

# Italian Air Force Accepts First Three Lockheed Martin C-130Js

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The Italian Ministry of Defence (MoD) has formally accepted the first three of 22 Lockheed Martin C-130J Hercules airlifters it has on order. Two of these aircraft will be delivered within the next several weeks to their new operating base at Pisa. Italy is beginning acceptance for what will be Europe's second largest C-130J fleet. The Royal Air Force being mid way through deliveries of its 25 C-130Js.

The Italian C-130Js have already been Type Certified, and will begin operational flying as soon as they arrive in Pisa. The Aeronautica Militare Italiana's (AMI--Italian Air Force) 46th Air Brigade aircraft will initially conduct logistic supply, maximum payload, and tactical missions. Full clearance, which will add clearance for paratroop, airdrop, assault landings on unprepared fields, and maximum alternate weights missions, is anticipated before the end of the year.

During 1999 the AMI evaluated their long-term tactical airlift needs, and determined that the best solution was a mix of aircraft including C-130Js, C-130J-30s and C-27Js. Last year Italy announced its intent to acquire 12 C- 27s.

The Italian configuration is among the most sophisticated yet developed for the aircraft. It has a highly advanced suite of communications and defensive systems equipment. This includes U/VHF combined multi-band radios and a laser warning receiver system. In addition, it will be the first C-130J "receiver-tanker" built. This means it has the ability to both refuel other aircraft as well as being refueled itself in-flight. This is a true 'force multiplier' for the AMI as it gives them great operational flexibility in tactical transport missions.

In addition to the 22 C-130Js, Lockheed Martin Aeronautics Company has signed a contract with the Italian government for the construction of a National Training Center (NTC) at Pisa Air Base, in support of the C-130J aircraft program. The AMI NTC will be used primarily to conduct C-130J aircrew and maintenance training, but will also provide growth potential as well as classroom facilities for other aircraft programs.

SOURCE Lockheed Martin Corporation

Website: <http://www.lmasc.com/>

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