

# The Program Guide



C-130

TECHNICAL COORDINATION GROUP  
WORLDWIDE REVIEW



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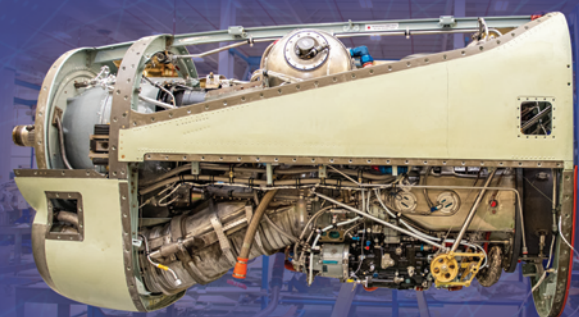
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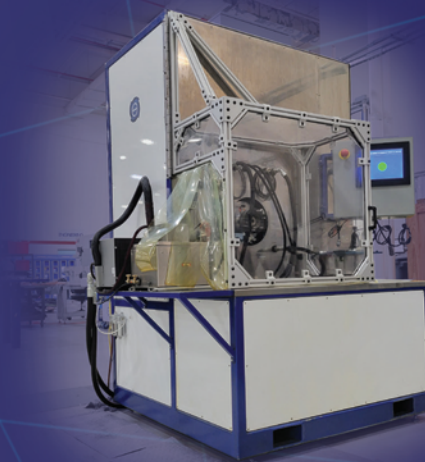
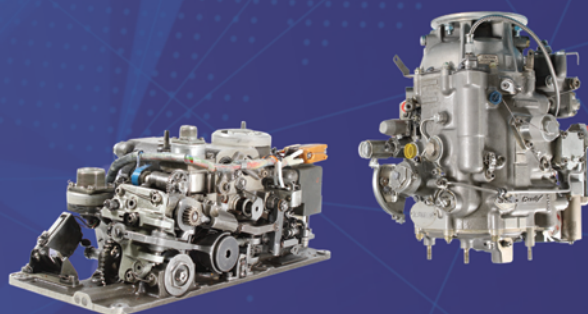
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**C-130 Technical Coordination Group (TCG)**

**World Wide Review (WWR)**

OCTOBER 28-NOVEMBER 1, 2024

October 28, 2024



I'd like to personally welcome each of you to the 34th annual C-130 TCG WWR. It's an exciting time for our TCG as we continue to grow, remaining always adaptable, motivated, and responsive. The TCG organization is confronting a time of many changes and we're meeting these changes during a time of larger nation-wide and global change. As we continue to collaborate, we will strive to meet challenges together and bring inspiration, ensuring our TCG remains at the cutting edge.

Our agenda over the next week is filled with topics our team has outlined as of significant interest to you as a customer. I highly encourage your maximum attendance

and questions at the briefings. Copies of these presentations are downloadable from the new C-130 TCG WWR app. We welcome your comments regarding the presentations; your valuable feedback helps us identify and address current challenges and future requirements associated with maintaining and flying our Herc's. Likewise, your feedback, positive or negative, concerning the briefings, personnel, facilities, and conference operations in general, will assist in our efforts to elevate the quality of this annual gathering.

We're transforming the way we operate to continuously improve our ability to collaborate, innovate, and enrich our C-130 worldwide community. Our teams have continued to meet the challenges of obsolete, aging aircraft and material deficiencies, despite setbacks. We should all be very proud of where we are today and excited about where we are heading in the future.

In closing, I'd like to thank each one of you for attending the C-130 TCG WWR and bringing your expertise together. You, as essential leaders, have the vision, the knowledge, the wherewithal, and the experience to help us pave our way into the future. You are truly our greatest asset today and tomorrow, and we could not accomplish what we do without your support and leadership. Throughout this conference, I ask you to stay engaged, keep us proactive, and help us shape the future of C-130 TCG. My thanks goes out to all of you.

**Kristopher K. Riddle**

Chief, C-130 TCG



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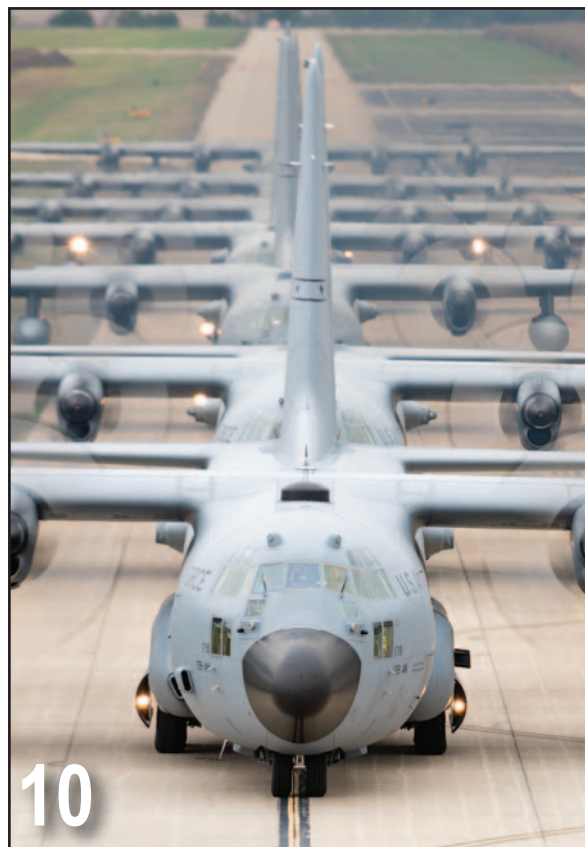


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# HERCULES EMBRACE THE FUTURE

## Advanced Upgrades Seek to Enable Single-Pilot Flight and More

By Valius Venckūnas

**I**n one form or another, the C-130 has been flying for 7 decades now. How does an aircraft achieve such a long service life? Good design, durability, versatility, and a slew of other positive traits surely help. But there is one feature that is arguably more important than the others: upgradeability.

Improvements to the C-130's airframe, engines, avionics, and mission systems have been crucial to its success. But more steps need to be taken for the Hercules's next leap into entirely new technological fields. Elsewhere, artificial intelligence (AI) is revolutionizing data processing and offering real-time decision support. Virtual reality is transforming training and planning. And autonomous flight is increasingly becoming a part of both high-risk missions and mundane operations.

