

CALLING IN THE GUARD

MAFFS

Modular Airborn Fire Fighting System

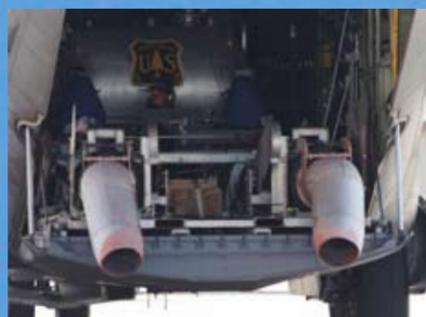
By Daniel Berlant, department information officer, Sacramento HQ, Communications

On January 30, CAL FIRE joined officials from the California National Guard and the US Forest Service to unveil a newly redesigned firefighting system that can augment CAL FIRE's own fleet of over 50 firefighting aircraft to help California battle major wildfires. The Modular Airborne Fire Fighting System, or MAFFS, is a portable fire retardant system that is mounted inside of a military C-130 transport plane converting it into a large air tanker.

The MAFFS systems have been around for over 30 years, but this newly redesigned system is more effective in its use and

dispersion of fire retardant. Each unit can carry 3,000 gallons of fire retardant, which can weigh up to 28,000 pounds. The MAFFS can drop their load at a variable rate that can cover an area 60 feet wide and one-quarter of a mile long.

"We pride ourselves on aggressive initial attack at stopping 95 percent of the fires in the state at less than 10 acres," said Chief Del Walters, director of CAL FIRE. "But unfortunately there is that other 5 percent. At times like that we have to rely on such tools as the MAFFS to augment our own fleet"



A look at the old MAFFS



The Redesigned MAFFS II

