

## **Modular Airborne Fire Fighting System (MAFFS)**

**What is it?** The Modular Airborne Fire Fighting System was developed in 1973 as a result of a wildland fire that was started on a DoD target range. The MAFFS is a roll on roll off dispersal unit that is owned by the Department of Agriculture, United States Forest Service (USFS) and flown and operated by 3 Air National Guard units. The operating units are: 145AW, Charlotte NC, 146AW, Channel Island CA, and the 153AW Cheyenne WY. Each of these flying wings has 2 MAFFS units assigned to them for a total of 6 MAFFS II units in the ANG. The current system is the MAFFS II delivery system, or the second generation system that will hold 3,500 gallons of water and retardant.

The primary mission of the MAFFS is to provide the USFS with a capability to fight Wildland Fires throughout the nation. This requirement is in support of the National Response Framework, Emergency Support Function #4.

The ANG MAFFS units are called out to support the USFS when the commercial Airtanker Fleet is either fully committed or cannot meet the required response time under the Economy Act. The ANG crewmembers and maintenance personnel undergo certification from the USFS annually in order to meet the standards of the USFS Fire & Aviation Division. The aircraft and crews are part of the national resource counted on by the USFS to save lives, property, and the national infrastructure.

**What has the Air National Guard done?** The ANG has 10 crews per wing certified and ready to support the USFS each year. Each year the maintenance personnel are certified on loading/off loading, recharging, and safety procedures of the MAFFS II dispersal units to safely conduct this high tempo mission. MAFFS Air National Guard C-130s, fitted with MAFFS, have averaged 245 sorties, 678,740 gallons of retardant or water delivered, and 265 flight hours annually since the DoD activated MAFFS for firefighting operations over the last 10 years. Today, three of the four MAFFS units are operated by the Air National Guard. This lifesaving asset provides the Department of Agriculture, Department of Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Bureau of Land Management, and the U.S. Forest Service with additional aerial firefighting assets to assist after the capabilities of commercial and contract air tankers have been exhausted or cannot meet time requirements.

**What continued efforts have the Air National Guard planned for the future?** The ANG remains committed to support the USFS needs in support of ESF #4 and to be part of the team that protects the national infrastructure by fighting wild land fires.

**Why is this important to the Air National Guard?** The MAFFS mission is a high profile domestic operations mission that is important to citizens of our nation. This mission has a direct impact on the lives, homes, and businesses throughout the nation. As "Guard Airman" we feel the impact of the loss of our neighbors' homes, diminished air quality, and loss of income that results from Wild land Fires throughout the nation. This mission also supports Department of Interior, Bureau of Land Management, and Bureau of Indian Affairs, a true "Whole of Government" approach to utilizing the tax payer's dollar.