



Gen. Schwartz delivers Dyess' first Super Hercules

On April 16, the Dyess Air Force Base community rolled out the red carpet for its newest resident: the C-130J Super Hercules.

The celebration was fitting for such a monumental occasion, as this is the first of 28 C-130Js that will make Dyess home of the largest fleet of Js in the world.

While the day itself was rainy and gray, no amount of precipitation could dampen the excitement of this milestone. A crowd of about 1,000 cheered when the J touched-down on the Dyess runway, with Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Norton A. Schwartz at the yoke.

In delivering the first aircraft, the U.S. Air Force's top uniformed officer said the C-130 has been flying in the skies over Abilene for almost 50 years, Schwartz noted that the "latest version of the backbone of our tactical airlift capability will continue the great legacy built by generations of aviators."

"The delivery of this C-130J and others like it is a step toward modernizing our airlift inventories," Schwartz said. "We'll continue to make progress in this area over the next few years."

The new aircraft will replace the existing Dyess fleet of 33 aging C-130s flown by the 317th Airlift Group. The C-130J Super Hercules fleet will be delivered over the next two years with final delivery in 2012.

"This is certainly yet another proud day for the C-130J program," said Ross Reynolds, Lockheed Martin vice president for C-130 programs. "We are seeing more and more that when the time comes to replace aging C-130 fleets, or establish new fleets, the choice is made to acquire the Super Hercules. There is no other airlifter that has the capability, flexibility and proven track record of the C-130J. From airlift recapitalization in the U.S., to the growing list of countries selecting the C-130J, this aircraft has the capability to meet whatever operational challenges the future holds."



Top: Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Norton A. Schwartz speaks at the C-130J Dyess Delivery, April 16. Middle: airmen pose in front of the newest Hercules to call Dyess home. Bottom: An airman salutes Dyess' new C-130J, also known as the "Pride of Abilene." (Photos by John Rossino)



The dawn of a new Super Hercules

Lockheed Martin introduces the new HC-130J Combat King II personnel recovery aircraft

The first HC-130J Combat King II personnel recovery aircraft made its official debut in Marietta on April 19 — only yards away from the production line where it was built.

Maj. Gen. Thomas K. Andersen, director of requirements, Headquarters Air Combat Command (ACC), spoke at the ceremony, which included about 250 guests from the U.S. Air Force, Lockheed Martin and supplier partners.

“Personnel recovery is one of the Air Force’s core missions and vital to what we do in defense of America. The mission is demanding and we are grateful to those [employees] of Lockheed Martin assembled here that have given us a world-class aircraft ready for the demands of the mission,” Andersen said. “The HC-130J will enable us to meet the expanding operational tasks that we face today — wartime operations in Operation Enduring Freedom and the Horn of Africa, and relief operations in the continental United States as well as in areas like Haiti and Chile. For that, ACC, the Air Force and the nation thank you.”

Joining the new HC-130J Combat King II at the ceremony was a legacy HC-130P, an HH-60 G Pave Hawk rescue helicopter, a team of Pararescue Jumpers and HC-130 crews from Moody Air Force Base, Ga.

Lockheed Martin is on contract now with the U.S. Air Force to

build 21 HC/MC-130J Super Hercules to start recapitalization of aging fixed wing rescue HC-130s and special missions MC-130s. The U.S. Air Force has approved a recapitalization requirement of 74 aircraft (37 for ACC and 37 for Air Force Special Operations Command).

“Yet again, we see the C-130 setting new standards for mission flexibility,” said Ross Reynolds, Lockheed Martin vice president for C-130 programs. “This new configuration of the proven C-130J will give ACC unparalleled capability for combat search and rescue. As demand for the C-130J continues to grow around the world, we will see more ways this aircraft can meet the demands of any operator and mission.”