How can these technologies be leveraged for training, operation, and maintenance of these big transports, ensuring modern-day Hercules are more effective than ever before?

### EXTENDED REALITY TRAINING

In aviation, training has seen its fair share of quantum leaps enabled by outstanding technological breakthroughs. Training also is an area of some of the most promising projects pertaining to the C-130,

including those aimed at solving an acute problem: How to provide the best training possible without compromising mission time?

"We request an aircraft to be down 3 days a week in order to train our students," Master Sergeant Gary Armstrong, 19th MXG Maintenance Training Management Section Chief, says. "When we do that, we are taking aircraft away from the mission."

One solution is to substitute an active-mission airframe with a training model. If that model takes on a digital form that can replicate real maintenance or operational challenges, a whole world of possibilities opens up—a virtual world.

Most of the industry today refers to this kind of technology as extended reality, or XR. Effectively, it melds old-school virtual reality (VR), which fully immerses a person in a digital or virtual world, with augmented reality (AR), which overlays digital elements onto an augmented, real-world scenario.

In 2020, the U.S. Air Force Air Mobility Command (AFMC) and Air Education and Training Command (AMC) began working on the first XR platform designed to teach airmen to maintain the C-130. Since then, such training solutions have evolved into an entire market, where companies such as Inscape, Simgon, and Vertex



Extended reality (XR) training, employed by the U.S. Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC), includes work in a virtual hangar, where 3D-modeled schematics are overlaid on an image of an aircraft. Here the technology is tested by Technical Sergeant Daniel Gonzalez, an AC-130 Special Missions Aviator Training Manager. (U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sergeant Caleb Pavao.)



Shown is a demonstration of the capabilities of extended reality (XR) training to Lieutenant General Tony Baumenfeind, Commander, U.S. Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC). Such training enables easy debriefing and an overview of results, paving the way for greater comprehension and mastery of the chosen subject. (U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sergeant Caleb Pavao.)

Solutions offer tools and programs that leverage the benefits XR provides. While this technology has not yet become widespread and continues to expand in applications, there are strong indications that sooner or later it will become the prevalent method of training, with significant positive consequences.

According to Mike Peeler, Director of Communications at Mass Virtual—a company that created the first virtual C-130 training environment for the U.S. Air Force—the changes immersive training with XR brings with it may be as significant in impact as that of the Industrial Revolution. This is because the benefits of XR training, at least according to Peeler and many of his colleagues, go far beyond just avoiding taking an aircraft away from the mission. XR training programs can be customized to the level of each individual user, with programs designed to address an endless array of training tasks, distributed and implemented with ease, and result in a level of highly specialized instruction and engagement that old-school training programs cannot compete with.

### CO-PILOT IN A BOX

Early generations of the C-130 required crews of up to six, including an engineer, a navigator, two loadmasters and two pilots. These days, it is not uncommon for modern C-130s to fly with just three crew members onboard, as the navigator's and engineer's



An air commando tries on a virtual reality (VR) headset during an extended reality (XR) training demonstration at the 2023 Weapons and Tactics Conference held in August 2023. (U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sergeant Caleb Pavao.)

positions have been replaced by upgraded systems, and a loadmaster's tasks can be streamlined. But is further reduction of the number of necessary crew members possible? It would seem so.

To date, the closest the U.S. Air Force came to testing this was in a series of training exercises performed at the 19th Airlift Wing. In early 2023, pilots of 41st and 61st Airlift Squadrons conducted simulated flights with only one pilot in the cockpit. The second seat was not empty—it was occupied by a loadmaster, ready to follow the pilot's instructions and help fly the aircraft. The goal of this experiment was not to minimize crew size but rather to prepare pilots and loadmasters for emergency situations where one of the two pilots cannot fly. At the same time, transport crew shortages are a real problem, one that advanced technology may help address.

A short while before the 19th Airlift Wing began planning their experiments with loadmasters in co-pilots' seats, Merlin Labs, a company from Boston, announced a partnership with the U.S. Air Force, seeking automated solutions for actual, no-compromise, single-pilot flights of the C-130. Merlin specializes in autonomous flight systems, equipping aircraft with the hardware and software needed to offload some or all of a pilot's duties to artificial intelligence.

For smaller aircraft, like the Cessna 208



In this extended reality (XR) training at Little Rock Air Force Base in 2019, Staff Sergeant Kenneth Renfrow, Maintenance Qualifications Training Instructor, 19th Maintenance Group, uses a virtual reality headset to experience an environment provided by a Mass Virtual training tool. (U.S. Air Force photo by Airman 1st Class Aaron Irvin.)



Extended reality (XR) training tools include detailed virtual recreations of real-world environments. Here, Jesse Matos, a Mass Virtual team member, and Thomas Torbert, Air Mobility Command Logistic Management Specialist, scan a flight deck of C-130J Super Hercules to create an environment for training of 19th Air Wing maintainers at Little Rock Air Force Base, Arkansas, in 2019. (Image courtesy of the U.S. Air Force.)





In 2023, a 61st Airlift Squadron loadmaster gains familiarization with the C-130J flight control panels during simulator training at Little Rock Air Force Base, Arkansas (U.S. Air Force photo by Airman 1st Class Maria Umanzor Guzman.)



Airmen shown loading weather equipment into Xwing's autonomous Cessna 208B Grand Caravan during AGILE FLAG 24-1, held in January at McClellan Airfield in Sacramento, California. Smaller aircraft like this help ensure autonomous flight technology is developed and tested before being used on larger platforms like the C-130. (U.S. Air Force photo by Matthew Clouse.)



According to Merlin Labs, the same technology used to autonomously fly smaller aircraft, such as the Cessna 208 Caravan, can perform the role of a co-pilot on big transports like the C-130. (Photo courtesy of Merlin Labs.)



Shown is a warehouse with over 44.5 million C-130 Hercules aircraft parts at Peterson Air Force Base, Colorado, in 2016. Predictive maintenance can help ensure these parts go where they are most needed, even before the need becomes pressing. (U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sergeant Amber Grimm.)



A crew of two, a pilot and a loadmaster, at the controls of a simulated C-130J of the 61st Airlift Squadron in 2023, establishing readiness in case of an emergency reduction in crew members. (U.S. Air Force photo by Airman 1st Class Maria Umanzor Guzman.)



