Lockheed Martin Delivers First C-130J Super Hercules For 2006

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Lockheed Martin delivered the first C-130J airlifter of 2006 yesterday. The aircraft was flown to Keesler Air Force Base, Miss., and assigned to the 403rd Wing's 815th Airlift Squadron, Air Force Reserve Command's only C-130J combat delivery squadron.

Flying the aircraft to Keesler was Maj. Gen. Michael Gould, commander of the 2nd Air Force. Gould is responsible for all operational aspects of basic military training, initial skills training and advanced technical training for Air Force enlisted and support officers.

"I'm honored that General (Duncan) McNabb (Commander, Air Mobility Command) gave me the opportunity to deliver this C-130J to the men and women of the 403rd Wing," said Gould, a command pilot with more than 3,000 flight hours in training and air mobility aircraft. "HQ Second Air Force is truly fortunate to be a partner with the 403rd as a part of Team Keesler.

"The aircraft flew extremely well and showed how it is the finest tactical airlifter the Air Force has ever built or fielded. It is state-of-the-art and offers our C-130 units a much needed increase in capability to fly further, faster and higher while carrying more payload than the older models. I'm sure Brigadier General (Richard) Moss and the 815th Airlift Squadron are thrilled to have this latest J-model as a part of their unit," Gould said.

The 815th Airlift Squadron, known as the Flying Jennies, received its first C-130J, a short-fuselage aircraft, in 1999 but is now being equipped with the longer-fuselage aircraft. Today's delivery is the fifth of eight aircraft that will eventually be assigned to the squadron.

Keesler AFB is also home to the 53rd Weather Reconnaissance Squadron. Known as the Hurricane Hunters, this unit flies the WC-130J into hurricanes to record and send storm data to ground stations, which helps make predictions of direction and intensity more reliable. The 2005 hurricane season was the first full season the WC-130J was flown into the Atlantic storms. The 53rd WRS operates 10 WC-130Js.

C-130J operators from around the world are now operating at a high tempo in both combat and relief support operations. The United States, United Kingdom, Italy, Australia and Denmark are all experiencing first hand the high reliability and increased range, speed and payload capabilities of the C-130J. This past year also marked the combat debut for the U.S. C-130J fleet, as both the Air National Guard and Marine Corps operated their aircraft in Iraq and Afghanistan. The EC-130J psychological warfare aircraft were also flown on operational missions for the first time.

The new aircraft is the longer fuselage C-130J which features a strengthened cargo ramp and improved airdrop system, allowing crews to make airdrops at 250 knots and minimizing exposure to anti-aircraft fire in hostile areas. The new Enhanced Cargo Handling System allows for rapidly converting the aircraft from hauling rolling stock to palletized cargo. These aircraft are 112 feet long, 15 feet longer than the short-length C-130J aircraft, which translates to 30 percent more usable volume for increased seating, litters, pallets, or airdrop platforms. In service, two C-130Js often do the work of three legacy C-130E or H-model aircraft.

A total of 182 C-130Js are on order, and 136 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, which saw extensive service during Hurricanes Katrina and Rita relief efforts. International C-130J operators include the Royal Air Force, Royal Australian Air Force, Italian Air Force and the Royal Danish Air Force.

The Marine aircraft, often referred to by crews as Battle Herks, are the standard short fuselage version of the Super Hercules. Using only wing and external tanks, the KC-130J has a 57,500 pound (8,455 U.S. gallon) fuel offload capability while being flown on a 500 nm radius mission, compared with 38,000 pounds (5,588 U.S. gallons) for the current fleet of KC-130Fs. The KC-130J is also configured to accept a fuselage tank if desired, adding another 24,392 pounds (3,600 U.S. gallons) of available fuel offload to a mission.

Headquartered in Bethesda, Md., Lockheed Martin employs about 135,000 people worldwide and is principally engaged in the research, design, development, manufacture, integration and sustainment of advanced technology

systems, products and services. The corporation reported 2005 sales of $37.2 billion.

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