Lockheed Martin Completes Deliveries Of C-130J Super Hercules Airlifters To Italy

Lockheed Martin delivered the last C-130J Super Hercules airlifter for Italy on February 10, completing a 22-aircraft program for the Italian Air Force (Aeronautica Militare Italiana, or AMI).

"Our crew members have been operating in Iraq, Afghanistan, in all weather conditions and in very demanding and difficult environments, with enemy threat, and this has always been a very reliable aircraft," said General B. A. Settime Caputo, Chief of Staff, Force Command, Italian Air Force.

"The C-130J is a strategic asset for the Italian Air Force and our fleet is performing all over the world well up to our expectations," said Brigadier General Vincenzo Lops, Head of 1st Department, ARMAEREO, Italian Ministry of Defence.

"The Italian Air Force has demonstrated what is possible with a new aircraft and how quickly it can change a country's operational capability," said Ross Reynolds, Lockheed Martin vice president for Air Mobility. "Although we have seen several countries acquire and now operate the C-130J, it will take U.S. orders to sustain production."

The first AMI Super Hercules was delivered in 2000 and shortly after, crews began flying relief supplies to Eritrea. In April 2002, an AMI crew returned exiled Afghani King Zahir Shah and now-President Hamid Karzi to Kabul on board one of the C-130Js. Because of the defensive systems on board the Italian aircraft, a second C-130J was dispatched to fly top cover as the leaders returned to their country. Earlier this year, Italian Premier Silvio Berlusconi paid a surprise visit to Italian troops at a base near Nasiriyah, Iraq, after traveling in a 46th Air Brigade C-130J in secrecy and under tight security.

In addition to the aircraft, the Italian C-130J program also included construction of AMI's National Training Center (NTC), a two-story, 57,000 square-foot facility that includes an operational flight simulator and a cockpit avionics part-task trainer, as well as classrooms and training spaces for other aircraft types. The NTC opened in April 2003.

The Italian Air Force first ordered 18 C-130Js in 1997, two more in 1999 and then two more in 2000. This final Italian aircraft is a long fuselage C-130J, which, in addition to highly advanced communications and defensive systems suites, features a strengthened cargo ramp and improved airdrop system, allowing crews to make airdrops at 250 knots, helping them avoid antiaircraft fire in hostile areas. These aircraft are 112 feet long, 15 feet longer than the standard-length C-130J aircraft, which translates to 30 percent more usable volume for increased seating, litters, pallets or airdrop platforms.

The AMI received 10 of the longer aircraft (one of which was the 100th C-130J delivered worldwide), as well as 12 standard-length C-130s. These aircraft replaced a fleet of early 1970s-era C-130Hs.

Six of the shorter aircraft will be operated as KC-130J tankers, a capability the AMI has not had previously. Using only wing and external tanks, the AMI KC-130Js, which are the same basic configuration as the U.S. Marine Corps tankers, have a 57,500 pound (8,455 U.S. gallon) fuel offload capability while being flown on a 500 nm radius mission. The KC-130J is also configured to accept a fuselage tank, which adds another 24,392 pounds (3,600 U.S. gallons) of available offload to a mission.

The C-130Js are operated by the 46th Brigata Aerea (Air Brigade), the AMI's air transport wing at Pisa Air Base, which shares the runway with the commercial airport there. The 50th Gruppo (Squadron) flies the long-fuselage aircraft and the 2nd Gruppo operates the short aircraft and the tankers. The 46th Brigata Aerea will also soon operate the C-27J Spartan medium transport developed by Lockheed Martin and Alenia Aeronautica.

Military technicians perform the on-aircraft maintenance for the AMI's C-130Js and depot-level parts repair is coordinated through the Integrated Contractor Support System (ICSS). Managed by Lockheed Martin, ICSS is also responsible for ensuring fleet-wide spare parts availability. ICSS was the AMI's first contractor logistics support operation.

A total of 180 C-130Js are on order, and 121 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 flies the HC-130J.

International C-130J operators in addition to the AMI include the Royal Air Force, Royal Australian Air Force and the Royal Danish Air Force. All four have recently operated, or are currently operating, deployed C-130J aircraft in

the Middle East or Afghanistan. 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, 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 Corp. 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 2004 sales of $35.5 billion.

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