



photo : Angad Singh

C-130 Hercules Diamond Anniversary

The Lockheed Martin C-130 Hercules tactical transport aircraft achieved another milestone on 23 August 2014, which marked the 60th anniversary of its first flight at Burbank, California in 1954.

The C-130 Hercules was conceived out of a need to provide the US Air Force a tough, versatile heavy lifter with plenty of 'trunk' space to haul troops, supplies and equipment; and have tremendous lift capacity, long range and austere landing field capabilities. It had to be a versatile transport aircraft which was "at home in the dirt, comfortable in the cold and in its element in dusty, hot environments". In effect, the Hercules was to offer something that had not previously existed:

a tactical airlifter with inbuilt potential and flexibility.

The focus on flexibility and multi-role, multi-mission capabilities can be traced to the original C-130A, which featured a large, unobstructed, fully-pressurised cargo hold, and could be reconfigured for the carriage of troops, cargo, special stores, for casualty evacuation. The C-130's combination of a cargo floor at truckbed height and rear loading ramp provided ease of loading and unloading with true roll-on/roll-off (or RORO) capability.

Since its debut, the C-130 Hercules has exhibited a combination of tenacity, flexibility and innovation that makes it the world's most prolific airlifter. In fact, the C-130 has had the longest, continuous

military aircraft production run in aviation history. To date, more than 2,500 C-130s have been ordered or delivered, the type operating out of 70 countries and produced in more than 70 variants. All of the C-130's production models have been built at the Lockheed Martin Aeronautics' Marietta facility.

It is hardly an exaggeration that the Hercules has been everywhere and is known for its ability to tackle "any mission, anywhere, at any time". Aircrews have flown it to both poles, landed or airdropped military supplies to combat zones and performed countless relief operations around the globe. From the highest airstrips in the Himalayas to landing on an aircraft carrier in the middle of the ocean, the

The Hercules is powered by four Rolls-Royce AE2100 turboprop engines



C-130 regularly defies expectations. A ski-equipped version of the Hercules resupplies Distant Early Warning radar sites in the Arctic, and in many of the special mission C-130s that followed, the special equipment was removable, thus permitting the aircraft to revert to transport, combat delivery, or medical evacuation tasks. Legacy C-130s and C-130Js also operate for VIP transport; fire-fighting (Modular Airborne Fire Fighting Systems or MAFFS); medevac or as a flying hospital; oil/herbicide dispersion, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) and armed ISR signals intelligence (SIGNIT), search and rescue and as an aerial refueller.

The newest Hercules model, the C-130J Super Hercules, which is also operated by the Indian Air Force, incorporates the advantages of new technology built on the inherent strength of the aircraft and its design. The Hercules has been reinvented again and again, and its continuous improvements have created virtually unlimited flexibility.

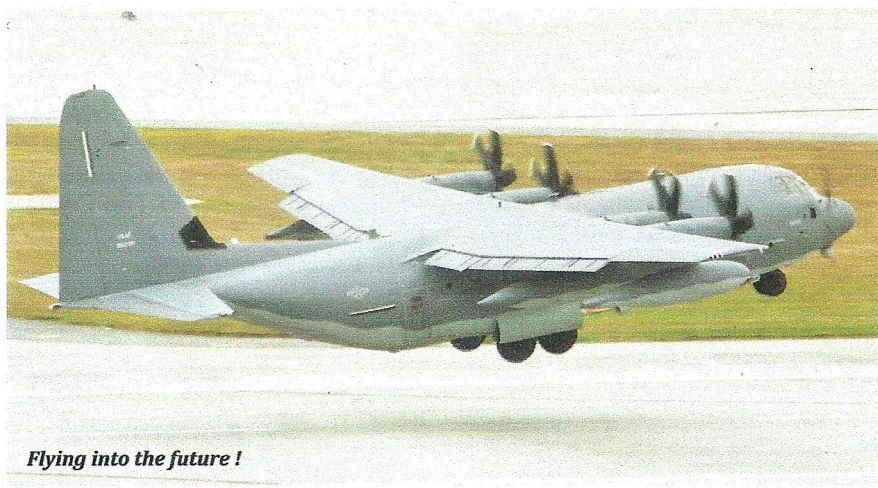
In January 2014, the C-130J expanded its offerings to include the LM-100J, the updated version of the civil-certified L-100 that was built from the 1960s through the

1990s and operated by freight companies around the world. Through select design changes, the LM-100J will perform as a civil multi-purpose air freighter capable of rapid and efficient cargo transport. The LM-100J is expected to be an efficient and ideal airlift solution when delivering bulk and oversize cargo particularly to austere locations worldwide.

"In its first six decades, the C-130 shaped aviation history, redefined industry standards and exhibited flexibility that other aircraft have yet to match," said

George Shultz, Lockheed Martin vice president and general manager, C-130 programmes. "The C-130 remains the world's most proven airlifter because of its ability to adapt, remain relevant and deliver results no matter the mission. As we celebrate the Hercules, we want to thank the people who designed, and now build, deliver, fly, maintain and sustain it. It's their contributions that have kept the global C-130 fleet flying and will continue to do so for decades to come."

Courtesy: Lockheed Martin



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