

North Carolina National Guard Media Advisory

stories:

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Donations to N.C. Guard for Crash Victim's Families Grow

CHARLOTTE, N.C. -- Community response, both locally and nationally to the deaths of four airmen who died and two others who were seriously injured when a Modular Airborne Fire Fighting System (MAFFS) equipped C-130 belonging to the 145th Airlift Wing, North Carolina Air National Guard, based here, crashed Sunday while fighting a woodland fire in Southwestern South Dakota has been unbelievable.

Tributes received for Lt. Col. Paul K. Mikeal of Mooresville, N.C., Maj. Joseph M. McCormick, of Belmont, N.C., Maj. Ryan S. David, of Boone, N.C. and Senior Master Sgt. Robert S. Cannon, of Charlotte have been numerous and varied.

"We're working hard to track all donations and calls wanting to help and assist," according to Terry Henderson of the 145 AW's Airmen & Family Readiness Center. Henderson continued, saying, "We've developed a 'Resource Roster' so that as we are informed of family needs or concerns we can respond quickly.

Henderson said donations have already been made of offers to provide meals, keep up lawns, provide gift cards, and donations to memorial funds. Information regarding donations or memorials is available through the 145th Airlift Wing, Airman & Family Readiness at (704) 398-4949.

The crew and its aircraft along with two other 145th C-130s and three dozen airmen flew from Charlotte to Peterson Air Force Base in Colorado Springs, Colo., Saturday to assist with fighting forest fires in the Rocky Mountain region. The crash occurred around 6:30 p.m. Mountain Time near Edgemont, S.D., as the crew assisted with battling what is being called the White Draw fire. The cause of the crash is unknown and under investigation.

MAFFS is a joint Department of Defense and U.S. Forest Service program designed to provide additional aerial firefighting resources when commercial and private air tankers are no longer able to meet the needs of the forest service.

According to Forest Service records, the agency has been working with the North Carolina Air National Guard on fire suppression missions since the early 1970s.