The new aircraft, which is based on a proven U.S. Marine Corps KC-130J tanker baseline, will have the Enhanced Service Life Wing, Enhanced Cargo Handling System, a Universal Aerial Refueling Receptacle Slipway Installation (boom refueling receptacle), an electro-optical/infrared sensor, a combat systems operator station on the flight deck, and provisions for the large aircraft infrared countermeasures system. In-line production of this proven configuration reduces cost and risk, and meets the required 2012 initial operational capability.

After Operational Testing & Evaluation, this first HC-130J will be delivered to Davis-Monthan Air Force Base in Arizona.



Top: The U.S. Air Force HC-130J at dawn, Marietta, Ga. Bottom left: A crowd of about 250 cheered for the new HC-130J Combat King II, giving the aircraft a thumbs-up. Bottom right: Maj. Gen. Thomas K. Andersen shakes hands with a team of Moody AFB-based parajumpers at the roll out ceremony. (Photos by John Rossino)

Joint training mission enables reservists to train as they fight

By Tech. Sgt. Tanya King, 403rd Wing Public Affairs

Reservists from the 815th Airlift Squadron, of the 403rd Wing, Keesler Air Force Base, Miss., completed a Joint Airborne and Air Transportability Training mission with Army Special Forces in Key West, Fla., April 16.

The JA/ATT program provides the 815th AS “Flying Jennies” with unique training opportunities, according to Lt. Col. Mark Carter, 403rd Operations Support Flight chief of operations.

Army students and instructors of the Special Forces Underwater Operations School partnered with the Flying Jennies to parachute from the C-130J-30 “Super Hercules” over a water drop zone, part of their training in the Combat Diver Qualification Course.

The six-week training includes exercises in underwater search and recovery, submarine lock-in and lock-out procedures, ship bottom search and recovery and over-the-water infiltration techniques.

Though the unique part of this mission for the Flying Jennies is that the drop zone is over water, the procedures aren’t any more challenging than airdropping personnel over land, said Lt. Col. Brian Freeman, 403rd Operations Group pilot and mission commander for the training exercise.

“Typically we are flying over land, but the process is basically the same,” he said. “In either case, we verify exactly where the user wants their cargo or personnel delivered and do our best to put it there.”

The Flying Jennies delivered 14 students and instructors and one assault raft on target to their drop zone near Key West Naval Air Station, Fla., for this scenario.

According to Carter, one of the primary benefits of this type of training is participants can learn what works and what doesn’t in a controlled environment.

“We have the added benefit of not only communicating and sharing ideas, but we learn more about what other services do on a day-to-day basis and are better able to appreciate each other’s roles in defense of our national security.” Carter said. “We would rather have lessons learned in training than in a wartime environment.”

“For specialized operations such as this, we depend on joint capabilities to ensure mission success,” said Maj. Dave Butler, Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School public affairs officer. “It’s vital that we train like we fight, and this joint training maximizes our effectiveness both at home and down range.”

Other JA/ATT missions include transporting and delivering



Army instructors assist 815th Airlift Squadron loadmasters in preparing the assault raft for the aircraft’s takeoff April 12, in Key West, Fla. (U.S. Air Force photo by Tech. Sgt. Tanya King)



Master Sgt. Lyle Michael signals the students to prepare to jump from the C-130J Super Hercules April 12, over Key West, Fla. (U.S. Air Force photo by Tech. Sgt. Tanya King)

vehicles via air-land into unimproved airfields, or airdrop, paralleling the kind of requests the 815th AS might receive during combat.

“If a unit wants us to airlift a vehicle into a dirt strip, it’s better to discover and resolve any issues around the onload or offload in a training environment,” Carter said.

Training for combat missions can not only help identify potential problems, but also validate additional capabilities such as those realized with employment of the C-130J, the latest version of the Hercules aircraft.

Harvest Hawk completes phase one testing

Courtesy of the U.S. Navy

The U.S. Marine Corps Harvest HAWK equipped KC-130J Super Hercules completed phase one testing at Patuxent River, Md., on April 10, 2010, and departed for the West Coast for required maintenance and to continue testing on Naval Air Systems Command (NAVAIR)'s ranges at China Lake, Calif.

