



302nd Airlift Wing (AFRC) Messages Modular Airborne Fire Fighting System (MAFFS) 2013

The Air Force Reserve Command's 302nd Airlift Wing currently provides 25 percent of the DOD's MAFFS capability. C-130 H3 aircraft, MAFFS "2" and MAFFS "5" are assigned to the 302nd AW. 2013 marks the 20th year of MAFFS capability based in Colorado with the Air Force Reserve Command's 302nd Airlift Wing, Peterson Air Force Base.

MAFFS History

- In the 1970s, Congress established the Modular Airborne Fire Fighting System (MAFFS) Program to aid the United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service. Typically, when all other civilian air tankers are activated but further assistance is needed, the U.S. Forest Service, through the National Interagency Fire Center, can request the aid of the U.S. Air Force's MAFFS flying units.

MAFFS is an extremely challenging mission -- only the most experienced Airmen fly this mission

- MAFFS certified aircrews are highly experienced having on average, more than 3,500 flight hours in each aircrew position.
- Large, C-130 cargo aircraft are flying low, slow and heavy during MAFFS missions
- Traffic pattern style approach, close formation
- Extreme hazards: Density altitude, terrain, air traffic, smoke, visual illusions

On average, Air Force Reserve members have high levels of experience

- Average total service of Air Force Reserve members: Officer – 18 years, Enlisted – 13 years
- Average age of Air Force Reserve members: Officer – 42, Enlisted – 35

Air Force Reserve – a surge force, trained and ready to deploy at a moment's notice

- Ideal special mission (MAFFS) partner, highly experienced and fully-trained
- Full-time readiness/part-time cost of AF Reserve efficient use of taxpayer dollars
- Each MAFFS wing is required to have five certified crews for each MAFFS unit. The 302nd AW has more than 10 qualified crews.
- MAFFS aircrew remain certified for up to two years, but training is conducted annually to emphasize safety on both the ground and in the air.

MAFFS, part of a larger federal effort

- MAFFS is a mission that highlights interagency cooperation. The 302nd AW is a federal force belonging to the Department of Defense, yet works in concert with the Department of Interior and the U.S. Department of Agriculture.
- The MAFFS partnership between land and natural resource management agencies and the military is very important because it provides a way to boost suppression efforts during periods of high wildfire activity.
- The U.S. Forest Service owns the MAFFS equipment and supplies the retardant while the DOD provides C-130 aircraft, aircrew and aircraft maintainers.

MAFFS II – increased aerial firefighting capabilities

- In 2010 The U.S. Forest Service transitioned all wings from MAFFS systems developed in the 1970s, known as “Legacy” systems, to new MAFFS systems, known as “MAFFS II.”
- MAFFS II systems incorporate new design features and technology that provide a number of advantages. MAFFS II is more self contained allowing it to use existing agency tanker bases, reducing flight time to and from fires. This results in more efficient use with potentially reduced costs and more retardant on the fire.
- The MAFFS II provides the capability for higher concentrations of retardant that can be more effective in creating fire containment lines than the Legacy MAFFS.
- MAFFS II has the capability to use foam injection which provides additional options for incident managers.

2012: A record MAFFS season for 302 AW MAFFS

- 400 drops by 302 AW MAFFS aircraft/crews in 10 states
- 1.2 million gallons by 302 AW MAFFS aircraft/crews
- 334.3 hours of employment by 302 AW MAFFS aircraft/crews
- Approximately 40 percent of all MAFFS drops in 2012 were accomplished by 302 AW MAFFS aircraft/crews

MAFFS and Sequestration

The Air Force Reserve will ensure that units that perform aerial firefighting, weather reconnaissance, and aerial spray will have adequate flight hours to maintain proficiency for these special missions. Air Force Reserve aerial firefighting operations are reimbursed through the National Interagency Fire Center and Congress has established a special flying hours account to cover weather reconnaissance.