



# MEDIA RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
July 19, 2021

## Cannon AFB receives its first AC-130J Ghost rider gunship

**CANNON AIR FORCE BASE, N.M.** – The 27th Special Operations Wing received its first AC-130J Ghost rider gunship, the successor to the AC-130W Stinger II, July 19, 2021.

The arrival of Cannon’s first AC-130J represents a significant expansion of AC-130 capacity as Air Force Special Operations Command structures for the great power competition through global operations. This delivery continues the Air Commando legacy of “Any place, Any Time, Anywhere” and will become part of the 17th Special Operations Squadron which reactivates in October.

The reemergence of great power competition, tightening fiscal constraints, and the accelerating rate of technological change demand significant adjustments to transform AFSOC to ensure Air Commandos are ready to successfully operate in this new environment.

“As we accelerate change in AFSOC to refocus on strategic partners, the 17 SOS is able to leverage the extended range and expanded capability of the AC-130J to be more effective in the Pacific and across great distances,” said U.S. Air Force Lt. Col. Drew Saylor, 27th Special Operations Group Detachment 2 commander.

As the premier Air Force Close Air Support platform, the AC-130J is perfectly suited for missions ranging from supporting troops-in-contact, to convoy escort all the way to long range armed interdiction. The AC-130J provides Special Operations Forces and conventional forces an expeditionary, direct-fire platform that is persistent, suited for a wide variety of environments and capable of delivering precision low-yield munitions against ground targets.

“Flying this plane is awesome. It represents a significant increase in performance and capability that makes us more effective and lethal on the battlefield,” said Maj. Ryan Whitehead, the AC-130J aircraft commander.

Photos and videos of the event will be available at <https://www.dvidshub.net/unit/27SOWPA> and <https://www.facebook.com/CannonAirForceBase>.

The AC-130J Ghost rider fact sheet is available at <https://www.af.mil/About-Us/Fact-Sheets/Display/Article/467756/ac-130j-ghost-rider/>.

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