



State of Wyoming Military Department **Office of the Adjutant General**

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For immediate release

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Guard and Reserve aerial firefighting resources scheduled to conduct annual training in South Carolina

CHEYENNE – The Wyoming Air National Guard's 153rd Airlift Wing in Cheyenne, Wyo., in participation with the National Interagency Fire Center, will conduct annual Modular Airborne Fire Fighting System training in Greenville, S.C., from April 24 until May 1, at the South Carolina Technology and Aviation Center.

Throughout the annual recertification, military pilots flying C-130 airplanes will conduct up to 80 practice flights per day, dropping water on target sites on National Forests in North Carolina, South Carolina and Georgia.

The training will consist of up to 400 military and civilian personnel, including both classroom and flight training for military flight crews, civilian lead plane pilots and various support personnel. MAFFS support specialists and aviators from the U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Indian Affairs, North Carolina Forest Service, and California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection will lead the week-long training.

Military personnel involved with this training include the 153rd Airlift Wing of the Wyoming Air National Guard in Cheyenne, Wyo; the 145th Airlift Wing of the North Carolina Air National Guard in Charlotte, N.C.; the 146th Airlift Wing of the California Air National Guard in Port

Hueneme, Calif., and the 302nd Airlift Wing with the U.S. Air Force Reserve of Colorado Springs, Colo.

The military C-130s equipped with slide-in MAFFS units can drop up to 3,000 gallons of retardant per run on wildfires. The four MAFFS-designated military units must perform refresher training each spring before the start to wild-land fire season.

MAFFS is a partnership between federal land management agencies and the military to provide supplemental air tankers to assist in fire suppression efforts nationwide during times of high fire activity. The system itself is a portable fire retardant delivery system that can be easily inserted into military C-130 aircraft, converting the vessel into an air tanker when the civilian fleet is fully committed. There are two units assigned to each of the four military wings, with a total of eight aircraft available for supporting civilian agencies if necessary.

Congress established the authority for the MAFFS program in the early 1970's to support wild-land firefighting through an agreement with the U.S. Forest Service. The military aircraft are requested by the National Interagency Fire Center and activated through the U.S. Northern Command, based on an agreement with the Department of Defense. The most recent MAFFS mission was mobilized in June 2008.

Media representatives interested in viewing the MAFFS units as they are loaded into Wyoming Air National Guard C-130s, or those interested in conducting interviews , should contact the Wyoming National Guard Public Affairs Office at (307) 772-5040, no later than close of business on April 20. MAFFS units are scheduled for placement early on April 21.