

The C-27 Spartan.

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AEROMEDICAL evacuation (AME) trials for the C-27J Spartan transport aircraft will clear the way for the air craft to carry patients from frontline airfields and disaster areas.



Introduced to Air Force service in 2015, the twin-engine Spartan can carry up to 21 litter patients and eight AME staff. Alternatively, the Spartan can carry three high-dependency patients and their accompanying medical support devices, and evacuate them from small, semi-prepared airstrips in remote areas.

The trials, held in December last year, included a demonstration flight from RAAF Base Richmond to Amberley. The CO of 35 Squadron, WGCDR Jarrod Pendlebury, said the trials would confirm existing aeromedical evacuation techniques, procedures and equipment were compatible with the C-27J Spartan. He said the trials would also increase familiarity for personnel who would use the Spartan in this role.

“Aeromedical evacuation is a role that the Spartan will make a big impact on within Defence. Remote airfields within Australia and across the Asia Pacific are often out of range of smaller aircraft platforms like Army helicopters, or are unsuitable for larger transports,” WGCDR Pendlebury said. “The Spartan has the speed and range to conduct evacuations from remote locations with little or no health-care infrastructure, and return patients to an airfield with a suitable healthcare centre.”

Although the Spartan has been acquired as a battlefield airlifter for Defence, there is considerable potential for the aircraft to benefit the civilian community during times of need. “Over the past 15 years, we’ve seen Air Force Hercules bring home Australians injured during the Bali bombing attacks, while also employing the AME role to provide critical support to coalition operations in Iraq and Afghanistan,” WGCDR Pndlebyw said. “

Additionally, our C-17A Globemasters have been used to tremendous effect to evacuate hospitals threatened by floods and cyclones. “Having the Spartan cleared to conduct aeromedical evacuation adds another option for Defence planners when they need to respond to a crisis.”

The government has congratulated Air Force on achieving initial operating capability (ICC) for its fleet of C-27J Spartan aircraft. Minister for Defence Senator Marise Payne said Air Force reached a significant milestone by attaining ICC late last year and this achievement would increase Defence’s ability to move people, equipment and supplies in Australia and the region.

“The Spartan can access airfields that are unable to support larger transport aircraft, thus increasing the reach for Defence when supporting communities across Australia and throughout the Asia Pacific region,” Senator Payne said.

“The Spartan can now be tasked on missions to transport 40 passengers or three military pallets of cargo, as well as fulfil roles such as light equipment airdrop.”

CAE AIRMSHL Leo Davies said he was proud of the milestone, as the C-27J Spartan was the missing piece in the air mobility matrix for tactical aircraft. “The arrival of the Spartan will greatly increase the mobility and flexibility for local commanders, allowing intra theatre airlift that will bridge C-130J Hercules and CH-47 Chinook options,” AIRMSHL Davies said.



Four of Australia’s 10 Spartans have arrived in Australia, where they are operated by No. 35 Squadron from RAAF Base Richmond.