

OPERATIONAL SUPPORT AIRLIFT

The Marine Corps presently operates four different aircraft to fill its Operational Support Airlift (OSA) requirements: the UC-12 King Air, the UC-35 Citation, the C-9B Skytrain, and the C-20G Gulfstream IV. OSA aircraft provide air logistic support to our warfighters by delivering high priority passengers and cargo between and within theaters of operation. OSA aircraft carry out short-notice, time-critical, logistical air movements, relieving front-line tactical squadrons from having to perform this necessary but non-tactical mission. By freeing our tactical aircraft assets from routine missions, OSA aircraft are an effective combat multiplier for the MAGTF, joint force, and regional combatant commander.

OSA has made significant operational contributions during the last several years. During Operation Enduring Freedom, the USMC C-20G based at MCAS Kaneohe Bay was forward deployed to Bahrain in support of Marine Forces Pacific (MARFOR-PAC) and the warfighters in theater. More recently, Marine Corps OSA assets from

MCAS Miramar were deployed to Kuwait in support of I MEF during Operation Iraqi Freedom, where they delivered key combat personnel and over 70,000 pounds of critical cargo in support of the Marine forces.

In the continental United States, OSA is used to conduct regularly scheduled parts and personnel movements for Combined Arms Exercises (CAX) and other peacetime training exercises. Here again, this eliminates the need for squadrons participating in the exercises of having to conduct their own parts supply flights and allows tactical assets to be used for maximum training benefit.

Acquisition of relatively low cost, commercial-off-the-shelf aircraft with minimal militarization provides MAGTF commanders swift, on-demand support. Current initiatives will ensure the availability of short-notice, time-critical, logistical air support using more capable aircraft fully integrated into Marine Corps operations.

