**Commander, National Guard Bureau Very Concerned**

**About Air National Guard Readiness**

Few people have been worried about the readiness of our Air National Guard (**ANG**). We have heard no stories that have concerned us, so most of us assume that all is well.

Army General Daniel R Hokanson, chief of the National Guard Bureau, noted that the entire fighter fleet needs to be modernized. The **ANG** aircraft inventory includes 470 F-16s and F-15s, but they are all over 30 years old. The do have 19 F-35s. They also have C-130 Air Transports that recently have been very busy dealing with wild fires.

The ANG has two basic missions, air defense and homeland operations.

Wild fires in the West has kept the C-130s very busy. Fitted with the Modular Airborne Firefighting System (MAFSS), these aircraft can deliver 3,000 pounds of retardant on a blaze, return to home base, reload more retardant and return 20 minutes unload another 3,000 pounds of retardant. This intense pace of operational tempo is aging the C-130s and threatens this fleet of aircraft. They need to be modernized, or replace to continue serving their homeland operations.

Our Congress, working with the Air Force needs to juggle our large budget to keep our ANG aircraft ready to protect our air space and also deal with future wild fires.

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**SOURCE:**

“**Guard Chief: “Entire Fighter Fleet” and More Needs to be Modernized**,” **Greg Hadley, *Air Force Magazine*, December 2021, p28**