Maxime Gariel (left) Xwing co-founder and chief technology officer, briefs airmen about their autonomous flight capabilities in the Xwing ground control station during the AGILE FLAG 24-1 exercise at McClellan Airfield in Sacramento, California, in January. (U.S. Air Force photo by Matthew Clouse.)



Reserve Citizen Airmen with the 302nd Maintenance Group examine a C-130 Hercules aircraft during an isochronal inspection at Peterson Air Force Base, Colorado, in summer 2019. Maintenance, repair, and overhaul technicians are among the main beneficiaries of the proliferation of predictive maintenance systems. (U.S. Air Force photo by Technical Sergeant Frank Casciotta.)

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Caravan that the company tests its technologies on, such a system enables fully autonomous flight, with pilots acting as overseers for some or all of the mission, rather than manually controlling the aircraft throughout. On large planes like the Hercules, the idea is that only one of the pilots would be replaced, facilitating single-pilot operations.

In June 2024, the U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) awarded Merlin the \$105 million contract to develop this concept for an automated co-pilot specifically for the Super Hercules. The technology for enabling single-pilot operations was earmarked for testing by Special Operations Forces on a small scale at first, with an eye toward scaling deployment as soon as the technology matures.

Merlin is not the only company to envision the reduction of C-130 crews. In early 2023, Reliable Robotics, a California-based company, began working on a study exploring the feasibility of automating flight of the U.S. Air Force's multi-engine transport aircraft. Early this year, Air Force went one step further, when exercise AGILE FLAG 24-1 saw the first deployment of an autonomous cargo aircraft, operated by Xwing. The company's Cessna 208B flew over 2,800 autonomous flight miles during the exercise.

This was followed by a demonstration of Reliable Robotics's remote-control station, designed to operate its own Cessna. "This successful demo underscored two important mission enablers—the ability to deploy Reliable's control station wherever the Air Force needs, and [to] convert existing aircraft using our aircraft-agnostic autonomous flight system," David O'Brien, Senior Vice President of Government Solutions at Reliable Robotics, explained following the exercise.

#### AI INFORMING MRO

There is no shortage of ventures exploring putting an AI-driven system into the co-pilot's seat of transports. However, the Hercules's interaction with autonomous flight does not end there. Arguably, even more attention-grabbing developments have been the C-130's becoming a mothership for different AI-controlled unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs). Whether it is launching and retrieving Dynetics X-61 Gremlins or deploying the General Atomics Mojave, the Hercules has been at the forefront of such autonomous flight experiments. In the meantime, AI and C-130's operations already have become intertwined in directing and optimizing the results of maintenance, repair, and overhaul (MRO) decisions and efforts.

The U.S. Air Force expanded its Condition-Based Maintenance Plus (CBM+) program to the service's C-130Hs and J models in 2020, less than a year after this capability was first launched on other aircraft. So, maintainers of those Hercules and Super Hercules were among the first to experience the advantages of such automated predictive maintenance systems.

The concept involves feeding aircraft usage and maintenance data to AI, which then generates predictive maintenance recommendations and alerts. By mid-2023, the CBM+ program had evolved into PANDA, the Predictive Analytics and Decision Assistant used across the U.S. Air Force.

To supplement PANDA, Lockheed Martin developed HercFusion, a predictive maintenance tool customized for the C-130. It is estimated that application of this program alone has helped U.S. Air Force maintainers improve their fleet's mission capability rate by at least 3 percent.

According to Mike Isbill, Lockheed Martin Technical Fellow in Digital Sustainment Analytics, "The less time the aircraft is down having to do maintenance—especially if it's troubleshooting what you really don't need to do because our AI can tell you don't need to do it—is a huge benefit."





**BRIGADIER GENERAL JON EBERLAN**  
COMMANDER  
WARNER ROBINS AIR LOGISTICS COMPLEX (WR-ALC) IN GEORGIA

(Image courtesy of the U.S. Air Force.)

# MOVERS & SHAKERS

EXCEPTIONAL PEOPLE HELPING TO SHAPE THE FUTURE

SPOTLIGHT ON

## BRIGADIER GENERAL JON EBERLAN

COMMANDER  
OF THE WARNER ROBINS AIR LOGISTICS COMPLEX (WR-ALC) IN GEORGIA

### SUPPORTING MISSION SUCCESS

Brigadier General Jon Eberlan talks about his roots in East Texas and the importance of a diverse team—whether driving for a touchdown or targeting mission success.

By Jeff Blundell

**B**rigadier General Jon Eberlan serves as Commander of the Warner Robins Air Logistics Complex (WR-ALC) in Georgia. Personnel under his command service, upgrade, and maintain all variants of the C-130, C-5, C-17, and F-15. They also maintain Special Operations Forces aircraft. Collectively, their multi-layered responsibilities come down to ensuring an aircraft's engines and airframe, as well as avionics, electronic warfare equipment, and mission-critical software, are all ready to fly when needed.

Eberlan emphasized the importance of effective planning to mission success. "Effective maintenance planning and execution are two essential ingredients for mission success," he says. "Our job is to provide our operators with a mission-capable aircraft, so they can execute the mission. I think we often

#### MAJOR AWARDS AND DECORATIONS

- Legion of Merit with oak leaf cluster
- Defense Meritorious Service Medal
- Meritorious Service Medal with five oak leaf clusters
- Joint Service Commendation Medal
- Air and Space Commendation Medal with three oak leaf clusters
- Air and Space Achievement Medal with two oak leaf clusters

**"Effective maintenance planning and execution are two essential ingredients for mission success..."**





Col. Jon A. Eberlan, 75th Air Base Wing commander, gives his first salute to airmen in the wing during a change of command ceremony April 13, 2018, at Hill Air Force Base, Utah. (U.S. Air Force photo by R. Nial Bradshaw.)

focus on the mission outcome without completely appreciating the planning and execution that it took to enable success. I would contend that effective aircraft maintenance planning and execution contribute to mission success similar to the way an offensive line enables a skilled position player on a football team to score a touchdown.”

This is an appropriate metaphor coming from a man who grew up as a multi-sport athlete in rural East Texas. Eberlan played football in high school, along with basketball and baseball. His dad was a teacher and a coach. And that is probably the path he would have taken, if not for the urging of a cousin.

