

# **Duckworth, Durbin, Sorensen Applaud Air Force Selection of Peoria's 182nd Airlift Wing as Preferred Location for New C-130J Aircraft**

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WASHINGTON DC - Combat Veteran and U.S. Senator Tammy Duckworth (D-IL) and U.S. Senate Majority Whip Dick Durbin (D-IL), along with U.S. Representative Eric Sorensen (D-IL-17) today applauded the Air National Guard's decision in selecting Peoria's 182<sup>nd</sup> Airlift Wing as one of four preferred locations for new C-130J aircraft to

replace the aging C-130H models. This announcement ensures the mission of the 182<sup>nd</sup> Airlift Wing is safeguarded, protecting the jobs of 1,200 Airmen and approximately 370 full-time employees. The consistent exceptional performance of the 182<sup>nd</sup> Airlift Wing helped boost its competitiveness and led to its ultimate selection.

“C-130s are so essential to the National Guard in carrying out work both at home and abroad,” Duckworth said. “They bring Americans into combat, provide humanitarian relief around the globe and support domestic responses throughout the nation—and have done so reliably for more than 50 years,” Duckworth said. “I’m proud the 182<sup>nd</sup> Airlift Wing was selected as one of the preferred locations for C-130H recapitalization and can continue its mission, protecting hundreds of good-paying local jobs and maintaining the ability for the Air National Guard to respond to new emergencies and domestic missions in the process.”

“The 182<sup>nd</sup> Airlift Wing has been a steadfast pillar of Illinois’ identity and national defense,” said Durbin. “The decision by the Air Force to select them as a preferred location for a new C-130J aircraft is a victory for the community and the nation, as it ensures the safeguarding of the 182<sup>nd</sup> Airlift Wing’s mission and the protection of the livelihoods of 1,200 Airmen and over 300 full-time employees. This solidifies the legacy of this remarkable unit, allowing them to continue their vital work in supporting our nation’s defense.”

“The dedicated service members and civilian workers at the 182<sup>nd</sup> Airlift Wing have consistently played a key role in strengthening our nation's defense capabilities,” said Sorensen. “I'm proud to see our region's exceptionalism and the exceptionalism of our troops here in Peoria be recognized once again with this decision, which not only guarantees good-paying jobs remain in Central Illinois, but also allows the Airlift Wing to further support our military's readiness and provide assistance for humanitarian and combat missions.”

“We are grateful to our Congressional delegation, especially Senators Tammy Duckworth and Dick Durbin and Congressmen Darin LaHood and Eric Sorensen, who all worked together to ensure that Peoria’s 182<sup>nd</sup> Airlift Wing received the aircraft they need to remain relevant well into the future,” said Air Force Maj. Gen. Rich Neely, the Adjutant General of Illinois and Commander of the Illinois National Guard. “I am most grateful to the Airmen of the 182<sup>nd</sup> Airlift Wing, whose hard work, dedication and innovation helped pave the way for these modern aircraft. They showed that the ‘Peoria way’ is the way to lead the nation.”

Duckworth and Durbin have worked tirelessly to support the 182<sup>nd</sup> Airlift Wing and protect the future of C-130 aircraft. Duckworth, a member of the U.S. Senate Armed

Services Committee, [secured](#) a provision in the Fiscal Year 2022 National Defense Authorization Act to establish a minimum inventory for the Air Force's C-130 fleet, ensuring that the Air Force has sufficient C-130 capacity to carry out critical missions domestically as well as overseas. In the Fiscal Year 2023 Omnibus Appropriations Bill, Durbin, a member of the U.S. Senate Appropriations Committee, helped [secure](#) \$1.7 billion for 16 new C-130J aircraft for the Air National Guard, which Duckworth also supported.

The 182<sup>nd</sup> Airlift Wing has operated a flying mission in Peoria since its founding in 1947. Since September 11, 2001, the 182<sup>nd</sup> Airlift Wing has deployed over 5,000 personnel to more than 29 countries, most recently providing key transport to Afghan refugees during the U.S.'s withdrawal from Afghanistan in 2021. Domestically, the unit helped administer more than 8 million COVID-19 vaccinations at 26 Illinois locations during the global pandemic, ensured cyber security for the 2020 and 2022 elections and deployed to the U.S. Capitol to support the 2021 presidential inauguration.

Despite its commitments at home and abroad, Peoria Airmen sustained the highest C-130 Hercules mission capable rates in the Air Force, besting the Air National Guard and Air Mobility Command during fiscal years 2020 and 2021. Most recently, the unit received the 2023 Major General Stanley F.H. Newman Outstanding Unit Award in which it was recognized as the top Air National Guard unit in the United States Air Force's Air Mobility Command.