Project Phoenix

Update 7 – November 5, 2015

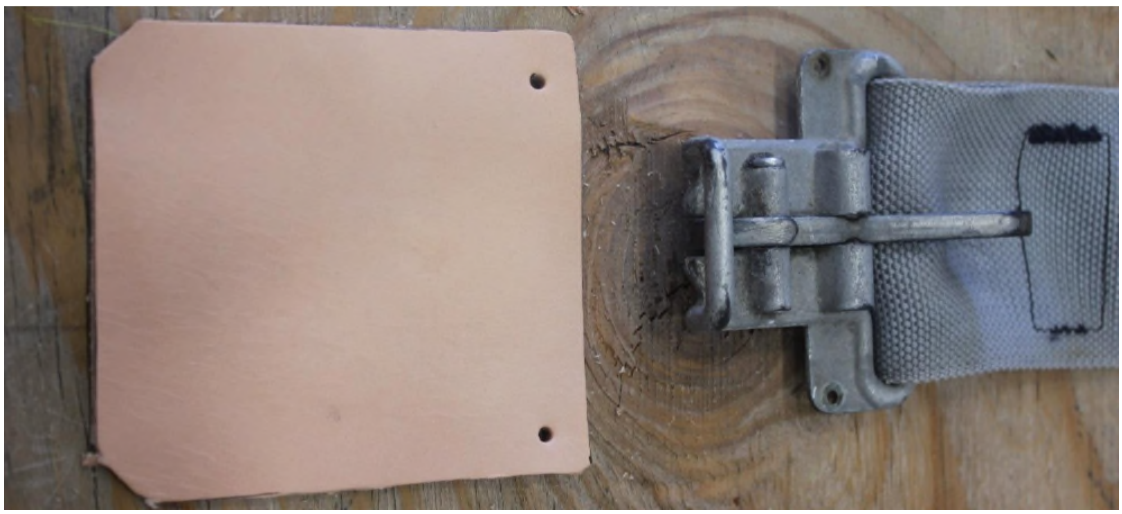
1426 departed the paint hangar on 5 October for USCG Heavy Maintenance Facility (HMF), Bay 3. The VectorCSP team completed installation of the port side cabin emergency escape hatch Plexiglas window. The hatch was returned to the paint hangar for painting of the missing emergency egress stencil on the interior of the hatch. The original seal that was removed prior to media blasting was glued to the hatch. The cabin sliding door was installed and lubricated.

Paint work on the main rotor blades was completed. All stencils (S/N, date of repair, date of manufacture, track data, bolt torque, etc.) were photographed prior to preparation for paint. The team made stencils using a vintage stencil cutter that punches out letters on card stock. After taping the card stock in its original positions, they repainted the stencil data on the blades.

Several blades show dates of manufacture which preceded the HH-52, which means they likely flew on the HH-19/HO-4S. Dimensions of the blades were provided to the ALC warehouse for fabrication of new shipping crates.

The aircraft was Jacked aircraft and the team replaced all wheels with new tires and tubes (donated by Goodyear). Bearings were lubricated and all corrosion was cleaned from the brake disks.

All seat belts were washed. New leather backing was riveted to pilot and copilot seat buckles. The original leather had deteriorated away. Installed all belts to seats.



Pilot and copilot seats were painted, preserving wear marks (patina) made by personnel entering/departing the cockpit. Seat tracks were lubricated and seats were installed in the cockpit with new seat cushions. New bungee cords were manufactured for the seats. A broken shoulder harness inertia reel was disassembled and repaired.

The SAR board was re-stenciled using card stock cut on a vintage stencil cutter as per photos taken before media blasting. Compartment covers that were removed prior to media blasting/painting were riveted on the SAR board. The SAR board was Installed on aircraft interior for fit test. It will be removed later for insulation blanket work. The team continues to populate SAR board components.

The flight mechanic seat board was sanded and repainted. The thickness of the seat cushion was reduced by the ALC upholstery shop to allow the seat to fold as designed, after which it was installed in the aircraft. The VectorCSP team removed corrosion, primed, and painted the upper and lower troop seat support tubes. They installed new troop seat webbing, and mounted the troop seats in the aircraft. Spring buttons in several of the troop seat support tube brackets were frozen and had to be replaced by functional brackets from the "Aberdeen Girls."

The team completed work on the float bags, with the exception of painting the upper and lower float bag retaining flanges. The float bag lower covers initially did not fit, requiring additional sewing. The starboard float bag was difficult to install. The port float bag upper cover flange broke during installation and had to be removed. The repair required drilling out all flange rivets to separate the flanges and removing the material. New flanges were cannibalized from the Aberdeen aircraft. The flanges were re-drilled to fit the 1426 sponson and underwent media blasting, priming, and riveting of the upper float bag cover to the flanges.

The team is currently manufacturing a nose section anchor line and lanyard for exterior of aircraft. Lanyard ring rubber bumpers were installed on fuselage sides. Rubber trim was obtained and installed on pilot and copilot window frames. Placards were reinstalled on instrument panel for VOR/TACAN and ADF pointers, and the fuel tank capacitance test placard was reinstalled in the cabin interior. The VectorCSP team is in the process of repairing the insulation blankets for the interior of the aircraft. Many were very smelly from being in storage for years. The team attempted to wash several blankets with soap and water, but it destroyed the insulation. On those blankets, the seams were opened, the insulation was removed, and new insulation was installed. Approximately half of the Velcro on the blankets needs to be replaced. The team discovered that cleaning the blankets with alcohol is the best solution to remove dirt and smell.

The team is developing a design for the Plexiglas cabin door closure, as desired by the NASM Rotary Wing Curator. In the process of building an "undetectable" aluminum frame which will hold a piece of Plexiglas in the cabin door. The use of non-glare Plexiglas was investigated, but it proved to be too opaque for viewing the cabin interior. The team is currently considering use of museum grade (UV filtering) Plexiglas, which substantially reduces glare from external light sources (such as overhead lights / camera flashes) when compared to standard Plexiglas.

Anti-collision and position lights were Installed. The engine and gearbox/rotor head were relocated from Telephonics to the USCG Heavy Maintenance Facility. The team will set up shelves to relocate all HH-52 RFI parts currently stored in private T-hangars to the HMF.

Artist's conception of HH-52A 126 suspended in military aircraft wing of Udvar-Hazy

As HH-52A 1426 nears completion and is scheduled to be dedicated at the National Air and Space Museum's Udvar-Hazy Center on April 7th, 2016, we'd like to remind you that she is your generous contribution to the history of rotary wing aviation as well as Coast Guard Aviation. This project could not have been accomplished without your individual monetary contributions, which now total over $63,000! We are on track to reach our goal of $100,000 in the months ahead, but we urgently need your help. If you are contemplating a donation, remember as the tax year ends that we are an IRS-approved section 501(c)(3) exempt, charitable & educational, non-profit organization. CGAA will award a life membership and a special commemorative challenge coin for a donation of $250 or more, and a one year CGAA membership (including 3 25-page issues of the "PteroGram" newsletter) for a donation of $30 or more. We will be grateful for a donation in any amount. Please visit our website (https://aoptero.org/index.php/about/phoenix-project "DONATE ONLINE" button at bottom of page) to make an electronic donation or mail your donation by check to:

Treasurer
Coast Guard Aviation Association
Post Office Box 940
Troy, VA 22974-0940