

# NIFC News

National Interagency Fire Center  
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## **MILITARY FIREFIGHTING AIRCRAFT ANNUAL TRAINING TO BE IN TUCSON**

**BOISE, IDAHO, April 20, 2004...**During the week of April 26, 2004, Tucson area residents may be seeing very large military C-130 aircraft with bright orange numbers on the tail flying very slowly and very low. The 146<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing of the California Air National Guard, the Coronado National Forest and the National Interagency Fire Center (NIFC) are hosting the annual refresher training and re-certification flights for the military aircraft used in wildland firefighting. The aircraft will be operating from the Forest Service's southwest ramp at the Tucson International Airport.

In addition to the 146<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing, California Air National Guard from Port Hueneme, the 302<sup>nd</sup> Airlift Wing of the Air Force Reserve from Peterson Air Force Base in Colorado, the 145<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing, North Carolina Air National Guard from Charlotte, and 153<sup>rd</sup> Airlift Wing of the Wyoming Air National Guard, will be participating in the exercise. The week includes both classroom and flight training for military flight crews and civilian lead plane pilots.

The C-130s are equipped with a special slide-in unit called the Modular Airborne Firefighting System, (MAFFs) allowing them to load and drop 3000 gallons of retardant on wildland fires. There are eight MAFFs units currently in operation. The military aircraft are a supplement aerial resource activated when the civilian fleet of airtankers is committed. During the annual training and re-certification, the units will drop water on targets chosen by the Coronado National Forest.

**MEDIA ADVISORY: A media opportunity is scheduled for 10:00 a.m. on Thursday, April 29, 2004, at the Forest Service southwest ramp at Tucson International Airport. From north of Tucson, go east on I-10 to I-19; turn south on I-19 at East Valencia exit. Travel east on Valencia to Nogales Highway. Go south (right) on Nogales Highway to Teton St. Go east (left) on Teton past the four-way stop to Apron Dr. The Forest Service facility is a tan metal 2-story building. Reporters should be prepared to show photo identification. Escorts will be provided to the aircraft ramp area. An additional opportunity to view a water drop from one of the aircraft will be offered on Thursday, April 29 at 1:00 pm, south of Pima County Fairgrounds. From I-10, travel south on Houghton Road (exit 275) approximately 1-2 miles to Pima Mine Ranch Road (unsigned). Travel approximately one mile west on dirt road past gate to drop point. We will flag the entrance to Pima Mine Ranch Road for easier identification.**