

MOVERS SHAKERS

EXCEPTIONAL PEOPLE HELPING TO SHAPE THE FUTURE

By Hank Hogan

SPOTLIGHT ON

PETER MACKOWSKI

CHIEF OF THE C-130 TECHNICAL COORDINATION GROUP (TCG)



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Keeping the Worldwide C-130 Fleet Flying



Formed in 1987 as a U.S. Air Force organization, the C-130 Technical Coordination Group (TCG) provides dedicated U.S. Air Force engineering, technical, and logistics sustainment support to "Partner Nations" who fly C-130s. Today, the TCG supports thirty-eight international members, whose combined national fleets totals roughly 400 Hercules aircraft. These airframes include B, E, H, J, and L-100 versions and make up 65 percent of operational C-130s worldwide.

Peter Mackowski, Chief of the TCG, assumed this post in September 2020. His career began with 23 years of active-duty U.S. Air Force service as an aircraft maintenance and avionics technician, followed by 7 years as a U.S. Department of Defense contractor, and then 11 years further supporting the Air Force as a civil servant.



Mackowski took time to sit down with us to discuss the TCG, its membership and mission, recent challenges and industry-wide changes, and why the organization pulls through in supporting its members time and again. His lightly edited comments follow.

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C-130 Technical Coordination Group



MISSION STATEMENT

The C-130 Technical Coordination Group (TCG) is the Foreign Military Sales (FMS) point of contact for dedicated USAF engineering, technical, and logistics sustainment support for C-130 Foreign Military Sales (FMS) Partner fleets.

The C-130 TCG is steadily expanding as the USAF continues to retire its fleet and the excess aircraft is purchased by international customers. Membership levels have varied over the years, but there has been one constant—service to our member countries. This service can be as simple as providing an aircraft part number to as complex as designing a country specific structural or avionics modification. Being positioned at Robins Air Force Base, GA, the staff of the C-130 TCG can not only draw from their considerable expertise but also from access to the flying history and future direction of the USAF fleet. The availability of such reliability, maintainability, and support data makes this low cost investment a winner.

As of 2021 the C-130 TCG has been operational for 34 years. Since the inception of the C-130 TCG in 1987 they have held 30 World Wide Reviews. Only three World Wide Reviews were not held due to the World Wide Review being formed later, government furlough, and the COVID-19 pandemic. The 2021 C-130 TCG is the 31st World Wide Review.

Courtesy of www.c130tcg.com.

Peter F. Mackowski

Mr. Mackowski was the Line/Country Manager for the C-130 Hercules Technical Coordination Program (TCP), Air Force Life Cycle Management Center, Robins AFB, GA from Mar. 2018-Sept. 2020. He was responsible for the financial execution/oversight of 35+ Partner Nation's (PN) funds while concurrently providing direct country support to seven different countries. During his tour he oversaw a combined renewal and introduction of 20 country LOAs authorizing the TCP to provide engineering, technical, and logistics support to C-130 PN fleets worldwide.

Mr. Mackowski has over 40 years of Federal Government service. He served 23 years on active duty in the USAF as an Aircraft Maintenance and Avionics Guidance and Control Technician, completing his final years of service as a First Sergeant for the USAF delegation at NATO Regional Headquarters Allied Forces NORTH. In the seven years that followed he managed a variety of different programs ranging from aircraft/commodity modifications to alternative energy projects as a DoD Contractor. Subsequently, Mr. Mackowski entered Civil Service as an Electronic Warfare Program Manager for the USAF's, Quick Reaction Capability Program. He also worked as a Logistician for the C-17 and C-27J Program Offices before returning to Electronic Warfare. This time as an Electronic Combat Information Security Assistance Program (ECISAP) Logistician for ten countries in Foreign Military Sales. His tour with ECISAP concluded as the Program Manager for the \$5B Saudi Arabia F-15SA, Digital Electronic Warfare System program. Additionally, he was selected as the 2015 National Dixie Crow Logistician of the Year for his work in bringing Federal Aviation Administration certified repairs to some EW commodities at the Warner Robins Air Logistics Complex.

EDUCATION

Master's in Science Aircraft Maintenance, Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University with certificates in Aviation Management & Safety.

Senior NCO and USAF First Sergeant Academy.

Senior Enlisted Equal Opportunity Workshop, Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute.

Courtesy of www.c130tcg.com.

Q: Although headway has been made in fighting the pandemic, this progress has been uneven, with some countries still experiencing significant problems. What has the last year or so been like as a result of Covid-19? And how do you see things playing out?

