



State of Wyoming Military Department

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April 29, 2011

For immediate release

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WyMD-11-31

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

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 Boise, Idaho, from May 1-7.

The Wyoming Air National Guard recently sent 13 personnel and one aircraft to Texas in support of the Texas wildfires. They deployed to Dyess Air Force Base, in Abilene, Texas, from April 18-26, using the second generation of the U.S. Forest Service's Modular Airborne Fire Fighting System or MAFFS 2.

The crew dropped 12,000 gallons on the Possum Kingdom Fire; 9,000 gallons on the Wildcat Fire; and 6,000 gallons on the Cole Fire. The crew consisted of Maj. Jeremy Schaad, Maj. Rickey Rau, Maj. T.J. Gagnon, Senior Master Sgt. Ted Anthony, Senior Master Sgt. Doug Peterson, and Master Sgt. Mike Novick. The crew had completed advanced training in Colorado last month.

Those crews and the other 153rd Airlift Wing personnel will receive their annual certification in Boise. Military pilots flying C-130 airplanes will conduct up to 80 practice flights per day, dropping water on target sites on national forest land in Idaho.

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. 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 1970s 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 this month to Texas.

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Find photos of MAFFS unit being loaded on C-130 on Flickr <http://bit.ly/gkBSOL>