



# Turkey Shoot on Lake Ouachita

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*Tech. Sgt. Brandon Rader, 314th Operations Group loadmaster, prepares to release an airdrop during a Turkey Shoot competition at Lake Ouachita, Arkansas on Sept. 25. The airdrop simulated precise delivery of food, water, and medical supplies for a downed aircrew member. US Air Force photo by Senior Airman Aaron Irvin.*

The USACE Lake Ouachita Field Office recently assisted the 314th Air Wing from the Little Rock Air Force Base with a Turkey Shoot competition on September 25. The exercise is a test of the C-130 aircrew's skill in executing a simulated emergency drop of lifesaving supplies for a stranded aircrew member. The Turkey Shoot is all-encompassing and requires the entire team's expertise to be successful. The maneuver includes maintainers who fix and prep the aircraft, launch crews who marshal and safely launch six Lockheed C-130 Hercules, or "Herks" on time, loadmaster-focused ground operations, flying at low levels without GPS assistance, and conducting dynamic water drop zones and assault landing competitions. These events not only improve the instructors' craft, but they also strengthen an expert team.

The simulated supply drop was conducted on Lake Ouachita just east of Hotel Island with the assistance of Natural Resource Specialist Joshua Tyler and Park Ranger Asher Kight, who

provided support by boat. The rangers supplied area knowledge, set the life raft in the correct preset GPS location, and kept recreational boaters away from the drop zone.

The Turkey Shoot was a success with all seven of the C-130 aircraft making successful drops. For a drop to be considered successful, the supply drop must land within 200 yards of the anchored life raft.

The USAF has conducted training exercises on Lake Ouachita for several years as part of a unique, ongoing partnership between the USAF and the USACE Lake Ouachita Field Office.



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**Above:** One of seven US Air Force C-130 aircrafts participates in the Turkey Shoot competition on Lake Ouachita.

**Below:** An anchored life raft takes the place of a downed crew member and serves the aircrew's target during the exercise. The dynamic water location presents a unique challenge for the crew, who must execute the maneuver with extreme precision.



## C-130 QUICK SPECS

**Full name:** C-130 Hercules

**Designed by:** Lockheed

**Introduced:** December 1956

**Wingspan:** 132 ft 7 in

**Maximum cruise speed:** ~376 mph

**Uses:** Firefighting, airborne surveillance, cargo delivery, VIP and passenger transport, medical evacuation, airdrops, humanitarian visits, arctic support



**Above:** Natural Resource Specialist Josh Tyler observes an inbound C-130 over the exercise area on Lake Ouachita. Tyler and Park Ranger Asher Kight provided support to the USAF aircrews by boat throughout the procedure.