
Look Who's Talking Careers

MSgt John Bartow

Career Area & Job Title:

Loadmaster, New York Air National Guard (NYANG)

The Big Picture - What I do:

Loadmasters work the “business end” of the LC-130 aircraft. We are responsible for the safe loading, inflight handling and download of cargo and passengers. We supervise loading teams, calculate limitations for large or outsized cargo and monitor aircraft systems inflight. Prior to takeoff, we calculate the aircraft allowable center of gravity to ensure that the airplane is properly balanced for all phases of flight. Loadmasters are airdrop subject matter experts. We employ the aerial delivery system to deliver up to 42,000 pounds of cargo via parachute to remote drop zones where landing may not be feasible due to terrain or ground threats. We also employ “combat offloading” see the short film!

What I Like Most About My Job:

As a member of the aircrew team, I frequently travel to most every corner of the planet. Most aircrew members have visited dozens of countries and all 50 states, supporting everything from humanitarian relief efforts to polar science support to combat operations.

The Most Unusual Part About My Job:

Loading cargo in the most remote regions of the world. There are times where the aircrew may be the only human presence for thousands of miles. Being “alone” on the snow with a job to get done can be challenging and intimidating at times. The aircraft must be positioned in front of the cargo instead of the cargo being positioned behind the aircraft. The loadmaster guides the pilot by looking out the ramp and door and determining the correct position for loading operations. Once aligned, the aircraft is stopped, the equipment inspected and then winched off the snow into the cargo compartment. All this occurs with engines running and at altitudes as high as 12,000 feet above sea level.

What Type of Schooling/Experience is Needed?

Aircrew formal training can last up to 2 years. Many loadmasters are selected from the more seasoned airmen in the USAF. If selected, training begins at Little Rock Air Force Base, Arkansas and lasts almost a year, followed by land, water and arctic survival schools. Finally, after another four months of home station training specific to the LC-130 ski mission, you are ski-mission qualified.

STEM Careers in Polar Climate
Grades 7-12
Single Class



MSgt Bartow is a key member of the NYANG team. Loadmasters are the rear eyes of the pilot during take off and flight visually inspecting engines and equipment for the flight team. The safe loading, and balance of equipment and passengers for flight and delivery is the loadmaster responsibility.

Education

- The minimum education requirement is a High School Diploma.
- Continuing military education is mandatory. The USAF provides resources for continuing civilian education. Loadmaster formal schooling gives airmen a majority of credits toward a Community College of the Air Force Associate of Science in Aircrew Operations.