

WORLD NEWS

WEIST -- Aarseth

The Air Force rolls out a new assault transport with a radical landing gear, called the Pantobase, for all-purpose takeoffs.

The new gear -- two lightweight hydro skis -- can be lowered in flight for landings on water, snow and ice. The wheels, atop the skis, act as shock absorbers.

The plane's belly is watertight. With the wheels up and the skis down, it is ready for a trial takeoff. By eliminating the usual massive hull of the seaplane, the transport plane retains all the advantages of assault transports -- ruggedness, spacious, straight-in tail loading and tail ramp opening.

Water, or land, snow, or ice -- the runways are all the same to the "Pantobase!"