

# News Release

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## Four MAFFS-equipped C-130 aircraft providing valuable support on wildfires

**Boise, Idaho**, August 20, 2020 – Four military C-130 aircraft equipped with Modular Airborne Firefighting Systems (MAFFS) continue to provide valuable aerial firefighting support to a number of California wildfires. The four MAFFS aircraft, two of which were activated in July and two activated earlier this week, have completed 123 retardant drops, including several on the Lake Fire north of Los Angeles and the LNU Lightning Complex in Northern California.

“We’re at our highest level of wildfire preparedness with multiple regions of the country experiencing a significant level of fire activity,” said Kim Christensen, deputy assistant director for operations for the USDA Forest Service. “These aircraft are instrumental in providing increased aerial firefighting capacity on fires across the West.”

Two of the aircraft are from the California Air National Guard's 146th Airlift Wing, Port Hueneme and two are from the ANG's 153rd Airlift Wing, Cheyenne, Wyoming. The crews rotate out with other Air National Guard or Reserve Wings every week to 10 days. Eighty-seven Department of Defense personnel are mobilized as part of the deployment.

“There is great satisfaction knowing we are helping protect people’s lives and livelihoods as part of a larger team of civilian and government professionals working to stop the fires,” said Col Gregory Berry, commander, 302nd Air Expeditionary Group.

Having military C-130s that can be converted into airtankers provides a critical “surge” capability that can be used to augment wildfire suppression efforts when the commercial airtankers are fully committed or not readily available. The aircraft can drop up to 3,000 gallons of fire retardant in less than 10 seconds across a quarter-mile line. The MAFFS system slides into the back of the military aircraft, and retardant is released through a nozzle on the rear left side.

“Our team goes through a rigorous certification prior to operating in the wildland fire environment and are honored to be of assistance in our hometown communities and nationwide,” said Col Berry.

The National Interagency Fire Center (NIFC), located in Boise, Idaho, is the nation's support center for wildland firefighting. Eight different agencies and organizations are part of NIFC including, the Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Indian Affairs, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service, U.S. Forest Service, National Weather Service, U.S. Fire Administration, and the National Association of State Foresters.

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