

# Lockheed Martin Delivers 2,700th C-130 Hercules Tactical Airlifter



MARIETTA, Ga., June 18, 2024 /PRNewswire/ – Lockheed Martin recently delivered the 2,700th Hercules multi-mission tactical airlifter, increasing the size, reach, and strength of the worldwide C-130 fleet.

This landmark aircraft is a KC-130J Super Hercules tanker operated by the U.S. Marine Corps' VMGR-252 at MCAS Cherry Point, North Carolina.

Defined by its proven performance and unmatched versatility, operators in 70 nations around the world fly C-130 airlifters to support any mission – anywhere, any time. The current C-130 production model is the C-130J Super Hercules, which includes the KC-130J tactical tanker. To date, the C-130J is certified to support 18 different mission requirements.

“The Lockheed Martin team is honored to deliver this milestone

Super Hercules to the U.S. Marine Corps, where it will be part of the largest KC-130J fleet in the world and provide true force amplification across the globe,” said Rod McLean, vice president and general manager of Lockheed Martin’s Air Mobility & Maritime Missions line of business. “Not only does this Hercules represent the 2,700th C-130 delivered, but it also reflects the inherent mission and performance adaptability that fuels the C-130’s ongoing relevance.”

The KC-130J is the global standard for tactical tankers, refueling a majority of rotary-wing aircraft in operation today and multiple fixed-wing aircraft including the Lockheed Martin F-35B/C Lightning II fighter aircraft. With its truly tactical design, the KC-130J has the ability to fly at the slow speeds and low altitudes that are ideal when refueling helicopters.

Always evolving, continually innovating, and ready for what’s next, the Super Hercules leads the charge by setting standards and shaping the future of tactical airlift missions – including humanitarian operations around the world. The global C-130J fleet spans 26 operators in 22 nations with 20+ airworthiness certifications. With nearly 3 million flight hours logged across the global fleet of 540+ C-130Js, invaluable insights gained from missions in every scenario equip the C-130J for what’s next.

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**CNO, CMC Sign Amphibious  
Warfare Ship Terms of**

# Reference, Strengthening Navy-Marine Corps Team



MEDITERRANEAN SEA (Feb. 26, 2024) The Wasp-class amphibious assault ship USS Bataan (LHD 5) transits the Mediterranean Sea during a photo exercise, Feb. 26, 2024. (U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Riley Gasdia)

17 June 2024

Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) Adm. Lisa Franchetti and Commandant of the Marine Corps (CMC) Gen. Eric Smith signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on Amphibious Warfare Ship Terms of Reference, June 12, 2024, demonstrating Navy and Marine Corps full alignment and commitment to amphibious ship readiness.

WASHINGTON, (June 17, 2024) – Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) Adm. Lisa Franchetti and Commandant of the Marine Corps (CMC) Gen. Eric Smith signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on Amphibious Warfare Ship Terms of Reference, June 12, 2024,

demonstrating Navy and Marine Corps full alignment and commitment to amphibious ship readiness.

The signing follows the CNO and CMC's letter earlier this year to their three-star officers who oversee plans and operations, calling for a deep dive on ship readiness and requirements for the training and certification of Amphibious Ready Groups.

"The Marine Expeditionary Unit is our crown jewel, and our Amphibious Warfare Ships are the most versatile, adaptable naval platforms in our inventory," said Smith. "This MOU ensures consistency and uniformity in how each service talks about amphibious force readiness so we can better plan and execute naval operations. Ultimately, this creates a stronger Navy/Marine Corps team for all our Marines, Sailors, and the American people."

The CNO echoed CMC's sentiment emphasizing that above all else, these new terms are intended to aid in better joint risk decisions between Navy and Marine Corps commanders and ensure the Navy remains ready and prepared to support contingency operations with the Marine Corps.

