

Lockheed Martin C-130J-30s For USAF Complete Airdrop Testing

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Lockheed Martin successfully completed U.S. Air Force airdrop testing last week with a fleet of three extended fuselage length, or "stretched," C-130J-30s at the Air Force Flight Test Center at Edwards AFB, Calif. These aircraft, which will be delivered to the Rhode Island Air National Guard later this year, are the first three C-130J-30s ordered by the Air Force.

The testing demonstrated the C-130J is capable of performing the critically important airdrop mission. Airdrop is the ability of a cargo aircraft to deploy paratroops and supplies from either the airlifter's rear loading ramp or the side paratroop doors from a range of altitudes.

"This has been a rigorous and exhaustive evaluation of the aircraft's capabilities by the Air Force. All three C-130J-30s performed flawlessly, and we are looking forward to the next round of testing with the US Army's 82nd Airborne Division," said Ross Reynolds, Lockheed Martin's C-130J program vice president. "We knew that we had designed and built a tremendously capable aircraft, and it is most gratifying when joint testing proves us right."

Completed tests included parachute-assisted pallet deployment of loads up to 42,000 pounds and paratroop drops from altitudes as high as 25,000 feet.

The C-130J-30's sophisticated navigation system allows the aircrew to achieve highly accurate drops in all weather conditions. The C-130J-30 brings a whole new operational airdrop capability to both the Air Force as operator and the Army as end user. Current analyses show a close formation of 33 C-130J-30s will be able to drop 2,800 troops in less than five minutes.

On Aug. 20, a C-130J-30 will be flown to Pope AFB, N.C., for further paratroop testing with the 82nd Airborne. Once testing is complete, the aircraft will be flown back to Marietta to be prepared for delivery to the 143rd Airlift Wing, the Rhode Island ANG unit based at 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 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 computer-controlled 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 standard 463L pallets rather than six, 97 medical litters 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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