

First Lockheed Martin Stretched C-130J-30s For USAF Head To Edwards

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Lockheed Martin has ferried the first three US Air Force C-130J-30s to the Air Force Flight Test Center at Edwards AFB, Calif., to begin airdrop testing.

The testing will demonstrate and certify the aircraft is capable of performing the vitally important airdrop mission. Airdrop is the ability of a cargo aircraft to deploy paratroops and supplies from either the side doors or rear loading ramp of the aircraft from a range of altitudes.

"This is a joint test program developed by Lockheed Martin, the U.S. Air Force, and the U.S. Army," said Ross Reynolds, vice president C-130J program. "A great deal of inter-organization coordination has gone into the planning to bring about a successful test program for the C-130J-30."

The C-130J-30's sophisticated navigation system allows the aircrew to drop with pinpoint accuracy. Once deployed, the C-130J-30 will bring a whole new operational airdrop capability to both the Air Force and the Army. Current analyses shows that a close formation of 30 C-130J-30s will be able to drop 2,800 troops in under five minutes.

From Edwards AFB, the aircraft will be flown to Pope AFB, N.C., for further paratroop testing with the U.S. Army's 82nd Airborne Division. Upon completion of that testing, the aircraft will return to Marietta to be prepared for delivery to the 143rd Airlift Wing, the Rhode Island Air National Guard unit based at Quonset State Airport near Providence, R.I., in late November.

Although designated a tactical airlifter, the C-130J-30 has demonstrated strategic capabilities with unrefueled non-stop flights of more than 4,000 miles. The C-130J-30 is based on the standard C-130J model, but features a fuselage that is 180 inches (457.2 centimeters) longer than the standard C-130J model, providing the greater airlift capability required by many operators. This version is the first stretched C-130J to be equipped with the Enhanced Cargo Handling System, which allows quick conversion from cargo floor tie-downs to rollers for palletized cargo.

When compared with the standard model, the J-30 can be used to carry 128 combat troops instead of 92, and 92 paratroops instead of 64. It can also carry eight 463L pallets rather than six, 97 medical liters instead of 74, and 24 container delivery system (CDS) bundles instead of 16.

Worldwide, 111 C-130Js and J-30s have been ordered. Current customers include the Air National Guard, Air Force Reserve Command, U.S. Coast Guard, U.S. Marine Corps, Royal Air Force, Royal Australian Air Force, Italian Air Force, and the Royal Danish Air Force.

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