"Our Navy – Marine Corps team generates combat power with global impact – unmatched by any other naval force every day," said Franchetti. "We stand ready to preserve the peace, respond in crisis, and win decisively in war, if called to do so. This MOU will ensure the ARG-MEU team remains the centerpiece of our naval expeditionary warfare presence, forcible entry, and sea basing capabilities."

The new terms of reference serve as supplemental guidance to existing readiness reporting criteria and will ensure consistency and uniformity in Navy and Marine Corps amphibious force planning, assessment, and operational mission execution.

The Department of the Navy is committed to reducing maintenance delays and is heavily investing in readiness in

the Fiscal Year 2025 Presidential Budget.

The joint MOU was signed during the 2024 Naval Board. Guided by the CNO and CMC's priorities, the Naval Board provides a regular forum for senior leaders to consider naval policy and guidance that affects warfighting issues, and works with type commanders to identify solutions for remediating those deficiencies.

Further remarks from the CNO and CMC on the MOU can found in this [video](#).

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## **24th MEU (SOC) Deploys Aviation Detachment to Sweden for BALTOPS 24**



By 24th MEU (SOC) Public Affairs Office, June 10, 2024

**KALLINGE** – The 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) Special Operations Capable (SOC) deployed a detachment of U.S. Marine Corps AV-8B Harrier jets, MV-22B Osprey tiltrotor aircraft, and personnel to Ronneby Airport in Kallinge, Sweden to conduct expeditionary advanced base flight operations in support of exercise Baltic Operations (BALTOPS) 24, June 9, 2024.

The aircraft are assigned to Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron (VMM) 365 (Reinforced), 24th MEU (SOC), which is currently deployed with the U.S. Navy Wasp Amphibious Ready Group (ARG). While based at Ronneby Airport, the detachment is capable of self-sustaining and self-deploying in support of various events with NATO Allies during BALTOPS 24.

“Our self-deploying and self-sustaining detachment demonstrates the ARG-MEU’s ability to project force more than 900 nautical miles and establish a forward operating base in the Baltic region,” said Lt. Col. Cory Jobst, commanding

officer, VMM-365 (REIN). “This expeditionary advanced base is a historic first with our longstanding partner, and newest NATO Ally, Sweden.”

The USS Wasp (LHD 1) and USS New York (LPD 21), with the Wasp ARG and embarked 24th MEU (SOC), are participating in BALTOPS 24. The Wasp ARG-24th MEU (SOC) is deployed to the U.S. Naval Forces Europe area of operations to support high-end warfighting exercises while demonstrating speed and agility in a dynamic security environment.

BALTOPS 24 is the premier maritime focused military exercise in the Baltic Region. The exercise, led by U.S. Naval Forces Europe-Africa, and executed by Naval Striking and Support Forces NATO, provides a unique training opportunity to strengthen combined response capabilities critical to preserving freedom of navigation and security in the Baltic Sea.

BALTOPS 24 is also part of the U.S. Department of Defense exercise series, Large Scale Global Exercise (LSGE). LSGE is an umbrella term that incorporates several exercises and military activities, which enable the U.S. Joint Force to train with Allies and partners and improve shared understanding, trust and interoperability on security challenges across the globe.

While the exercise is led by U.S. Naval Forces Europe-Africa/U.S. Sixth Fleet, it will be command-and-controlled by Naval Striking and Support Forces NATO, headquartered in Oeiras, Portugal.

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# Two Marine Generals Nominated for Third Star

From the U.S. Department of Defense, June 6, 2024

Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III announced today that the president has made the following nominations:

Marine Corps Maj. Gen. Melvin G. Carter for appointment to the grade of lieutenant general, with assignment as deputy commandant for Information, Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, Washington, D.C. Carter is currently serving as the deputy director of Cybersecurity for Combat Support, National Security Agency, Fort Meade, Maryland.

Marine Corps Maj. Gen. Benjamin T. Watson for appointment to the grade of lieutenant general, with assignment as commanding general, Training and Education Command, Quantico, Virginia. Watson is currently serving as the commanding general, 1st Marine Division, San Diego, California.

