

C-21A

What is it? The C-21 is a twin turbofan engine aircraft used for cargo and passenger airlift. The aircraft is the military version of the Lear Jet 35A business jet. In addition to providing cargo and passenger airlift, the aircraft is capable of transporting one litter or five ambulatory patients during aero medical evacuations.

The C-21 can carry eight passengers and 42 cubic feet of cargo. The fuel capacity of the C-21 is 931 gallons with refueling accomplished at ground level through each wingtip tank. The safety and operational capabilities of the C-21 are increased by the autopilot, color weather radar and tactical air navigation system, as well as high frequency, very high frequency and ultra high frequency radios.

The aircraft has a crew of two and may be flown from either cockpit seat. It is equipped with an automatic navigation system to enhance crew efficiency. Four cathode ray tubes display essential information to the pilots.

In April 1997, the majority of continental U.S. based C-21s were consolidated within the 375th Airlift Wing at Scott Air Force Base, Ill., with the National Guard Bureau retaining two aircraft at Peterson AFB, Colorado. An additional nineteen C-21s are in use as bridge missions at Fargo, ND, Battle Creek, MI, and Windsor Locks, CT until they receive the C-27J Spartan starting in FY12. Once the C-27s come online the nineteen C-21s will be retired.

What has the Air National Guard done? The ANG has played a critical role in the movement of senior leadership throughout the CONUS. Missions include domestic operations as well as deployed operations in the CENTCOM AOR.

What continued efforts have the Air National Guard planned for the future? The ANG is transitioning from 21 total C-21As to two. There are no Operational Support Aircraft (OSA) replacements for the C-21 and the missions of those units will transition to the C-27J Spartan, a twin turboprop short takeoff and landing transport aircraft. Near term enhancements include avionics upgrades to comply with future FAA/ICAO equipment requirements necessary for flight within the US and European airspace.

Why is this important to the Air National Guard? The C-21 provides a viable alternative to commercial transportation as an efficient system for the rapid movement of senior leaders as well as medevac missions with the retirement of the C-9. There continues to be a necessary and viable requirement for rapid mobility on a small scale. Rapid mobility not only means moving dozens of airmen at a time, but moving handfuls at a time.