“He came home for the holidays with a lot of cool stories from his job as a Tactical Air Control Party (TACP) and talked about the benefits associated with military service,” recalls Eberlan. “Shortly thereafter, I went to see a recruiter in Lufkin, Texas, took the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery, and enlisted in the U.S. Air Force as an Electronic Warfare Systems Specialist in 1990.”

During his first enlistment, he became passionate about aircraft maintenance and dedicated himself to a life of service. At the urging of some of his supervisors, he went back to school, earned his bachelor’s degree, and became a commissioned officer. His impressively successful career has since taken him all over the world and now finds him leading a dedicated team of 6,500 at the WR-ALC.

Brigadier General Eberlan sat down with the writers of this special *Program Guide* to talk about team building, effective leadership, and whether he has an all-time favorite aircraft.



Eberlan enlisted in the U.S. Air Force in 1990. He has commanded at the squadron, group, and wing levels and has served in key major command, air staff, and joint duty positions. (Image courtesy of the U.S. Air Force.)

**Program Guide:** As a leader, how has your approach to team building changed over the decades?

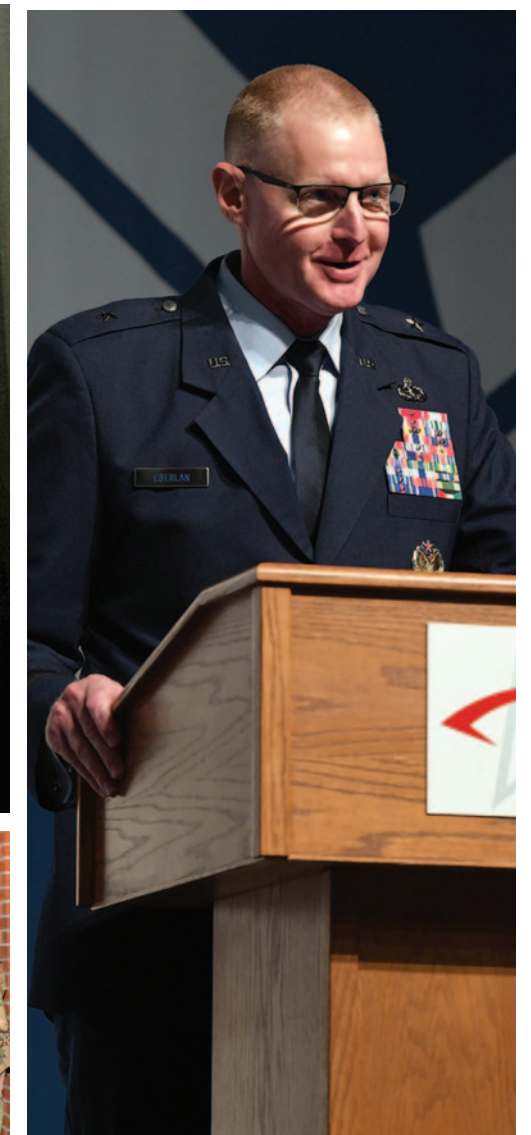
**Brigadier General Jon Eberlan:** I feel like the foundational qualities for high-performing teams haven’t necessarily changed that much over the years. Trust, respect, accountability, transparency, resiliency, collaboration, and shared vision have always been and remain important. What I have seen change is a better appreciation for and understanding of the power of diversity in team composition.

We all have varied experiences, strengths, weaknesses, biases, blind spots, and ways of solving problems. When you recognize, understand, respect, and embrace the fundamental differences between one another, you get higher quality decisions, more complete solutions to problems, and increased performance. Team diversity also helps curb groupthink. I would encourage any leader to seek out people with different backgrounds and experiences.

Robins Air Force Base and Georgia College and State University leadership came together to sign an educational partnership agreement at the Warner Robins Air Logistics Complex Headquarters at Robins Air Force Base, Georgia, Jan. 18, 2023. The joint venture will provide educational opportunities and mentorship to GC&SU students in the fields of engineering, technology, logistics and business. (U.S. Air Force photo by Kisha Foster Johnson.)



Brigadier General Jon A. Eberlan leads a team of more than 6,500 people. He says that recognizing, understanding, respecting, and embracing diversity leads to higher quality decisions. (Image courtesy of the U.S. Air Force.)



Brigadier General Jon A. Eberlan, seen here giving remarks at the change of command ceremony, assumed command of the Warner Robins Air Logistics Complex in June 2022. (Photo by Tommie Horton, courtesy of the U.S. Air Force.)







Colonel Jon Eberlan, 75th Air Base Wing commander, spars for ball possession with a player from the Ogden Wheelin' Wildcats during a wheelchair basketball game Oct. 9, 2019 at Hill Air Force Base, Utah. Leaders from Hill's units faced off against the Wheelin' Wildcats, a semi-professional wheelchair basketball team, to celebrate National Disability Employment Awareness Month. (U.S. Air Force photo by Cynthia Griggs.)

**PG:** *Your portfolio covers the physical maintenance of legacy aircraft such as the C-130, but also “sustainment of mission-critical software, test program sets, and automated test equipment.” How do you approach those seemingly different realms of responsibility?*  
**Brigadier General Jon Eberlan:** At a basic level, what you’re producing in each mission area is different, but all are complementary. Each has its own distinct process that, when followed correctly, will deliver the results you’re looking for.

In order to maximize effectiveness and resource utilization, you really have to understand the linkages between the mission areas and stakeholder equities across the enterprise, ensuring that everyone has an understanding of how everything fits together, not just each individual mission area. Once you have shared enterprise understanding, you can concentrate on executing the particular processes, acknowledging that when things don’t go according to plan or process, you’re going to have to make adjustments driven by data.

**PG:** *Costs associated with military planes and programs is a constant focus. What do you do to help control costs and stay within budget?*  
**Brigadier General Jon Eberlan:** Our depots are primarily funded through the Air Force Working Capital Fund. And I think for us the biggest measuring stick with respect to costs is our hourly depot rates, which take into account material, labor, and support.

We don’t have as much control over material costs, but we can control how much cost is applied to labor through efficiency. If you are able to increase speed, reduce waste, and become more efficient in repairs, you spend less on labor than planned and are in a better position to hold hourly rates steady or reduce them, which ultimately means more readiness at a reduced cost to the warfighter.