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# U.S. Marine Economy Continues Upward Trend

*\$476 billion contribution helps build a 'greater, more Climate-Ready Nation'*

From NOAA, June 7, 2024

The American marine economy continued to bolster the nation in 2022 as demonstrated by increased sales and jobs, according to the most recent statistics from the [annual Marine Economy](#)

[Satellite Account \(MESA\)](#) released by two Department of Commerce agencies – NOAA and the Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA).

The marine economy contributed a total of \$476 billion in economic impact in 2022, making up nearly 2% of the nation's gross domestic product (GDP). It generated \$777 billion in sales, and supported 2.4 million jobs in 2022. MESA provides valuable insights on how the marine sector contributes to the nation's economy.

“A strong, sustainable marine economy helps build a greater, more Climate-Ready Nation,” U.S. Secretary of Commerce Gina Raimondo said. “The Biden-Harris Administration and the Department of Commerce are committed to enhancing the marine economy, and helping communities and ecosystems grow and thrive.”

“These figures show how essential the Blue Economy is to American prosperity,” said NOAA Administrator Rick Spinrad, Ph.D. “The ocean and the Great Lakes are integral to the overall health of America's economy, and they impact our lives in numerous ways.”

The largest contributors to GDP are tourism and recreation, with \$163 billion; national defense and public administration, with \$149 billion; and offshore minerals, with \$62 billion.

The sales sectors that showed the most growth for 2022 include:

- Ship and boat building, up 14.6%;
- Coastal tourism and recreation, up 8.1%; and
- Marine transportation and warehousing, up 7%.

For the first time, MESA includes information on wind energy and alternative power generation, allowing for a greater understanding of the offshore wind industry's importance to the nation's economy. Wind farm construction totaled \$161 million in sales, and alternative power generation totaled \$10

million in sales.

MESA is in its seventh year, as NOAA and the BEA produce statistics that improve national estimates for ocean, coastal and major water bodies' economic activity by major industry, accounting for inflation. The data comprises 10 sectors that represent businesses dependent on America's ocean, coasts and the Great Lakes.

"This report underscores the critical need to do whatever we can to support and bolster the marine sector," said NOAA's National Ocean Service Assistant Administrator, Nicole LeBoeuf. "Our nation's marine economy influences many aspects of our economic landscape and our daily lives, affecting regions far beyond our coasts."

These data reflect a period from 2017 to 2022 and is the most comprehensive and accurate produced to date. The marine economic statistics validate previous estimates of the marine economy's value.

The 10 sectors, ranked by sales, adjusted for inflation, and percentage change compared to the previous year:

- Tourism and recreation, \$220 billion, up 8.1%.
- National defense and public administration, \$194 billion, down 2.5%.
- Offshore minerals, \$66 billion, down 1.3%.
- Transportation and warehousing, \$56 billion, up 7%.
- Living resources, \$31 billion, down 6.7%.
- Ship and boat building, \$20 billion, up 14.6%.
- Coastal utilities, \$15 billion, down 3.2%.
- Research and education, \$12 billion, up 4%.
- Professional and technical services, \$8 billion, down 5.5%.
- Marine construction, \$7 billion, up 3.1%.

"We can continue building a thriving marine economy for America by investing in restoration, sustainability and working closely with stakeholders," said NOAA Chief Economist

Monica Grasso, Ph.D. “A thriving, resilient marine economy uplifts our communities and drives our nation forward.”

The report, data and other information are available at [NOAA's Digital Coast](#) website and on the [BEA Marine Economy website](#). MESA's statistics reflect 2022 data, given data availability and the analysis process.

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## WASP ARG-24TH MEU (SOC) Begin Deployment



From U.S. Fleet Forces Command, 01 June 2024

ATLANTIC OCEAN – Sailors and Marines assigned to the Wasp (WSP) Amphibious Ready Group (ARG)-24th Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) Special Operations Capable (SOC) began deployment

operations in the Atlantic, June 1.