Harvest HAWK is a modular roll-on, roll-off weapons system for the KC-130J consisting of a Fire Control Console in the aircraft's cargo compartment, the Target Sight Sensor (TSS) mounted in the left under wing fuel tank and a launcher for four Hellfire missiles mounted on the left hand refueling pylon. NAVAIR is working a complimentary effort to test and deploy the Standoff Precision Guided Munition (SOPGM) as a standalone capability for Harvest HAWK. The 30 mm cannon, which will be mounted in the left side troop door, has been deferred to a later block upgrade.

The test team, composed of personnel from Air Test and Evaluation Squadrons 20 (VX 20) and 23 (VX-23), Operational Test Squadron 1 (VX-1), Marine Aerial Refueler Transport Squadron 352 (VMGR-352), Lockheed Martin, and engineers from the Joint Attack Munitions Systems (JAMS) project office, NAVAIR AIR-5.1 Integrated Systems Evaluation,



The prototype Harvest HAWK weapons systems equipped KC-130J sits on the ramp in front of Air Test and Evaluation Squadron 20 (VX-20) at Patuxent River, Md. (U.S. Navy photo by Liz Goettee)

Experimentation, and Test (ISEET) department, and NAVAIR AIR 4.6 Human Systems department, conducted the tests during this phase of Harvest HAWK testing.

The Harvest HAWK equipped KC-130J from VMGR-352, "The Raiders" from Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., arrived at Patuxent River on March 17, 2010. The first Harvest HAWK equipped KC-130J is scheduled to deploy by summer 2010 equipped with the TSS, Hellfire and SOPGM.

Vive le Super Hercules

Top right: U.S. service members and French paratroopers board a U.S. Air Force C-130J Hercules aircraft at the School of Airborne Troops in Pau, France, March 3. U.S. airmen with the 435th Contingency Response Group and U.S. soldiers with the 5th Quartermaster Company joined French service members for a week of training at the École des Troupes Aéroportées, a military school dedicated to training French military paratroopers. Bottom right: French marine Maj. Yann Le Bastard, a free fall instructor, poses for a photo before jumping from a U.S. Air Force C-130J Super Hercules aircraft. Bottom left: U.S. airmen with the 435th Contingency Response Group, U.S. soldiers with the 5th Quartermaster Company and French paratroopers fly in an Air Force C-130J Super Hercules aircraft before participating in a static line jump. (U.S. Air Force photos by Staff Sgt. Jocelyn Rich and Airman 1st Class Caleb Pierce)



MAFFS in Marietta

Lockheed Martin welcomed members from the 146th Air Wing of the California Air National Guard (CA ANG) and its C-130J equipped with a Modular Airborne Fire Fighting System II (MAFFS) to Marietta on Thursday, April 29. While in Marietta, the C-130J put its aircraft on display for employees to visit. In addition, the crew toured the C-130J final assembly line. The CA ANG was in nearby Greenville, S.C., for MAFFS training from April 26-29, along with 400 other military and civilian personnel for MAFFS training. (Photo by Damien Guarneri)



Exercise enhances partnerships for U.S., Bulgaria

By Master Sgt. Quinton T. Burris, 86th Airlift Wing Public Affairs

Airmen from Team Ramstein's 86th Airlift Wing and 435th Air Ground Operations Wing, as well as U.S. Army in Plovdiv, Bulgaria.

The bilateral training exercise brings U.S. and Bulgarian military forces together to build upon and strengthen the bonds currently shared between the two countries, while continuing to improve interoperability as Bulgaria continues to progress as a new partner nation in NATO.

After being delayed for five days due to the volcanic ash of Eyjafjallajokull, 81 Airmen from the 37th Airlift Squadron, 86th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, 435th Contingency Response Group, as well as members of the 5th Quartermaster Company at Rhine Ordnance Barracks and Explosive Ordnance Disposal Mobile Unit 8 out of Sigonella, Italy, arrived in Plovdiv for the fourth annual exercise.

