

Lockheed Martin KC-130J Tanker For Marine Corps Completes Critical Test

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On August 30, the U.S. Marine Corps' new KC-130J aerial refueler achieved a major test milestone when its drogue was successfully engaged by a Navy F/A-18 at NAS Patuxent River, MD.

(Photo: <http://www.newscom.com/cgi-bin/prnh/20000918/ATM020>)

The first KC-130J is scheduled for delivery to MCAS Cherry Point, N.C. later this month where it will be used as a hands-on training system (HOTS), primarily for the maintainers. The Marines trained at Cherry Point will later support the KC-130J development and operational testing at the Naval Air Warfare Center's Aircraft Division at NAS Patuxent River.

There are three aircraft involved in the KC-130J test program and a number of milestones were achieved over the summer. Some highlights include:

- * Marine Corps-specific avionics testing is now 90% complete. Only electromagnetic interference, electromagnetic compatibility, avionics cooling, and tests of the environmental control system remain to be completed.
- * Tests of the refueling system, tank and fuel line drainage, fuselage tank operations, ground refueling surges and fuel tank priming have all been completed.
- * The USMC tanker-peculiar software build is complete, and software regression testing for the USMC Block 5.2 mission computer is complete.

The USMC has eight KC-130Js on order, with three more approved in the 2001 Defense Budget. There is an overall requirement for 51 KC-130Js to replace the ageing fleet of KC-130F/Rs, some of which are more than 40 years old.

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