**PG:** *You have had an incredible career and achieved so much. Has anything in particular eluded you?*  
**Brigadier General Jon Eberlan:** The U.S. Air Force has blessed me beyond



Eberlan posing with one of the Macon players. The Brigadier General played baseball, basketball, and football during his high school days. (Image courtesy of the U.S. Air Force.)

measure and afforded me with unimagined opportunities. I feel extremely fortunate to have had the opportunity to get to know, serve with, and lead some amazing men and women. Professionally, there’s nothing that I feel like I’ve missed out on. And I look forward to continuing to serve and improve myself.

However, I do wish that I had taken more time earlier in my career to do more with my family. You can’t get some of those opportunities back when your kids grow up. I’m fortunate to have had a supportive family throughout my years of service. In that, we’re not unique. I think that there are many other service members who would say that the support and sacrifice of their respective families was a major factor in their successful service to our nation.

**PG:** *In your current role, how much attention do you pay to current events such as the conflicts in Ukraine and the Middle East?*  
**Brigadier General Jon Eberlan:** To be an effective leader, you always want to maximize your opportunities for success, and you cannot do that without understanding the different facets of the operating environment. You have to pay close attention to current events, otherwise, you run the risk of developing ineffective strategies and wasting resources.



A lifelong sports fan and athlete, Eberlan was thrilled to have the opportunity to throw the first pitch at a Macon Bacon baseball game. (Image courtesy of the U.S. Air Force.)

**PG:** *The C-130 does so many things and has lasted so long. Would you call it the single greatest aircraft ever built?*  
**Brigadier General Jon Eberlan:** I don’t know about the greatest, but there is certainly a strong argument with respect to the C-130 being the most versatile. When you think about the wide range of missions that the C-130 performs, it is next to impossible to find another joint force aircraft with comparable versatility.

**PG:** *On a personal level, do you have a favourite plane?*  
**Brigadier General Jon Eberlan:** Over the years, between field and depot aircraft maintenance assignments, I’ve been around numerous aircraft weapon systems. Frankly, I appreciate each one for what it is able to do and its contribution to the overall U.S. Air Force mission. So, I’d have to say, when it comes to support and sustainment, love the one you’re with.■

**“I feel extremely fortunate to have had the opportunity to get to know, serve with, and lead some amazing men and women.”**



# FRANCE AND ITS AIR FORCE

By Tracy Martin

The French Republic is located in Western Europe and claims overseas such territories as Saint Pierre and Miquelon in the North Atlantic, French Guiana in South America, the French West Indies, and multiple islands in Oceania and the Indian Ocean. Because of its far-reaching territories, France has one of the largest, discontinuous, exclusive economic zones in the world.

Long ruled by a series of kings, France was among the leading European nations by the 17th century. King Louis XVI provided key support to American in its war with Great Britain for independence, and his policies and expenditures ultimately set France on the path leading to the French Revolution in 1789. The Declaration of the Rights of Man of that year have influenced human civil rights around the world.

In the early 19th century, Napoleon became emperor and conquered a majority of continental Europe. In 1814, Napoleon was forced to abdicate his throne after allied Austrian, Prussian, and Russian forces vanquished his army and occupied Paris. Louis XVIII was crowned king of France and stayed in power until the 1830s. In subsequent decades, France lost its hold on much of the territory it had previously claimed.

In the first half of the 20th century,

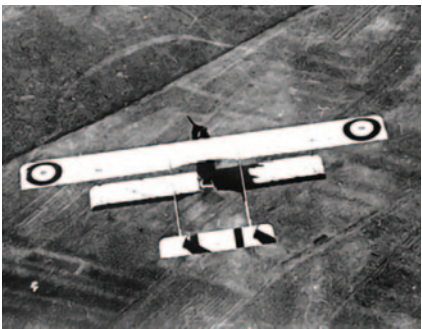


Bastille Day parade in Paris, July 14, 2017, smoke trails billow overhead from a flyover conducted by French Alpha jets. (U.S. Navy photo by Chief Petty Officer Michael McNabb.)

Dewoitine D.510 monoplane fighters from the mid-1930s. (Image courtesy of Sharealike 3.0 Unported.)



A North American T-28 Trojan, used against guerrillas during the Algerian War. (Image courtesy of GNU Free Documentation License.)



French aircraft during World War I, flying over German, held territory in 1915. (Public domain.)

France was invaded by Germany in 1914 at the start of World War I and again in 1940 at the outset of World War II. Because of cultural ties with Great Britain, and a long-standing alliance with America, the nation was defended by both Allies during these wars.

Today, France has a mixed market economy with heavy government involvement. The third-largest manufacturing country in Europe behind Germany and Italy, it ranks as eighth in the world by share of global manufacturing output.

## FRANCE FAST FACTS

Capital: .....Paris  
Land area: ..... 248,573 square miles  
Population: .....68,373,433 (2024)  
Urban population: .....  
.....66,142,961 (as of 2024)  
Official Language: .....French  
Literacy rate: .....99.00%  
Religion: .Christianity 38%, Islam 10%,  
.....Buddhism .5%, Judaism .5%,  
.....other/no religion 51%  
Currency: .....Euro  
GDP: .....\$3.988 U.S. billion  
.....(ranking 11 worldwide)  
Government: .....  
...Unitary semi-presidential republic  
Minister of Defense: Sebastien Lecornu  
Military Branches: ...Army, Navy, Air  
...and Space Force, and Gendarmerie  
Military Service: ...Men and women  
.....ages 15 to 17 (voluntary)  
Active military personnel: ...270,000  
Reserve military personnel: ...63,700

The country also has the eighth largest national defense budget and the second largest in the European Union (EU), as well as the largest military by size in the EU. At the forefront of EU development, it also has participated in conflicts championed by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

### FRENCH AIR AND SPACE FORCE

The Armée de L’Air became one of the first professional air forces in the world, when it was founded in 1909. The French took active interest in developing their air force and trained the first fighter pilots of World War I. Among the first countries to build aircraft, France had 148 planes, in twenty-four squadrons, supporting ground forces at the start of the war, and it is credited with introducing fighter aircraft mounted with automatic guns.

In World War II, the Battle of France (1940) was waged by the Vichy French Air Force. As a result of German occupation over the next 2 years, both the French Air Force and the nation’s aircraft industry were all but eliminated.

