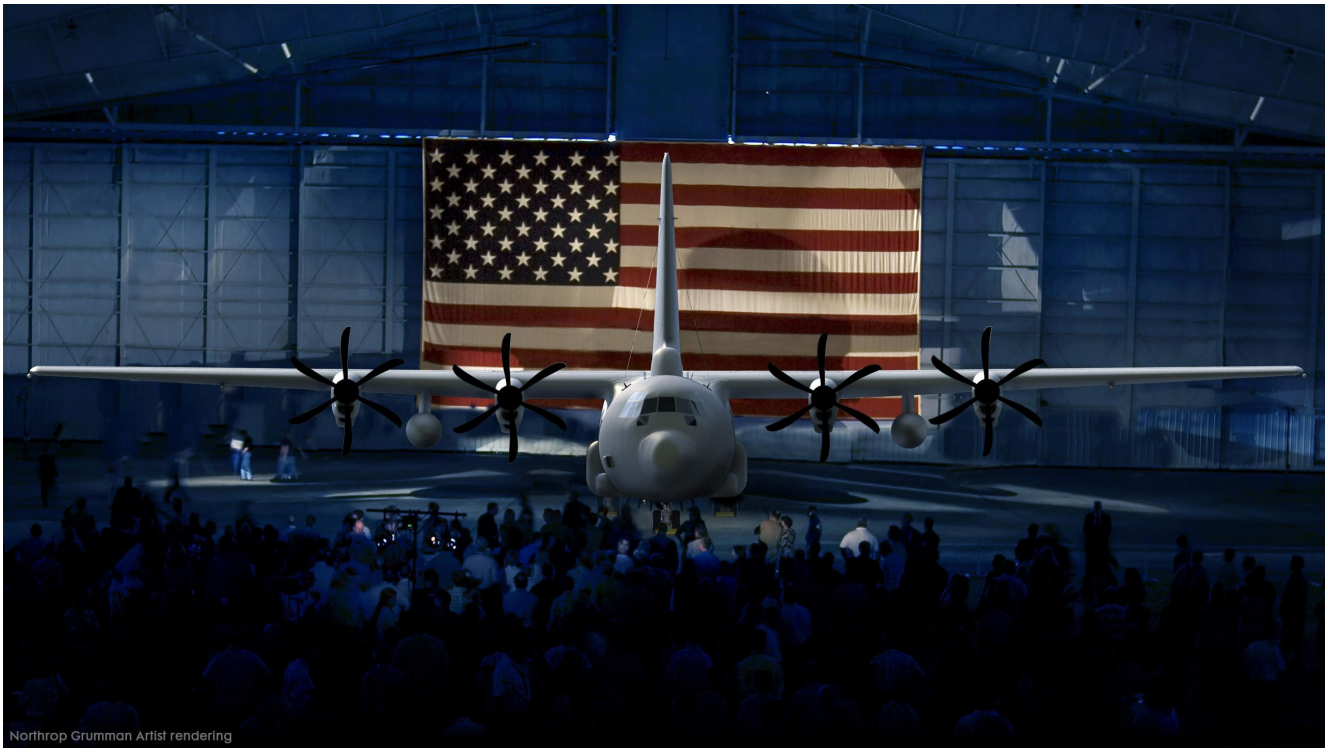
E-130J Popular Name Announced for TACAMO Mission Aircraft



The E-130J received its popular name designation, Phoenix II, in August 2025. The Phoenix II will be the Navy's new Take Charge and Move Out (TACAMO) mission aircraft for decades to come. (Artist Rendering)

Release From Naval Air Systems Command

NAS Patuxent River, Md. – The U.S. Navy's Airborne Strategic Command, Control and Communications Program Office (PMA-271) and Strategic Communications Wing 1 (SCW-1) announced the official popular name for the Navy's new Take Charge and Move Out (TACAMO) mission aircraft: E-130J Phoenix II.

In October 2024, the placeholder name E-XX was officially designated as E-130J. As of today, the E-130J's popular name has been designated as Phoenix II, representing the mythical bird whose ability is to be reborn and represents a symbol of immortality, resurrection, and renewal.

This meaning of rebirth is a nod to the proven C-130 platform

fulfilling the TACAMO mission since 1963-1993 via the EC-130Q.The E-130J Phoenix II will relieve the Navy's E-6B Mercury fleet of the TACAMO mission. TACAMO is the vital connection for the president, secretary of defense and U.S. Strategic Command with naval ballistic missile forces.

"Phoenix II is the ideal popular name as we take the E-130J TACAMO mission into its next phase," said Capt. Roger Davis, PMA-271 program manager. "A phoenix is known for its resilience, exceptionally long lifespan, and its ability to transform and continue its purpose. The dedicated team at PMA-271 have committed to the ideals of TACAMO's critical deterrence mission when executing this new platform; transforming the legacy mission aircraft into a new weapon system with unmatched survivability and longevity for this country."

SCW-1 squadrons home based out of Tinker Air Force Base, Oklahoma. They include the "Ironmen" of Fleet Air Reconnaissance Squadron (VQ) 3, "Shadows" of VQ-4 and "Roughnecks" of VQ-7.

"I'm pleased that this very important program remains on track, and that we were able to leverage our community sailors and veterans through the process," said Capt. Britt Windeler, commander of SCW-1. "I feel like Phoenix II is especially apt, as we are returning to our roots of executing the TACAMO mission on a C-130 variant."

The current platform, E-6B Mercury, is a communications relay and strategic airborne command post aircraft. It provides survivable, reliable, and endurable airborne Nuclear Command, Control, and Communications (NC3) for the president, secretary of defense and U.S. Strategic Command. The E-130J Phoenix II will recapitalize the aging E-6B Mercury fleet that has been in service for more than three decades.

PMA-271 is part of Naval Air Systems Command (NAVAIR) with its

headquarters at Naval Air Station Patuxent River, Maryland. Its mission is to deliver and support survivable, reliable and endurable airborne command, control and communications for the president, secretary of defense and U.S. Strategic Command.

The mission of SCW-1 is to receive, verify and retransmit Emergency Action Messages (EAMs) to U.S. strategic forces.