

INDIVIDUAL HISTORY

LOCKHEED C-130E/WC-130E 64-0553

RAFM Loan-in L001-0008

1964

Ordered as one of a batch of 46 C-130E-LM Hercules. Built by Lockheed Martin at its Lockheed Marietta Plant.

Constructor's number 4048. Delivered as USAF 64-553.

One of three of this batch (64-552/53/54) later converted to WC-130E weather reconnaissance aircraft.

Served with USAF 53 and 55 Weather Reconnaissance Squadrons (WRS) -see below. The primary mission of the WC-130 was that of tropical storm reconnaissance, along with atmospheric sampling, rain-making, fog-seeding, winter storm reconnaissance, and even the air-drop of Christmas gifts!

See

http://www.thelivingmoon.com/45jack_files/03files/Whiskey_Chalie.htm

Having proven the worth of the C-130 as an atmospheric sampling and reconnaissance platform with earlier A and B--models, the Air Weather Service (AWS) asked for and received six more, in 1965. 61-2360, 61-2365, and 61-2366 were transferred from Tactical Air Command (TAC), and 64-0552, 64-0553, and 64-0554 were brand new. They were modified for weather reconnaissance at Warner-Robins Air Materiel Area (WRAMA)

All six were delivered to AWS in 1965, and transferred to the 54th WRS, Andersen AFB, Guam, that same year.

In 1967 they were sent back to original manufacturers Lockheed-Marietta for the addition of the atmospheric sampling system, and then returned to the 54th WRS where they remained through mid-1972.

For the following fifteen years all of them would transfer 'round and 'round amongst the 53rd, 54th, 55th and 56th Weather Reconnaissance squadrons, wherever the operational demand was greatest.

The aircraft did visit the UK on occasion, being photographed at RAF Mildenhall in Military Airlift Command markings in April 1977 when serving with 53rd WRS.

After the 54th WRS closed in 1987, all six E models were reunited at the 53rd WRS, then at Keesler AFB, Mississippi.

In 1989, all the E-models were modified once again with the Improved Weather Reconnaissance System (IWRS) which had finally reached operational status after three years of testing and evaluation.

At the same time, the atmospheric sampling infrastructure was removed from these aircraft, thus ending forever that capability of the WC-130.

In 1991 the 53rd was deactivated, and all six E models were transferred to the 815th Weather Reconnaissance "Flight" of the 815th TAS, 403rd TAW, an Air Force Reserve unit at Keesler AFB. (For a time the 815th Flight was designated as the 920th Weather Reconnaissance Group.)

64-0553's nose latterly still retained the 403 TAW markings from this time, along with the AMARC code 'CF145')

In 1993, the 53rd WRS Hurricane Hunters were re-activated as an Air Force Reserve entity at Keesler, and assumed all weather reconnaissance duties, aircraft, and personnel from the 815th. At that time, four C-130H aircraft of the 815th AS, which had previously been WC-130s, were re-converted to the type, and the six E-models were retired.

5 Jan 1994 Placed into storage at USAF AMARC (later AMARG) at Davis-Monthan AFB, Arizona.

(The 309th Aerospace Maintenance and Regeneration Group (AMARG), often called The Boneyard, is a United States Air Force aircraft and missile storage and maintenance facility in Tucson, Arizona, located on Davis-Monthan Air Force Base)

3 Apr 2001 Aircraft scrapped; nose and forward fuselage survived in an aircraft salvage yard owned by Dross Metals, later ARMair – Aircraft Restoration & marketing) adjacent to Davis Monthan AFB, along with an interesting collection of aircraft noses including a Vickers Viscount and Convair 990, and later still recorded as owned by the now-closed Southern Utah Air Museum.

For pictures please see
<https://www.boneyardsafari.com/wc130e-64-0553>

and

[http://www.c-130.net/g3/c-130-photos/AMARC/64-0553 Lockheed L 100 Hercules - WC-130E - U S Air Force -and- N EV Boeing B 727 Evergreen International Noses - 8865336232](http://www.c-130.net/g3/c-130-photos/AMARC/64-0553%20Lockheed%20L%20100%20Hercules%20-%20WC-130E%20-%20U%20S%20Air%20Force%20-%20and%20-%20N%20EV%20Boeing%20B%20727%20Evergreen%20International%20Noses%20-%208865336232)

- 2018 Loaned to RAF Museum by Pima Air and Space Museum; restored and repainted by them on behalf of the RAFM, April 2018.
- 5 May After movement to Long Beach, California, left Pima 30 April 2018; by sea departing 5 May to UK for incorporation into new exhibition at RAF Museum Hendon.
- 7 June 2018 Arrived at Southampton Docks.
- 14 June 2018 Delivered to RAF Museum Hendon for inclusion in new 'Age of Uncertainty' exhibition.

Andrew Simpson

RAF MUSEUM 2018