Rhode Island Air National Guard Takes Delivery Of New Lockheed Martin C-130J Super Hercules

Lockheed Martin delivered the third C-130J airlifter of 2006 last week. The aircraft was flown to the Rhode Island Air National Guard, 143rd Airlift Wing home base at Quonset State Airport.

The 143rd was the first U.S. unit to deploy a C-130J to Iraq in support of the Global War on Terror. In addition, they were the first unit in the U.S. to receive the longer C-130J-30 variant of the aircraft. The Super Hercules was formally accepted by Brig. Gen. James D'Agostino, assistant adjutant general for air for the Rhode Island National Guard.

The C-130J-30 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 rapid conversion of 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 do the work of three legacy C-130E or H-model aircraft.

"The C-130J truly increases our capability to deal with the challenges of the Global War on Terror," said D'Agostino. "I am proud to be delivering this great aircraft to a great unit and we look forward to operating it for a long time to come."

The 143rd, known as the Rhode Warriors, will receive two C-130J-30 aircraft this year from the Lockheed Martin Marietta, Ga., production facility.

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

A total of 182 C-130Js are on order, and 138 have been delivered to date. In the U.S., Air Force Reserve Command and Air National Guard units fly C- 130Js, WC-130Js and EC-130Js. The Marine Corps operates KC-130J tankers and the Coast Guard flies the HC-130J. International C-130J operators include the Royal Air Force, Royal Australian Air Force, Italian Air Force, and the Royal Danish Air Force.

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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