



From Sky to the Sea



IAF C-130Js in formation (photo: Lockheed Martin)

C-130J: A Proven Solution for India

The Indian Air Force may be one of the newest C-130J Super Hercules operators, but lately it's been one of the busiest especially, this past summer! In June 2013, the IAF deployed one of its C-130J-30s of No.77 Squadron ('Veiled Vipers') to evacuate 244 people stranded in Uttarakhand by paralysing floods in the area. Then, in August, an IAF C-130J-30 was in the news again when the crew landed a Super Hercules at Daulat Beg Oldi (DBO) airstrip.

The C-130 Hercules certainly knows austere airstrips. The rugged aerial workhorse was designed to handle landing in the dirt and has done so successfully for almost 60 years. But, the landing at Daulat Beg Oldi took austere to a new level, literally! Daulat Beg Oldi's dirt runway has the distinction of being the world's highest airstrip, located at 16,614 feet in a remote area of the Karakoram mountains. The other aircraft of near-comparable size to land here was an Antonov An-32 in 2008.

This landing marked the first time a C-130 of any type had landed at Daulat Beg Oldi. It's certainly a record for the *Veiled Vipers* crew operating the aircraft and most likely a new mark for the C-130J.

While India's relationship with the C-130J is relatively new, Lockheed Martin's presence in India now spans 20 years, as the world's largest defence contractor opened its New Delhi office in 1993.

With strengthening of the Indo-US relationship over the past decade, Lockheed Martin has increased its presence in India. In 2005, the corporation expanded its office to better support the global security needs of the Indian Ministry of Defence. Today, Lockheed Martin's largest effort in India is the C-130J Super Hercules programme.

It's noteworthy that Lockheed Martin and Tata Advanced Systems have also formed a joint venture company in India, Tata Lockheed Martin Aerostructures, Ltd. (TLMAL), for manufacturing airframe components in support of the worldwide C-130J fleet. Lockheed Martin has partnered with Tata Advanced Systems in February 2011 to form the joint venture that manufactures aerospace components for the C-130J in a factory near Hyderabad. Work at the facility includes producing empennages and center wing box components that are included in all C-130Js. TLMAL was honoured with the 2013 Aerospace & Defense "Best Joint Venture of the Year" award, which was announced at Aero India 2013 in Bangalore. The C-130J's unique combination of flexibility, affordability, availability and reliability has customers (there are 15—including India—operating or on contract to receive C-130Js) seeking additional mission capabilities for the Super Hercules.

Stephanie Stinn and Jeff Rhodes, Lockheed Martin



IAF C-130J head on (photo : Angad Singh)