

C-130J Super Hercules Demonstrates Capabilities At International Exercise And Competition

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RAF LYNEHAM, England

The first-ever airlift competition involving only Lockheed Martin C-130J Super Hercules airlifters began April 19 at this Royal Air Force base in England.

"Exercise Combined Strength has been in the planning stage for more than a year," said RAF Squadron Leader Phil Atkinson, director of the meet. "It took a lot of coordination to get everyone here, but the joint training will be highly beneficial. The ability to share information face-to-face and actually see how each unit operates its aircraft is invaluable."

The field includes teams from the host Royal Air Force, the U.S. Air Force, Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve Command, the Italian Air Force and the Royal Australian Air Force. Other C-130J operators, including the U.S. Coast Guard and the Royal Danish Air Force, sent aircrews to observe the competition. Each team is competing in low-level navigation, airdrop accuracy and spot landing events; important skills for delivering supplies to small, confined landing strips in combat areas. The C-130Js taking part in the event are achieving a 100 percent sortie availability rate.

Two important operator user councils, the C-130J Operations Working Group and the International J Maintenance User Group, are holding meetings at Lyneham in conjunction with the competition. The C-130J Operations Working Group is a joint steering committee comprising the senior pilots and members of the command staffs from each C-130J operator. The International J Maintenance User Group (IJMUG) is the maintenance organization counterpart to the Operations Working Group.

U.S. competitors in "J Rodeo" include the 143rd Airlift Wing, Quonset Point Airport, Providence, R.I.; 146th Airlift Wing, Channel Island ANGS, Calif.; 314th Airlift Wing, Little Rock, Ark.; and the 403rd Wing, Keesler AFB, Miss. International competitors include 37 Squadron, RAAF Richmond, Australia; 46th Air Brigade, Pisa AB, Italy; and both 24 and 30 Squadrons from the RAF.

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the first flight of the C-130. More than 2,260 Hercules aircraft in more than 70 different variants have been delivered to 60 countries since the program began. Counting those that bought used aircraft, 67 countries fly the Hercules today. The C-130J is the latest version to come off the longest, continuous, active military aircraft production line in history.

A total of 179 C-130Js are on order, and 112 have been delivered to date. In the United States, Air Force Reserve Command and Air National Guard units fly C-130Js. The Marine Corps operates KC-130J tankers, and the Coast Guard is now introducing the HC-130J into service. International C-130J operators include the Royal Air Force, Royal Australian Air Force, Italian Air Force and the Royal Danish Air Force. The capabilities and performance of the C-130J in supporting light, fast and lethal combat operations make it a true transformational asset.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Lockheed Martin Aeronautics Co., a business area of Lockheed Martin, is a leader in the design, research and development, systems integration, production and support of advanced military aircraft and related technologies. Its customers include the military services of the United States and allied countries throughout the world. Products include the F-16, F/A-22, F-35 JSF, F-117, C-5, C-130, C-130J, P-3, S-3 and U-2. The company produces major components for the F-2 fighter, and is a co-developer of the C-27J tactical transport and T-50 advanced jet trainer.

Headquartered in Bethesda, Md., Lockheed Martin employs about 130,000 people worldwide and is principally engaged in the research, design, development, manufacture and integration of advanced technology systems, products and services. The corporation reported 2003 sales of \$31.8 billion.

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