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(Wyo.)- Wyo., NC, C130 Crews Practice Fighting Wildfires

By: Jeremy Anderson Posted at: 05/07/2013 02:14 PM

CHEYENNE, Wyo. (AP) - Air National Guard units from Wyoming and North Carolina are getting practice this week using C-130 cargo planes to fight wildfires.

The five C-130s based in Cheyenne and Charlotte are fitted with a device called the Modular Airborne Fire Fighting System, or MAFFS.

The MAFFS consist of large, pressurized tanks that are rolled into the cargo planes. Usually the devices spray fire retardant but for training purposes are loaded with water.

All this week, the crews are practicing dropping water on remote areas in southeast Wyoming and northern Colorado. The planes saw heavy use last year and one of the North Carolina planes crashed in South Dakota, killing four of the six crew members.

California's governor last week activated two MAFFS-equipped C-130s to fight wildfires in his state.