

Lockheed Martin Unveils Groundbreaking C-130J Super Hercules Performance Results

PARIS, June 18, 2025 /PRNewswire/ -- Lockheed Martin [NYSE: LMT] continues to revolutionize the future of tactical airlift with the C-130J Super Hercules and today announced a major breakthrough in wing structure testing that greatly exceeded expectations, by validating the extended wing life of the C-130J and structural superiority of the center wing box.

After a rigorous testing program, the C-130J's wing structure has proven to offer nearly 40% more lifespan compared to initial estimates and nearly twice the specification design life.

The test result demonstrated a significant extension of the wing's service life, from an estimated 90,000 Equivalent Flight Hours to an expected 122,500 Equivalent Flight Hours, solidifying the C-130J's position as the most capable and reliable tactical airlifter in the world and validated the aircraft's durability to operate in challenging operational environments well into the future.

In 2009, Lockheed Martin incorporated an Enhanced Service Life (ESL) center wing box into all new production C-130Js to extend the operational life of the aircraft. The center wing box, or mounting surface for the wings, determines structural soundness of the aircraft. The ESL wing was designed to extend the operational life of an aircraft more than double the original wing's 45,000 Equivalent Flight Hour service life, potentially extending the Super Hercules' lifespan by decades.

The recent testing program, initiated and funded by the U.S. Air Force and the Royal Canadian Air Force, pushed the wing to its limits by simulating the stresses and strains of real-world flying conditions. The U.S. Air Force provided a C-130 ESL center wing, two outer wings and a center fuselage for the Wing Durability Test (WDT). After several years of testing, the WDT results exceeded expectations and validated the C-130J wing life to be an astounding 122,500 Equivalent Flight Hours.

"With this groundbreaking test result, we're redefining the boundaries of what's possible for the C-130J Super Hercules," said Rod McLean, vice president and general manager of the Air Mobility & Maritime Missions line of business at Lockheed Martin Aeronautics. "Already proven in challenging operational environments, the structural durability test validated the C-130J as the standard for exceptional reliability, safety and excellence in any environment. It is built to deliver performance and built to last."

The Super Hercules is the worldwide choice in tactical airlift, serving 28 operators in 23 nations. To date, more than 560 C-130Js have been delivered and certified by over 20 airworthiness authorities, with the Super Hercules global fleet surpassing 3 million flight hours. Learn more about the C-130 at www.lockheedmartin.com/C130.

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