The deployment is a scheduled rotation of forces that fosters maritime security and increased theater cooperation. The ARG provides a forward naval expeditionary presence with vast, specialized crisis response capabilities to support geographic combatant commander, numbered fleet commander, and joint special operations task force commander.

“The Wasp ARG is ready,” said Capt. Nakia Cooper, commodore of Amphibious Squadron 4. “I’m confident in the skill and unwavering commitment of our team. Through robust training and real-world events, we have demonstrated professionalism and proficiency at every level. We are ready to support combatant commanders around the globe in any capacity deemed necessary.”

WSP ARG certified to deploy following a composite training unit exercise, which concluded May 12. The ARG consists of three Hampton Roads-based ships: amphibious assault ship USS Wasp (LHD 1), amphibious transport dock ship USS New York (LPD 21), and dock landing ship USS Oak Hill (LSD 51), totaling more than 4,500 Sailors and Marines across the force.

“The Marines and Sailors of the 24th MEU (SOC) demonstrated their tactical acumen throughout our pre-deployment training program, and we are ready to execute in any climate or place,” said Col. Todd Mahar, commanding officer, 24th MEU (SOC). “We are excited to deploy with our Wasp ARG teammates and take our naval warfighting capabilities forward to support national security objectives.”

Coupled with the WSP ARG, the 24th MEU (SOC) serves as a premier stand-in force with a full complement of all-domain capabilities to operate persistently within the littorals or weapons engagement zones of an adversary. The 24th MEU (SOC) serves as one of the Nation’s primary crisis response forces

capable of conducting amphibious operations, crisis response, and limited contingency operations, including enabling the introduction of follow-on forces and designated special operations, in support of theater requirements of the geographic combatant commander.

U.S. 2nd Fleet, reestablished in 2018 in response to the changing global security environment, develops and employs maritime forces ready to fight across multiple domains in the Atlantic and Arctic in order to ensure access, deter aggression and defend U.S., allied, and partner interests.

To learn more about WASP ARG and 24th MEU "Team of Teams," visit their DVIDS feature page at <https://www.dvidshub.net/feature/wasparg24thmeu>.

You can find Amphibious Squadron 4, Wasp Amphibious Ready Group on Facebook and DVIDS.

You can find the 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit on Facebook, Twitter (@the24MEU), Instagram (@24MEU), and DVIDS.

You can find USS Wasp on Facebook and Instagram (@usswas

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## **Marine Corps Launches Talent Acquisition Pilot for Cyber, Signals Intel**

# SEAPOWERS

The Official Publication of the Navy League of the United States

QUANTICO, Va. – Manpower and Reserve Affairs announced the Marine Corps Talent Acquisition Pilot (MCTAP) program today, a groundbreaking initiative aimed at identifying and recruiting highly skilled individuals to fill critical roles within the active and reserve components of the 1721 Cyberspace Warfare Operator military occupational specialty and the active component of the 2629 Signals Intelligence Collection Manager MOS. The two-year pilot program commences June 2024.

As a 21st century fighting organization, the Marine Corps must creatively and critically address how to employ talent. The MCTAP explores a pathway for exceptionally talented Americans to join the service at a rank appropriate for their education and experience, up to Gunnery Sergeant, in two pre-determined fields.

“The time and investment in identifying, acquiring, and developing talent is significant, especially in these fields,” said Lt. Gen. James Glynn, deputy commandant, Manpower and Reserve Affairs. “This initiative enhances readiness and contributes to lethality by leveraging proven private sector talent to rapidly meet critical areas of capability.”

All applicants accepted into the pilot with no prior Marine

Corps experience will complete Marine Corps recruit training and earn the title of Marine. Applicants who previously served in the Marine Corps as successful graduates of recruit training will not be required to retrain.

