

MILITARY AIRCRAFT

12 December 2016

Germany Receives First Tactical Standard Airbus A400M Airlifter

Airbus Defence and Space has delivered to the German Air Force its first A400M transport aircraft qualified for tactical operations and able to fly in areas subject to military threats.

The aircraft is the sixth A400M in German service and the first with the new capabilities in addition to the world-leading performance of all A400Ms as strategic transports. All aircraft will be retrofitted to the new standard and receive subsequent enhancements as those are certified.

Key aspects of the aircraft's latest capabilities are improvements in its self-defence systems, ability to air-drop cargo loads, and paratrooping. Additionally it can operate on unprepared runways, fly as low as 150ft above the ground, refuel other aircraft as a tanker, and safely take-off and land in extremely high temperatures.

Airbus Defence and Space A400M Programme Manager, Kurt Rossner, said: "The A400M programme has made enormous progress this year in implementing these critical capabilities on the aircraft. In addition to having twice the payload-range of the legacy transports like the C-160 and C-130 that it is replacing, it can now also operate from any runway that those older aircraft could use. There is no other aircraft in the market with the A400M's combination of tactical and strategic capabilities and it is going to transform Germany's air mobility force."

The new aircraft is fitted with a Defensive Aids Sub-System (DASS) incorporating a Missile Warning System, Radar Warning Receiver, and an Expendables Dispensing System to eject flares and radar-confusing chaff. The DASS for all A400Ms is integrated by Airbus Defence and Space at Ulm.

Military and humanitarian loads of up to 8 tonnes each, including for example 24 x 1 tonne pallets, are fully certified for air-dropping from the aircraft's ramp and further loads are being continually qualified in flight test.

Paratroops can be dropped from the ramp or side paratroop doors in sticks of up to 20, and sticks of 30 have already been successfully demonstrated with certification to follow. Flight testing continues to build the numbers next to 40 and then 58 in a single pass.

The A400M is certified to operate from grass runways and has successfully completed testing of operations from gravel and sandy soil with certification in process. Low-level flight in mountainous terrain is cleared down to 150ft above ground by day and 300ft by night under the pilot's manual control. Development of automatic low-level flight is well advanced.

The aircraft is certified to receive fuel in-flight from a tanker, and as a tactical tanker itself to refuel fighters and other large aircraft by day, with night operations demonstrated and close to certification.

In this latest configuration the A400M is certified to operate in temperatures up to 55°C at sea level, ensuring excellent “hot and high” performance at operationally challenging airfields around the world. And it is approved to take-off and fly on only three of its four powerful engines in the event of a mechanical problem or battle damage, adding to its outstanding level of operating autonomy.

About Airbus Defence and Space

Airbus Defence and Space is a division of Airbus Group formed by combining the business activities of Cassidian, Astrium and Airbus Military. The new division is Europe’s number one defence and space enterprise, the second largest space business worldwide and among the top ten global defence enterprises. It employs more than 38,000 employees generating revenues of approximately €13 billion per year.

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