A: "Over the past year, it was difficult. We learned a lot about ourselves, who we are, how we work, and where our future should go. With all that, we're not going to be the same agency we were before," Mackowski replies.

The retirement of some experienced team members, along with adjustments in

working remotely, posed new challenges. "When we started teleworking, I was not a fan at all. I dreaded it, because of my personal nature. I'm more of a face-to-face person."

"But as many of us discovered, technology overcame the drawbacks. Video teleconferencing was the ticket. A picture is worth a 1,000 words." And the adaptability of the organization triumphed.

"We handled the same volume of assistance requests as we had in the past," he finishes proudly, noting that going forward telework will continue to be a key part of TCG's toolkit."



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"We take over maintaining some of the older U.S. Air Force C-130 manuals, when that variant is retired... updating them with current data, such as newer inspections, and make them available to our customers. We're the only one in the USAF authorized to doing that."

Q: How is TCG funded and what do member countries receive?

A: "Each member pays into a pro-rata system that is based on the number of aircraft we support. They pay so much per aircraft for our services. That covers our salaries, a 24/7 online support website, and In Country Reviews (ICRs). Our ICRs allow us to bring a team into a country once a year to sit down and talk with customers about any questions they may have."

Q: What are the challenges for the TCG in supporting the international C-130 fleet? And how have those been addressed?

A: "Our partners have old and new technology" he answers. "We're actually supporting C-130Bs, some of the original C-130s produced, up through C-130Js, the newest. We have to be flexible, open to new ideas and thinking."

Mackowski mentions a particular situation where one of the Partner Nations flying a U.S. Navy C-130 variant posed a unique question. They came to the TCG, wanting to know if it was possible—and safe—to take a flap from one C-130 version and put it on another for a mission scheduled to fly that week.

"Our engineering staff had to find out whether you could take a flap off an original B model and put it on this Navy plane, and then, most importantly, figure out if it was safe. Man, they busted their tails, staying after hours, but they got an answer. That allowed the country to fly that aircraft and support that mission."

The TCG also performs another crucial task in supporting the international fleets. "We take over maintaining some of the older U.S. Air Force C-130 manuals, when that variant is retired... updating them with current data, such as newer inspections, and make them available to our customers. We're the only one in the USAF authorized to doing that."

Q: What changes have there been in sustainment over the years? And what do you see happening in the future?

A: "Advanced automation. What used to be done manually on these legacy aircraft is now automated," he immediately responds.

"There's also rapid advancement of projects. Now, they're taking less time to get out the door and out to the field."

He also points out that can lead to issues. For instance, if training is neglected, technical orders not updated, or fundamental issues not addressed, this can pose problems. Of greatest importance, he notes, "Safety, naturally, is paramount when you're flying these older aircraft."

Q: How do you ensure older aircraft stay safe while incorporating new capabilities?

A: "We spend a lot of time with the customers," he says, mentioning that this process entails engineering and logistics aspects that involve analyzing how changes impact various Hercules versions.

He also notes that this support can be difficult for a far more basic reason: a lack of replacement parts for these legacy airframes. "Manufacturers don't make certain C-130 parts any more. Some parts have to be manufactured from the original drawings."

One solution is another significant application of new technology. As Mackowski notes, "We've actually used 3D printing on some parts that weren't flight critical."

Q: What did you learn in previous jobs that applies to your work with the TCG?

A: Recalling an early experience in foreign military sales, Mackowski highlights a primary requirement in dealing with international partners: "We need to understand each culture, and what it takes to get things done, then work together to face these challenges head on."

"We currently support thirty-eight Partner Nations around the world, so you can understand the amount of cultural differences we work with."

So how do they so effectively deal with this? "Having relationships with folks, that bridges a lot of gaps."

Q: Finally, what lessons have you learned from your years of active duty, as a contractor, in civil service, and now as TCG Chief?

A: "What is the most important thing I learned? Don't give up. Anything that is worth doing is worth doing for the people we support: the warfighters."

He adds, "Everyone on your team has good ideas. Some are good, some are not so good, and some you might just not understand. I may not like what somebody says sometimes, and I may disagree with it, but that doesn't mean they may not have a good point."

"Because they disagree with me, they give me a different perspective or viewpoint I hadn't thought of." His takeaway is, "Take points from all your people, and just press on."

All of this put together—insightful leadership, experience, knowledge, cooperation, and the willingness to keep trying, ever doing their best, until the job is done—is why the TCG is invaluable in keeping so many Hercules mission ready and flying worldwide.