"We are here to build partnerships while working with our Bulgarian counterparts as we exchange airlift and airdrop tactics and ideas; our trip here is vital to everyone involved," said Lt. Col Matthew Wehner, 37th AS deployed commander. "We are able to assist the Bulgarians with training and maintaining their jump requirements during the day and complete out nighttime training requirements during the night ... a task which is difficult to complete in Germany due the reduced hours of darkness."

In a matter of four days, 37th AS crews and 435th Security Forces Squadron jumpmasters, with assistance from U.S. Army jumpmasters, completed nine sorties, trained 360 Bulgarian paratroopers on the proper way to jump from a C-130J aircraft and completed 513 static line and freefall jumps.

Given the compressed training schedule from what was previously planned as a two-week event, the days are long and the nights short, however the mood stayed positive given the value of the exercise.

The Bulgarians have capitalized on some vital, realistic training;



Bulgarian 68th Special Forces Brigade members load onto a U.S. Air Force C-130J for a static line jump during exercise Thracian Spring 2010 at Plovdiv Airport, April 23. (U.S. Air Force photo by Master Sgt. Quinton T. Burris)

the U.S. aircrews seized the opportunity to fly one of the best training airspaces in Europe; and the jumpmasters took advantage of the chance to exchange ideas and training, tactics and procedures with NATO partners.

"I really enjoy working with the Bulgarians; they are very professional," said Maj. John Grimm, 435th SFS commander. "The opportunity to train with our NATO partners allows them (the Bulgarians) the chance to understand how we operate, while we learn how they operate. All of which will pay huge dividends in the long run, as we continue build upon on interoperability for possible future joint operations."

And according to Bulgarian Lt. Col. Petko Petkov, 68th Special Forces chief of Combat Training who recently returned from a tour with U.S. forces in Afghanistan, the training provided here is not only vitally important to success downrange, it's also a "good time."

"I enjoy any opportunity I have to work with U.S. forces. It is always a pleasure; no matter the location," he said.

Maintenance officer keeps 'Hercs' flying

By Tech. Sgt. Lindsey Maurice

Maintaining a fleet of one of the U.S. Air Force's oldest aircraft may not be the easiest job, but has proven to be a very rewarding experience for one maintenance officer.

First Lt. Fernando Rolon deployed from Dyess Air Force Base, Texas, is just over a month into his first deployment in the U.S. Air Forces Central Command area of responsibility, where he is serving as the 386th Expeditionary Aircraft Maintenance Squadron aircraft maintenance unit officer in charge, overseeing a diverse group of aircraft maintainers and valiant fleet of C-130s.

"I have the privilege of serving with the finest unsung heroes - the aircraft maintainers," Rolon said. "Our job here is critical because we provide fully mission capable aircraft to accomplish our airlift mission. The transportation of personnel, supplies and air medical evacuation is a mission the C-130 knows well. Our global reach capability has made us the backbone of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom."

As a maintenance officer, the lieutenant is responsible for providing safe, airworthy aircraft to accomplish the mission.

"It's my responsibility to ensure that any maintenance being performed is done safely and by the book," he said. "A very important aspect of my job is to foster an environment where good maintenance discipline is practiced and is the standard. Our job is inherently dangerous and every day aircrew members entrust their lives to the quality of maintenance we perform. This responsibility is taken very seriously and is the reason why an aging fleet of C-130s continues to provide the world's premier airlift capability."

According to the two-year Air Force veteran, aircraft maintenance is divided into two categories: preventative (scheduled) maintenance and corrective (unscheduled) maintenance. The lieutenant said one of the biggest adjustments his unit has had to make here involves its preventative maintenance workload.

"At home station preventative maintenance is done every 15 days; however, due to the harsh environment and the high OPSTEMPO, we decided to complete the preventative maintenance every seven days," he said. "This allows us to strategically manage our aircraft to meet mission requirements."