“For those who have acquired the skills outlined in this MARADMIN and feel called to serve the Nation in uniform, I look forward to your applications,” said Glynn. “Join our prestigious team; we have a place for you.”

Read [Marine Administrative Message 253/24](#) for more information and how to apply.

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## **F-35B Crashes in New Mexico En Route Test Assignment**



ATLANTIC OCEAN (Oct. 18, 2023) U.S. Marine Corps Maj. Alex Horne, assigned to Air Test and Evaluation Squadron (VX) 23, conducts flight operations from the Royal Navy aircraft carrier HMS Prince of Wales (R09) in the Atlantic Ocean, Oct. 18, 2023. (U.S. Navy photo by Kyra Helwick)

By Richard R. Burgess, Senior Editor

ARLINGTON, Va. – An F-35B Lightning II strike fighter crashed shortly after takeoff from Kirtland Air Force Base, New Mexico, on May 28. The pilot ejected and was hospitalized with serious injuries.

The Marine Corps F-35B was en route to deliver to Edwards Air Force Base, California, for assignment to test duties. The aircraft was flying from the Lockheed Martin factory in Fort Worth, Texas, for delivery to Edwards.

According to press reports, the pilot was an Air Force officer assigned to the Defense Contract Management Agency's Fort Worth office.

Marine Operational Test and Evaluation Squadron One, headquartered at Marine Corps Air Station Yuma, Arizona, has a detachment at Edwards Air Force Base for F-35 test and evaluation.

Rep. Rob Wittman, chairman of the Tactical Air and Land Forces subcommittee of the House Armed Services Committee issued a statement on the mishap:

"I am incredibly grateful to the first responders who promptly aided the pilot after this crash and relieved to hear the pilot is in stable condition. I am praying for the pilot and their family as they undergo treatment for serious injuries.

"Any crash of our military aircraft is of utmost concern. While we know that expanding F-35 test capacity is the first step to fundamental F-35 transformation, this incident exacerbates the already urgent need to expand it. That's why I authored an amendment in this year's National Defense

Authorization Act to increase F-35 test capacity by 50%, ensuring that the U.S. military can accelerate tests associated with our nation's largest defense acquisition program.

"This incident will undoubtedly cause a technical setback for F-35 modernization and warrants an extensive and thorough investigation to determine the exact cause of this crash."

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## Austin: New Officers Ready to Lead in Complex World



May 24, 2024 | By Jim Garamone, DOD News

Even as new Navy ensigns and Marine Corps second lieutenants were being commissioned at the U.S. Naval Academy, U.S.

Central Command issued a release on the latest threat to mariners in the Red Sea.

“At approximately 7:26 a.m. on May 23, Iranian-backed Houthis launched two antiship, ballistic missiles into the Red Sea,” the Centcom release said. “There were no injuries or damage reported by U.S., coalition or commercial ships. This continued malign and reckless behavior by the Iranian-backed Houthis threatens regional stability and endangers the lives of mariners across the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden.”

This is just one of the threats that the new officers will confront as they begin their military careers. It’s an example of the challenges these young officers must face as they join the ranks.

Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III told the graduating service members in Annapolis, Maryland, that their experiences at the Naval Academy have made them ready to confront the challenges of the future.

“I hope that you will see your years here as a long lesson in grit, adaptability and discipline,” the secretary said. “You put in the ‘reps and sets’ to succeed as a team and grow as teammates. And that’s what we’ll continue to expect of you – today and every day.

“The United States has the most capable Navy and Marine Corps in the world. ... And make no mistake, we’re going to keep it that way. And you’re going to keep it that way.”

The graduating class arrived at the academy at the height of the COVID-19 epidemic. They had to adapt to a new learning situation and new procedures in order to graduate. “You have lived by your class motto: ‘*From Adversity, Victory*’,” Austin said. “And during a once-in-a-generation pandemic, that’s exactly what you showed.”