After the war, the French aircraft industry was rebuilt, and the reinvigorated French Air Force was active in French Indochina (Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos) from 1945 to 1954. The Air Force also played significant roles in other international and regional conflicts over the years. It was heavily involved in Algeria from 1953 until 1962, marking a period of intense military engagement. During that time, France also played a crucial role in the Suez Crisis.

From 1962 on, military defense in France focused on nuclear deterrence, including creating the Strategic Air Forces Command and the Air Command of Aerial Defense Forces. By 1985, two more commands were added, the Tactical Air Forces Command and the Military Air Transport Command.

In 2009, France rejoined the NATO Military Command Structure, having been absent since 1966. In 2019, to address aerospace expansion, the nation folded the French Air Force into the new French Air and Space Force.

### FRENCH AIRCRAFT INDUSTRY

France has a long history of aircraft innovation and manufacturing, beginning in 1905 with the Blériot-Voisin Company. The Henri Farman III debuted in 1909 as





Following is a list of reported French Air and Space Force aircraft in service at the time of this writing. These numbers fluctuate and may not include aircraft flown by some government entities.

<b>Combat Aircraft</b>	
Dassault Mirage 2000D and 5F	101
Dassault Rafale	93
<b>Airborne Warning and Control System (AWACS)</b>	
Boeing E-3 Sentry	4
<b>Reconnaissance</b>	
Beechcraft Super King Air	2
Dassault Falcon 8X	3 on order
<b>Tanker</b>	
Airbus A220 MRTT	10
Boeing KC-135 Stratotander	5
Lockheed Martin KC-130J	2
<b>Transport (Cargo &amp; Personnel)</b>	
Airbus A330-200	5
Airbus A400M Atlas	20
CASA CN235	27
DHC-6 Twin Otter	5
Lockheed Martin C-130 Hercules	14
Lockheed Martin C-130J Super Hercules 2	
Socata TBM 700	15
<b>Helicopters</b>	
Aérospatiale SA330 Puma	21
Airbus H160M Guepard	40 on order
Airbus H215 Super Puma	3
Airbus H225M Caracal	13
Eurocopter AS555 Fennec	40
<b>Trainers</b>	
Airbus H225M	1
Alpha Jet	27
Beechcraft Super King Air 350	1
Cirrus SR20	16
Cirrus SR22	9
Dassault Mirage 2000	6
Embraer EMB 121 Xingu	17
Grob 120A-F	18
Pilatus PC-21	26
<b>UAVs</b>	
General Atomics MQ-9 Reaper	16



A French Rafale fighter jet takes off from the runway during Arctic Defender 24 at Eielson Air Force Base, Alaska, July 8, 2024. International allies including France, Spain, and Germany participate in multilateral combat training such as AD24 to enhance interoperability, build trust, and evolve airpower. (U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Kelsea Caballero.)

the first aircraft to use ailerons, and it served as the most widely flown fighter plane in World War I.

Dassault Aviation was formed in France in 1929, renamed Avions Marcel Dassault in 1947, and again to Dassault Aviation in 1990. In 1958, its Mirage III became the first Western European combat aircraft to exceed Mach 2. Released in 2001, the Dassault Rafale is distinguished from other European fighters of its era as being almost entirely built by a single nation, involving major French defense contractors, including Dassault, Safran, and Thales.

Development of the Eurofighter Typhoon was begun in 1983 by a consortium of Airbus, BAE Systems, and Leonardo. A highly agile model, the Typhoon was designed to be an effective dogfighter in combat. It entered operational service in 2003 and is now employed by the air forces of Austria, Germany, Italy, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Spain, and the United Kingdom.

#### FRANCE'S HERCULES

The French air force procured twelve C-130Hs between 1987 and 1990 and supplemented this fleet with two additional used models in 1996. These aircraft primarily transport conventional and special forces, along with freight, and also support parachute drop operations.

Despite the introduction of A400Ms in 2014 and four C-130Js (two which are KC-130Js) in 2018, the C-130Hs are slated to remain operational for several more years. They are scheduled for



A French Air Force C-130H airlifter. (Image courtesy of the French Air Force.)

significant upgrades, particularly in avionics, to ensure compliance with current standards and to adhere to evolving airspace regulations beyond 2025.

The contract to modernize the C-130Hs was awarded to Collins Aerospace's French division, which will oversee project management and industrial organization. Upgrades include Collins Aerospace's Flight2 avionics solution and the dual HGS-4500 Head-Up Guidance (HGS), with the EVS-3000 multispectral enhanced vision system improving pilot situational awareness. An electro-optical infrared camera for asset detection is also integrated into the HGS.

"Modernizing to the Flight2 system provides the French Air Force with the latest generation of avionics and optimized support and maintenance solutions to complete demanding missions all over the world," explains Olivier Pedron, Managing Director, Avionics, for Collins Aerospace in France.

In 2017, as part of continued close cooperation between France and the United States, the French Air Force took delivery of the first of two C-130J Super



The French Air Force's C-130J-30 #5836/61-PO at Lockheed Martin's facility in Marietta, Georgia. (Image courtesy of Lockheed Martin.)

Hercules aircraft and two KC-130J tankers. Boasting an anticipated service life of 40 years, these aircraft will participate in a wide range of missions, including combat search and rescue (CSAR), tactical recovery of aircraft and personnel (TRAP), humanitarian evacuation, power projection, and other logistics operations at home and overseas. The KC-130J also will provide French helicopters with airborne refueling.

In 2021, Lockheed Martin won a \$51 million, cost-plus-fixed-fee contract to support the French Air Force for sustainment of its C-130 fleet, with work done at Bae Aéronautique, France, and Marietta, Georgia. The covered aircraft included seven C-130Hs, seven C-130H-30s, two C-130J stretched-fuselage airlifters, and two KC-130J tankers. And the contract provided for program management, field service representatives, travel and per diem,



A Dassault Mirage 2000 in flight. (Photo SRA Greg L. Davis, courtesy of the U.S. Air Force.)



A French Dassault Mirage IIIC pictured in 1980, armed with a Matra R.530 missile. (Image by Mike Freer, GNU Free Documentation License 1.2.)

data, replenishment of spares, and other key sustainment tasks.

In February 2024, one French Air Force, and three Royal Jordanian Air Force C-130 aircraft performed an airdrop of humanitarian supplies to Gaza. The French transports were carrying 2.2 tons of food packages and hygiene kits. In keeping with the decision made during Jordan's King Abdullah II's meeting in Paris with French President Macron in December 2023, France plans to continue to work with Jordan to strengthen humanitarian support for Gaza.