Another difference the company grade officer said he has discovered in his time downrange is the group dynamics within his unit.

"Our maintenance team includes Airmen from multiple active duty bases around the globe to include Air National Guard and Reserve components," he said. "Being a part of the 'Total Force' is an experience I've only had here in the AOR. It's impressive to see the 'Total Force' in action working day in and day out to get the mission done."



U.S. Air Force 1st Lt. Fernando Rolon, 386th Expeditionary Aircraft Maintenance Squadron aircraft maintenance unit officer in charge, is deployed from Dyess Air Force Base, Texas. (U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Lakisha A. Croley)

The CGO said his days downrange usually start out pretty routine.

"I arrive early in the morning and prepare for the 386th Expeditionary Maintenance Group daily stand up," he said. "I brief the commander on what we accomplished the previous day and on what my production teams are preparing for the following missions. Once the daily stand up is over, I return to the flightline and ensure our sortie generation capability matches the daily air tasking order discussed."

Rolon said the other major aspect of his job is taking care of the Airmen within his unit.

"I make sure our maintainers are being safe and following technical orders," he said. "I have a great team that assists with taking care of the Airmen. My two flight chiefs ensure all our Airmen's needs are met and that they're mission focused."

The lieutenant said the people aspect is his favorite part of his job.

"Watching these professionals maintain aircraft and seeing the fire in their eyes to launch aircraft after aircraft is incredible," he said. "The strong camaraderie we maintainers have is indescribable and is an experience I value deeply. I'm amazed at what they accomplish and feel confident they are the reason why we are the world's premier Air Force."

Rolon added that while he enjoys his job, like all jobs, he does face some challenges.

"The most challenging aspect of my job is never knowing what's in store for the next day," he said. "There is never a dull moment and always a new challenge staring you in the face."

The maintenance officer said that something many people don't realize about the maintenance career field is that it is a 24 hours a day, seven days a week job.

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Flying a lifeline with Aeromedical Evacuation heroes

By Staff Sgt. Richard Williams, 455th Air Expeditionary Wing Public Affairs

Effective medical care in a combat zone can be a challenge. Remote locations and unsafe driving conditions can become almost overwhelming difficulties when trying to get patients from a field hospital at one of the forward operating locations in Afghanistan to the medical care they need.

The 455th Expeditionary Aeromedical Evacuation (AE) Flight takes the challenges of Afghanistan and ensures those who need the care get where they need to go.

“Aeromedical evacuation is the movement of patients injured and sick, combat and noncombat related from the area of responsibility to a higher echelon of care,” said Maj. Richard Foote, 455th EAEF, flight nurse. “Whether it is from Camp Bastion to Kandahar Airfield or from Bagram to Landstuhl Regional Medical Facility, Germany we try to get our most serious patients from here to home in 72 hours.”

Maj. John Jordan, 455th EAEF, medical crew director added, “When we say patients, they are not just U.S. servicemembers; we provide care for coalition military and local and foreign nationals as well.”

Foote, deployed from the 908th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron, Maxwell Air Force Base, Ala., said, it doesn’t matter if friend of foe are loaded onto their aircraft, when the AE team receives them, they become patients and top level care is provided to all.

Jordan, also deployed from the 908th EAS, took time to explain the evacuation process, which has many moving parts on the ground to ensure maximum efficiency when aircrews take off.

A flight surgeon validates a patient in an automated system, which means the patient needs to move from point A to point B. Once the patient is approved for travel, the AE operations team receives notification of the movement.

“The AEOT builds a package with all of the information on our mission. This package assists us in creating the mission plan of equipment and teams needed for a successful flight,” Jordan said, adding that can change at a moment’s notice.

Once the medical crew director gets the call from the AEOT, he contacts the on-call crew who has one hour to report for pre flight preparations, which could include a standard AE crew, a critical care team or even a plus up in crew based upon patient numbers, said Tech. Sgt. Kim Price, 455th EAEF, flight medical technician.

