Lockheed Martin Customers Accept Software For Fully-Configured C-130J Avionics

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Lockheed Martin has begun the delivery of C-130J aircraft with a new software configuration that brings the aircraft's avionics system to full functionality. Known as Block 5.3, the new software incorporates substantial upgrades and new capabilities and is now the baseline for all production C-130J aircraft.

The KC-130J tankers now being delivered to the U.S. Marine Corps all have Block 5.3, and the Royal Australian Air Force is the first operator to accept 5.3 for its existing aircraft. The company has completed all necessary testing to prove the airworthiness of the new software and its operation with aircraft hardware.

"Installing Block 5.3 takes the C-130J from being an amazing aircraft, to a true world-beater in terms of capability," said C-130J program vice president Ross Reynolds. "No military transport aircraft in production today has a mission software package as advanced and sophisticated as that on the J. It truly represents the very leading edge of systems technology"

Block 5.3, among many other enhancements, gives crews the ability to fly integrated precision radar approaches. It also provides greatly enhanced navigation capabilities as well as fully automatic formation flying. The software allows both new C-130Js and older C-130s to fly in formation using the Coordinated Aircraft Positioning System. Now a mixed fleet of C-130 transports can stay in formation while the autopilot and auto-throttle systems on the C-130Js are engaged. Block 5.3 also addresses nearly all of the operational items the U.S. Air Force during development and operational testing.

The new software will be installed in the deployed world-wide fleet of C-130J and the longer fuselage length C-130J-30 aircraft over a period of about a year, beginning in the next few weeks.

Current customers for the C-130J and C-130J-30 include the U.S. Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve Command, U.S. Coast Guard, U.S. Marine Corps, U.K. Royal Air Force, Royal Australian Air Force, Italian Air Force, and the Royal Danish Air Force.

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