This placement is essential. The configuration of these two training assets mimics real-life events and leads to more effective and realistic training.

BUNO 351 served HMX-1 shy of 50 years before reaching its end of service life. The aircraft entered into service in July 1975 and was decommissioned in October 2024. This venerable aircraft carried nine presidents: Gerald Ford, Jimmy Carter, Ronald Regan, George H. W. Bush, Bill Clinton, George W. Bush, Barack Obama, Donald Trump, and Joe Biden.

[PMA-274](#) provides safe, ready, high-performing, and affordable aircraft, capabilities, and support to HMX-1.