#### SOURCES:

Helen Chachaty, "France's C-130Hs get a makeover," *Le Journal De L'Aviation*, March 2019. "Collins Aerospace redefines mission capabilities of C-130H through modernization program with the French Air Force," July 2019, Collinsaerospace.com. Murielle DeLaporte, "Thirty Years after Acquiring its Very First C-130-H, France Welcomes the 'J' as a Crucial Gapfiller for Today's Operations, June 2018, operationnels.com.; "France's Armée De L'Air Welcomes First C-130J Super Hercules," January 2018, Lockheed Martin, www.lockheedmartin.com. "Jordan air-drops aid into Gaza with help of French plane, February 2024, France 24.com.; Pierre Tran, "French order of C-130J aircraft signals plan for larger Air Force fleet," January 2018, DefenseNews.com.; Wikipedia, www.wikipedia.com



# THE VERSATILE HERCULES

By Tracy Martin

The Lockheed Martin C-130 Hercules stands as one of the most enduring and successful military aircraft. Its exceptional versatility has led to numerous variants developed throughout its extensive career. Production has surpassed 2,500 units, with a global operator base spanning nations from Afghanistan to Zambia.

The U.S. Air Force remains the largest user, employing the Hercules across airlift squadrons, electronic warfare units, special operations, and many other vital missions. The C-130 also serves other U.S. service branches, including the U.S. Coast Guard, U.S. Navy, Air National Guard units, state-side firefighting units, and more.

### THE NEED FOR AN AIRLIFTER

At the outset of the Korean War, the U.S. Air Force faced a critical gap, the absence of a suitable transport aircraft capable of efficiently airlifting troops and essential cargo over medium distances from short, less-than-ideal airfields. Recognizing this urgent need, the U.S. Air Force Tactical Air Command initiated the development of specifications for such an aircraft in early 1951.

Lockheed Aircraft, which later became Lockheed Martin, won the competition to build the new aerial transport. The company secured a contract to produce two prototypes, leading to the first flight of the YC-130 in 1954. The new model's design, featuring four turboprop engines, demonstrated remarkable capabilities by taking off from Lockheed's Burbank, California, airfield in just 800 feet.

Beyond its impressive takeoff performance, the YC-130 exceeded other performance requirements set by the U.S. Air Force. Its innovative back-opening hatch and spacious fuselage facilitated efficient ground loading and unloading of diverse payloads, while also enabling effective aerial deliveries. Its cargo capacity and range further underscored its operational versatility.

The initial production model, the C-130A, rolled out of Lockheed's Marietta, Georgia, facility closely resembling the prototypes. It was initially powered by Allison T56-A-1A turboprop engines and Curtiss-Wright electric-reversible, three-bladed propellers, but later versions adopted a Hamilton-Standard hydraulic system with four blades to address design challenges. This was just the beginning of numerous modifications and advancements spanning more than 6 decades, enhancing the C-130's capabilities as a leading-edge transport. Today, more than 540 of the latest C-130J Super Hercules, with eighteen mission variants, have been delivered to operators in twenty-two countries.

### GLOBAL SUPPORT

Lockheed Martin offers a robust global network of dedicated service centers and collaborates with qualified industry partners to provide comprehensive support to worldwide operators of both legacy and newer models of Hercules aircraft. This includes supplying parts, upgrades, and ensuring extensive service coverage.

Additionally, the C-130 Technical Coordination Group (TCG) plays a pivotal role as a U.S. Air Force aviation support program, serving an international consortium of thirty-eight country partners and providing vital operational and logistical assistance. The group's cooperative efforts consistently and effectively enable and enhance the operational readiness and effectiveness of C-130 fleets across global defense forces.

### 2024 HERCULES HAPPENINGS

In February of this year, California acquired and begin to retrofit seven new C-130H aircraft to expand the state's firefighting fleet, which works to protect people and property from the ever-increasing threat of wildfires. As part of a comprehensive conversion strategy to optimize firefighting efficiency, CAL FIRE has been equipping each of its C-130Hs with a 4,000-gallon fire retardant delivery system. At the time of this writing, the first of these Hercules were expected to begin serving by the fall.

Also in February, Lockheed Martin delivered the first of four C-130J-30 Super Hercules tactical airlifters with the Block 8.1 upgrade, to the Royal Norwegian Air Force, marking the outset of advanced capabilities and increased Super Hercules interoperability in the Nordic region and across Europe. Block 8.1 is now the standard for all new production model Super Hercules, with operators including the U.S. Air Force, U.S. Coast Guard, and U.S. Marine Corps, as well as Australia, France, Germany, and New Zealand.

In addition, Honeywell and ST Engineering Defense Aviation Services (STEDAS) have been selected for a major upgrade of the Tunisian Air Force's two C-130J-30 tactical transport aircraft. This upgrade initiative will include installation of state-of-the-art cockpit and mechanical component enhancements. Central to the upgrade is Honeywell's Cockpit Display System Retrofit (CDSR), a cutting-edge glass cockpit solution designed to significantly enhance avionics capabilities.

In April, the 910th Airlift Wing, based at Youngstown Air Reserve Station, Ohio, received a new large-area, fixed-wing aerial spray unit designed for use on a Hercules. Members of the wing were tasked with testing this spray equipment on the C-130J-30 Super Hercules, which is due to replace their current workhorse, the C-130H. The new spray unit better equips them to spray chemicals that kill disease-carrying insects, prevent weeds from covering unexploded ordnance on testing ranges, or help disperse oil spills.

Also in April, the 317th Airlift Wing, stationed at Dyess Air Force Base, Texas, conducted a C-130J Super Hercules Max Endurance Operation. Utilizing external fuel tanks, the wing successfully completed a 26-hour, 33-minute single-aircraft mission from Dyess Air Force Base to Andersen Air Force Base in Guam. The operation, known as "Hazard Leap," showcased the aircraft's extended range and set a new standard in operational endurance for the Air Mobility Command.

In June, Lockheed Martin achieved a major milestone by delivering the 2,700th Hercules, further expanding the global fleet of this multi-tactical airlifter's size, reach, and capabilities. The landmark KC-130J Super Hercules tanker is currently serving the U.S. Marine Corps Aerial Refueler Transport Squadron 252 stationed at Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point, North Carolina.