“We show up, preflight our equipment, get our intelligence and crew briefings, load our truck, and head to the aircraft to prepare it for the mission,” she added.

With equipment loaded and mission objectives set, the AE



U.S. Air Force airmen from the 455th Expeditionary Aeromedical Evacuation Flight, transport wounded Afghan National Army soldiers and U.S. military personnel during a medical evacuation in a C-130 over Afghanistan, March 26. The 774th Expeditionary Airlift Squadron in Bagram flies C-130 aeromedical evacuations across Afghanistan. (U.S. Air Force photo by/ Tech. Sgt. Jeremy K. Cross)

crew departs the airfield on a C-130 aircraft heading to forward operating locations to bring patients from a lower level of care to a higher level of care, explained Major Foote.

The standard AE crew is a five person team however, this can change from mission to mission depending upon the number of patients to be received and their needs, Jordan explained. He also said the mission can change and often does in flight and the medical crew director (MCD) and the flight nurse must constantly evaluate the situation and sometimes adjust patient loads and crew requirements based on the medical needs of the patients.

After the crews land and begin the patient transfer process, the medical technicians ensure the proper equipment is coordinated for patients and everything is working properly, Price said. “Typically there are three technicians on the aircraft to assist the flight nurse and the MCD with patient care.”

There are challenges with completing the AE in the joint service/ coalition medical environment, Jordan explained. “When we are dealing with coalition forces some of the medical equipment and procedures are not standardized and that can cause some difficulties at times but we haven’t had any issues so far.”

“Sometimes there can also be a language barrier to overcome,” Price added. She pointed out although this can sometimes make care difficult, the bottom line is the AE crews are equal opportunity care givers so everyone gets the same top class care.

The importance of their mission cannot be stressed enough, said Jordan, who pointed out the team he worked with were all members of the Air Force Reserves and only Foote was an actual AE nurse in his civilian job.

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Making a rest stop

C-130 crew chief Marine Sgt. Zachery A. Williford with Aerial Refueler Transport Squadron 252 conducts a post-flight inspection on a KC-130J aircraft shortly after landing at U.S. Naval Station Guantanamo Bay, March 23. The aircraft brought supplies and parts bound for the multipurpose amphibious assault ship USS Bataan, which recently completed support to Operation Unified Response after 10 weeks off the coast of Haiti. (Photo courtesy of the U.S. Navy)



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“Our maintainers are out there fixing aircraft at all hours, despite weather conditions, ensuring mission requirements are met,” he said. “All the while, these technical experts still manage the time to pursue higher education, volunteer with different organizations and ultimately make time for their families. They’re incredible.”

Rolon added that he is thankful for the opportunity to deploy and experience the C-130 mission downrange.

“I feel great about deploying,” he said. “I don’t view it as a burden, but as an obligation to our great nation. Everyone in the Armed Forces should deploy at least once. The experience gained and the lessons learned will benefit everyone’s career.”

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We all deployed because we want to help people,” said Price, who works at a mental health clinic when she is not performing AE for the Air Force. “We chose our job because we love what we do. I just reenlisted here because I want to continue what I am doing.”

technician when not deployed. “As an AE team we are required to fly three to four times a month and on the average, with training requirements we spend about 14 days a year not performing this mission in some form.”

“Most people think we are the typical one weekend a month and two week a year Airman,” said Jordan, who is an Air Reserve

Foote summed the Aeromedical mission up when he said, “We take people home who have been injured serving their country and get them home to their family.”

Wing walking

U.S. Air Force Senior Airman Joseph Rimmacher, crew chief for the 435th Air Mobility Squadron, performs a routine maintenance check on a C-130J Super Hercules aircraft at Ramstein Air Base, Germany, April 14. Rimmacher won the 2009 Lt. Gen. Leo Marquez Award for demonstrating the highest degree of sustained job performance, job knowledge and job efficiency. (U.S. Air Force photo by Airman 1st Class Grovert Fuentes-Contreras)



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