This is the second year in a row that Austin, a graduate of

the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, New York, has officiated at the Naval Academy's graduation. "Last year, I told the class of 2023 that they would learn that the lifeblood of the rules-based international order is actually seawater," he said. "And over the past year, we've seen how important your mission is. Sea power is a beacon projecting American power and American principles to the world. Our allies and partners depend on it, and our foes and rivals envy it."

The Navy and Marine Corps are upholding U.S. principles from the South China Sea to the Red Sea. Austin said the United States is seeing new challenges to the open world of rules, rights and responsibilities built with U.S. leadership after World War II. "In times like these, freedom of navigation rides on the bow waves of U.S. Navy ships," he said. "As officers, you will help us increase American security and model American values worldwide. Our sailors and Marines let the U.S. military project power anywhere on Earth."

The new ensigns and second lieutenants will join the services working to "secure the world's sea lanes for the free flow of ships, commerce and ideas," Austin said. "We're depending on you to sail, fly and operate wherever international law allows. We're depending on you to deepen old alliances and forge new friendships. And we're depending on you to deter conflict and to keep the peace."

Yes, the new officers must be prepared for war, but they must do more. Austin quoted Navy Adm. Arleigh Burke, who in 1961 said that Navy officers must "understand not only how to fight a war, but how to use the tremendous power which they operate to sustain a world of liberty and justice."

"And you will be tested. Just ask last year's graduates," the secretary said.

The secretary spoke with ensigns of the class of 2023 who are

aboard the USS Carney. “They helped defend freedom of navigation in the Red Sea,” he said. “They helped those in distress at sea. They helped degrade the capabilities of the Iranian-backed Houthi militia. And they helped shoot down missiles and UAVs . In fact, the Carney conducted 51 engagements in six months, which is the most direct Navy engagement with a foe since [World War II](#).”

“And the message of those ensigns on the Carney to the class of 2024 is this: You are ready.”

The secretary said they will lead sailors and Marines through tension and uncertainty.

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## **Marine Corps set to receive new Light Assault Weapon System**



The M72 Fire from Enclosure (FFE) system with A8 and A10 munition. (Courtesy photo from Nammo)  
From Marine Corps Systems Command, May 20, 2024

MARINE CORPS BASE QUANTICO, Va. – Marine Corps Systems Command is pleased to

announce the acquisition of the M72 Light Assault Weapon Fire from Enclosure Munition.

The M72 LAW Fire from Enclosure (FFE) is a compact, lightweight, single-shot weapon system. It incorporates an improved launcher featuring an enhanced in-line trigger mechanism and improved sling design. The M72 FFE comprises two configurations: the M72A8 anti-armor and the M72A10 multi-purpose, anti-structure munition. The M72A8 contains a high-explosive charge warhead that improves armor penetration, while the M72A10 provides Marines with increased capability for eliminating structures.

The M72 FFE is designed to deliver versatility and

reliability, enabling Marines to counter threats effectively in close-range

combat. Its performance is optimized for urban environments, vehicles, and complex terrain, ensuring operational effectiveness in these challenging scenarios.

The M27A FFE variants will replace the current LAW weapon system capability. The new system allows Marines to fire multiple shots daily from inside a room and has less flash and back blast than an M9 pistol. The reduced visibility increases the lethality and safety of Marines.

“This new capability removes the Marine from exposure to enemy engagement by introducing the FFE capability, said Mr. Scott Adams, Product Manager, Ammo. “The FFE and the reduced thermal signature provides the Marine with an added layer of protection.”

The MCSC team worked closely with their Army counterparts to procure this new capability. All shoulder-fired rocket ammunition is procured through the U.S. Army Joint Munitions Command, the Single Manager for Conventional Ammunition. This enables the services to combine orders to realize cost savings by leveraging economic order quantity prices.

The M72 FFE rocket underscores the Marine Corps’ ongoing efforts to lighten the warfighter’s load and increase lethality. PdM Ammo expects to begin fielding the M72A FFE in calendar year 2024.