



Despite repeated claims of neutrality by recent Irish Governments, **over two and a half million US troops and their weapons** have passed through Shannon Airport since 2002. When Ireland became a de-facto member of the “coalition of the willing” assembled by the US for its global war on terror in 2001, the US troop carriers started to appear at the airport. They were initially taking occupation forces to and from Afghanistan but before long the airport was also providing fully fledged support for a second US led war in Iraq. The American military at US Europe Command Headquarters in Stuttgart even assigned a permanent staff officer to Shannon Airport in 2002, meaning it has effectively been operating as a US airbase since then.

The US military use of Shannon Airport continues. In the first five months of 2017, a total of 22,465 US troops and their weapons passed through Shannon on US military contracted planes.

### US Armed Troops Passing Through Shannon

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
2016	48,648
2015	63,549
2014	55,405
2013	69,840
2012	101,108
2011	250,000
2010	229,000
2009	265,000
2008	256,000
2007	263,000
2006	281,000
2005	341,000
2004	159,000
2003	122,000
2002	73,000

### Shannon Airport: A Hub for US Military Contracted Carriers

Most of the US troops passing through Shannon are on board flights that are classified as "civilian". These are governed by the 1944 Convention on International Civil Aviation (known as the Chicago Convention). These military contracted troop carriers are operated by Omni Air International, Atlas Air, Sun Country Alliance and other carriers.

The Chicago Convention states that "*no munitions of war may be carried in or above the territory of another State in aircraft engaged in international navigation, except by permission of such State*". In Ireland the **Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport** routinely approves requests from US military contracted planes landing at Shannon to carry munitions of war.

In 2016 **873 requests** were received from US military contracted planes to carry munitions or weapons through Ireland. Almost all of these were granted.

### And an Operating Base for US Military, Air Force & Navy Planes

In addition to the US troop flights, aircraft operated directly by the US military, Air Force and Navy also pass through Shannon. Quite extraordinarily, the Irish government claims that these are all unarmed, carrying no arms, ammunition or explosives and are not part of any military exercises or operations. This is despite the fact that in September 2013 a Hercules C-130 with a 30mm cannon mounted on the side was photographed at Shannon.

For a foreign military aircraft to land at an Irish airport or to pass through Irish airspace, permission must be granted by the **Minister for Foreign Affairs**. In 2016 he granted permission to **592 US military aircraft** to land at Shannon. This is in addition to the 873 military contracted planes carrying weapons.



US Air Force Hercules C-130 at Shannon



US military contracted troop carrier at Shannon

Shannonwatch is a group of peace & human rights activists based in the mid-West of Ireland.

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# Air Traffic Control and Military Flights

Between 2003 and 2015 it cost the Irish state **€42 million** to cover the air traffic control costs of foreign military aircraft using Irish-administered airspace. This covers military aircraft and not military contracted troop carriers. Most of the cost is associated with US planes en route to Europe and war zones in the Middle East.

The €42 million cost is due to Ireland's participation in a multilateral agreement overseen by Eurocontrol, which is the European Organisation for the Safety of Air Navigation. Ireland does not have to cover the cost of the US military flights because the US is not a member of Eurocontrol. However the State has chosen to do so. Other European neutral countries, particularly Austria, Finland and Switzerland do not give free passage to US military flights

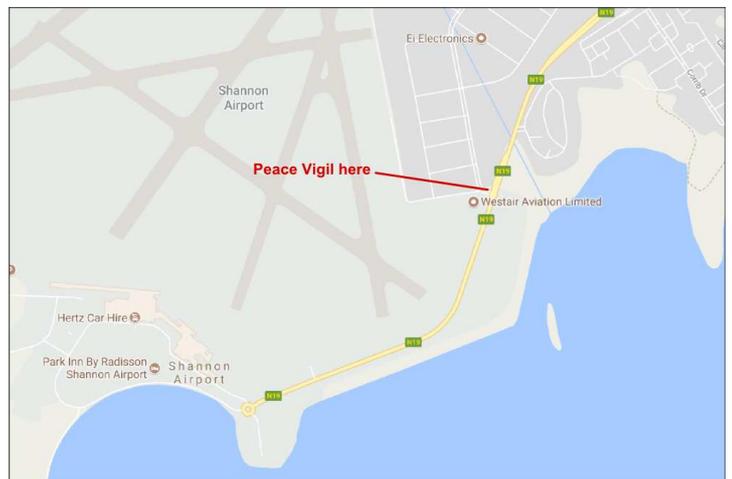
Year	Cost
2003	€2,751,000
2004	€4,612,000
2005	€3,156,000
2006	€2,466,000
2007	€2,930,000
2008	€3,003,000
2009	€3,283,000
2010	€2,809,000
2011	€2,558,000
2012	€4,059,000
2013	€4,075,000
2014	€3,071,000
2015	€3,571,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>€42,344,000</b>



## Monthly Peace Vigil at Shannon

On the **second Sunday of every month at 2pm** Shannonwatch hold a peace vigil at Shannon Airport for one hour. Please join us for one of these, as we call for an end to the US military use of Shannon.

As the authorities will not permit the peaceful protest to take place at the airport itself, the peace vigils are held just before the gantry at the airport entrance.



Shannon Airport has also been used repeatedly over the years by CIA rendition planes. These planes transferred detainees from one country to another illegally, using means that bypassed all judicial and administrative due process.

Garda have been asked on many occasions to search rendition-linked aircraft and to confirm if cargo planes are carrying illegal or undeclared munitions. As far as Shannonwatch is aware, no military or CIA planes have been inspected at Shannon since 2002.

US Air Force Hercules C-130 at Shannon

US military contracted troop carrier at Shannon

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