

# Chief of Navy Reserve: Top Budget Equipment Priority is C-130J Transport Aircraft



A C-130T Hercules, assigned to the “Condors” of Fleet Logistics Support Squadron (VR) 64, recovers at Naval Air Facility Misawa, Japan. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Benjamin Ringers*

WASHINGTON – The admiral in charge of the Navy’s reserve force told Congress his top budget equipment priority is to acquire C-130J Super Hercules transport aircraft to recapitalize the legacy C-130T fleet.

Testifying before the Senate Appropriations Committee’s Defense subcommittee, Vice Adm. John B. Mustin, chief of Navy Reserve, said the C-130J is necessary to replace the C-130Ts and KC-130Ts – with an average age of more than 30 years – serving in five of the Navy Reserve’s fleet logistics support squadrons.

“Procurement of the more capable C-130J aircraft variant to replace the three-decade-old C-130 airframes is the Reserve’s number one equipment priority,” Mustin said. “Last year, Navy Reserve fleet logistics squadrons flew 26,000 hours and moved 24 million pounds of cargo at a cost avoidance of a billion dollars. However, the current C-130 fleet is challenged to meet sustained fleet logistics requirements. Modern KC-130Js will realize an additional \$200 million in annual transportation cost savings.

The five Navy Air Reserve fleet logistics squadrons operate 19 C-130Ts and 11 KC-130Ts. Five other KC-130Ts are operated by the two Navy test wings to support test and evaluation activities. The KC-130Ts were transferred from the Marine Corps Reserve when its two reserve Marine aerial

refueler/transport squadrons upgraded to the KC-130J, a process completed in April 2021.

“There is no active-duty counterpart to what we do [with the C-130] in the reserve force,” Mustin said. “That’s our intra-theater lift. Certainly, working with the Air National Guard and the Air Force, we’re able get from CONUS into theater whether that’s in the EUCOM area or INDO-PACOM. Once there, however, transition to strike groups and distributed U.S. Navy is impossible without C-130s.

“We’ve got C-40s – smaller capability – but if we want to transfer an F-35 engine, we’ve got to have the C-130s,” he said.

Mustin noted that with the age of the C-130 aircraft “our mission-capable rates are lower, and we struggle to maintain given that we are the only service – active or reserve – to continue to fly what is called the Tango variant [C-130Y/KC-130T]. The incessant demand from not only our fleet commanders but combatant commanders drive my urgency to recapitalize there.”