As we all know, Lockheed Martin manufactures the Hercules at its facility in Marietta, Georgia. To honor the profound impact of the C-130 both locally and globally, the Georgia General Assembly passed a resolution acclaiming this as the "Year of the Hercules!" as part of the celebration of the 70th anniversary of the C-130's inaugural flight on August 23, 1954. Happy birthday to the Hercules!

Sources: Air & Space Forces Magazine, <https://airandspaceforces.com/>; C-130.net, [www.c-130.net/](http://www.c-130.net/); Lockheed Martin, [www.lockheedmartin.com/](http://www.lockheedmartin.com/); Military Factory, [militaryfactory.com/](http://militaryfactory.com/); Shepard, <https://shepardmedia.com/>; Technical Coordination Group (TCG), <http://c130tcg.com/>; U.S. Air Force, <http://af.mil/>; The Warzone, <http://thedriven.com/>; Wikipedia <https://en.wikipedia.org/>.

### 2024 WORLDWIDE C-130 LIST

The list below estimates military-operated C-130s in service at the time of this writing. Note that these numbers change frequently and may not include operational variants serving in other government and nongovernment fleets.

Country	Air Force	C-130 Aircraft
Algeria	Algerian Air Force	18
Argentina	Argentine Air Force	5
Australia	Royal Australian Air Force	10
Austria	Austrian Air Force	3
Bahrain	Royal Bahraini Air Force	2
Bangladesh	Bangladesh Air Force	7
Bolivia	Bolivian Air Force	4
Botswana	Botswana Defense Force	3
Cameroon	Cameroon Air Force	3
Canada	Royal Canadian Air Force	17
Chad	Chad Air Force	1
Chile	Chilean Air Force	4
Colombia	Colombia Air Force	8
Denmark	Royal Danish Air Force	4
Ecuador	Ecuadorian Air Force	3
Egypt	Egyptian Air Force	21
Ethiopia	Ethiopian Air Force	2
France	French Air Force	14
Gabon	Gabon Air Force	1
Germany	German Air Force	3
Greece	Hellenic Air Force	4
India	Indian Air Force	12
Indonesia	Indonesian Air Force	28
Iran	Islamic Republic of Iran Air Force	28
Iraq	Iraqi Air Force	9
Israel	Israel Air and Space Force	10
Italy	Italian Air Force	8
Japan	Japan Air Self-Defense Force	14
Japan	Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force	6
Jordan	Royal Jordanian Air Force	7
Libya	Libyan Air Force	2
Mexico	Mexican Air Force	3
Morocco	Royal Moroccan Air Force	16
Netherlands	Royal Netherlands Air Force	4
New Zealand	Royal New Zealand Air Force	3
Niger	Niger Armed Forces	3
Nigeria	Nigerian Air Force	3
Norway	Royal Norwegian Air Force	4
Oman	Royal Air Force of Oman	3
Pakistan	Pakistan Air Force	23
Philippines	Philippine Air Force	5
Poland	Polish Air Force	3
Portugal	Portuguese Air Force	4
Qatar	Qatar Emiri Air Force	4
Romania	Romanian Air Force	8
Saudi Arabia	Royal Saudi Air Force	33
Singapore	Republic of Singapore Air Force	5
South Africa	South African Air Force	6
South Korea	South Korean Air Force	16
Sri Lanka	Sri Lanka Air Force	2
Sudan	Sudanese Air Force	1
Sweden	Swedish Air Force	5
Taiwan	Republic of China Air Force	20
Thailand	Royal Thai Air Force	12
Tunisia	Tunisian Air Force	3
Turkey	Turkish Air Force	19
United Arab Emirates	United Arab Emirates Air Force	8
United States	U.S. Air Force	368
United States	U.S. Coast Guard	26
United States	U.S. Navy	28
Venezuela	Venezuelan Military Aviation	3



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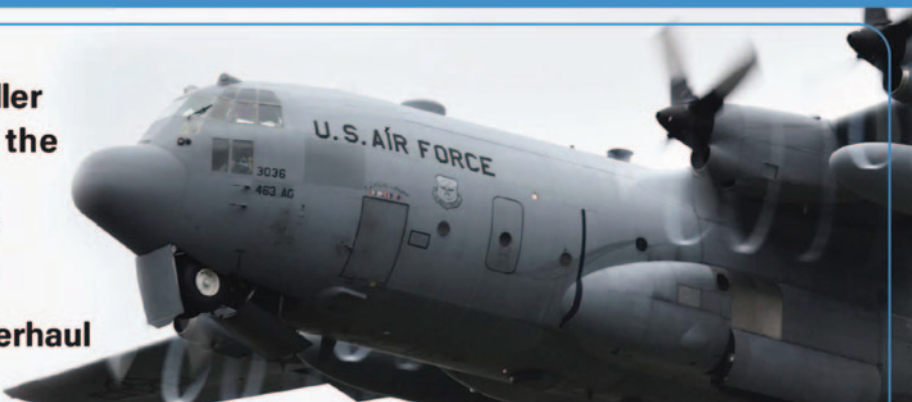




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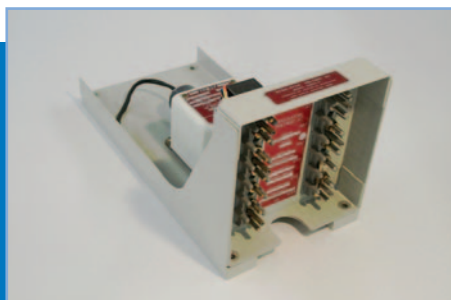


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<p>WR-ALC 480 Page Road Warner Robins, GA 31098 U.S.A.</p>	Booth #: 907	<p><b>XTREME SEMICONDUCTOR</b> 12908 Trails End Road Leander, TX 78641 U.S.A. 512-255-5401 Contact: Marty Lanning mlanning@xtremesemi.com www.xtremesemi.com</p>  <p><i>XTREME Semiconductor, a “solutions” company for obsolete microelectronic products providing cost effect alternatives to redesign and assisting with maintaining production readiness of legacy systems. • MIL-PRF-38535 QML certified manufacturing • Chip Recovery (ChiPR) – a game changer in the fight against obsolescence. • Certified EOL Product - assurance that you receive only authentic OCM material.</i></p>	Booth #: 720
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