

# Marine Squadron Circles Globe, Aiding International Mission in Africa



MARINE CORPS AIR STATION MIRAMAR, Calif. – Marines with Marine Aerial Refueler Transport Squadron (VMGR) 352 circumnavigated the globe aboard a KC-130J Super Hercules. The flight began and ended at the squadron's home base of Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, California, and involved 11 strategic stops across Europe, Africa, the Middle East, and the Indo-Pacific regions.

The primary mission of the VMGR-352 "Raiders" was to deliver equipment and Marines to 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing squadrons deployed to Camp Lemonnier, Djibouti, in support of Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa. The 10 pilots and crewmembers that participated enhanced their proficiency and earned critical qualifications through long-distance flights, honing their skills in navigation and logistical operations over extended ranges and varied conditions.

"Our global flight showcased the capability of the KC-130J to extend the operational reach of Third MAW," said Lt. Col. Mark Bock, commanding officer of VMGR-352. "More importantly, the operation demonstrated the readiness and skill of the Marines who fix and fly our aircraft."

Headquartered at Camp Lemonnier in Djibouti, CJTF-HOA is the only enduring U.S. military presence in Africa, tasked to promote regional stability, build partner nation military capacity, and protect U.S. and partner interests. A detachment from VMGR-352 has been deployed to Camp Lemonnier since May 2024 providing air-to-air refueling, combat assault transport,

and air drop capability to CJTF-HOA and other partners in the region.

“CJTF-HOA is made up of various units throughout the joint force,” said U.S. Marine Corps Maj. Nathan Fluker, KC-130J Detachment OIC at Camp Lemonnier. “The capabilities Third MAW brings are unique and play a vital role in crisis response as well as supporting partner nations.”

The mission spotlighted the versatility of the Marine Corps' KC-130J Super Hercules. With a range exceeding 3,500 nautical miles and a 57,500-pound fuel offload capacity using wing and external tanks, “hercs” excel in long-distance logistics and refueling of both fixed-wing and rotary-wing aircraft, on the ground and in the air. The KC-130J's ability to carry up to 92 troops while also serving as a flying gas station and cargo bay made it ideal for delivering Marines and equipment to Camp Lemonnier. Its multi-role nature, capable of tactical transport, air delivery, and air-to-air refueling, underscores its value in supporting diverse missions across the globe.

“The flight in support of deployed units enabled mission success by delivering required bulky supply parts that would have taken weeks to ship by other means,” Fluker said.

The flight path to Djibouti comprised stops in the Indo-Pacific region, among them Wake Island, Guam, Singapore, and Diego Garcia. The return to Miramar included stops in Qatar, Greece, England, and Maine.

These stops were not only logistically necessary, ensuring refueling and resupply needed to traverse vast distances, but also strategically impactful, showcasing the Marine Corps' ability to operate seamlessly across different continents and strengthen relationships with partner nations.

“Disparate stops require us to comply with different national

rules and regulations and build relationships,” Bock said. “This experience and those relationships make our squadron better prepared to operate globally.”

VMGR-352’s successful global flight underscores the vital role of Marine Corps aviation in supporting U.S. operations across multiple theaters. As both a deliberate mission and a training opportunity, the Raiders increased their proficiency and global deployment readiness.

“Marines are ready to win in any clime or place, and the Raiders of VMGR-352 are no exception,” Bock said. “It’s an honor to be leading this team.”