Incoming 22nd Air Force Commander Delivers Newest Lockheed Martin C-130J To Keesler Air Force Base

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

The aircraft was flown by Maj. Gen. Martin M. Mazick, the director of operations for AFRC, who will soon assume command of the 22nd Air Force, one of the Reserve's three numbered air forces. "I have been flying Lockheed Martin products for 25 years," said Mazick. "I flew C-141s for 19 years and C-5s for five. I am proud to be delivering this new C-130J to Keesler where it will provide increased combat delivery capability to the 403rd."

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 seventh of eight aircraft that will eventually be assigned to the squadron.

Keesler AFB is also home to the 53rd Weather Reconnaissance Squadron (WRS). 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 newly delivered 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, minimizing exposure to anti-aircraft fire in hostile areas. The 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 137 have been delivered to date. In the U.S., 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 nautical mile 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 required, 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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