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Maj. Kimberly Holman, 805-340-7301 Release # 09-04

**National Guard Fights Fires in Kern County**

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| **PORT HUENEME**, **Calif**. – California National Guard firefighting assets were activated this week in response to wild fires across Kern County.  The California National Guard (CNG) mobilized one C-130J aircraft from the 146th Airlift Wing in Port Hueneme, along with three CH-47 Chinook and two UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters operating out of Bakersfield airport and Lebec heliport in Kern County.  As of Tuesday morning, the National Guard aircraft had dropped more than 20,000 gallons of retardant on Kern County fires. In total, the fires have burned close to 70,000 acres.    “This is a testament to the preparation and dedication of the Soldiers and Airmen of the California National Guard,” said Maj. Gen. David Baldwin, adjutant general of the CNG. “Their rapid mobilization on 9/11 is a poignant reminder of the effort put forth on a daily basis to keep our nation safe.”    The CNG’s C-130J is equipped with the Modular Airborne Fire Fighting System which is capable of dropping up to 3,000 gallons of water or retardant on the wild fires. Additionally, California's CH-47 Chinook and UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters are capable of dropping 660 to 2,200 gallons of water and provide for personnel transport in and out of dangerous and hard-to-reach locations.  Lightning strikes in the Kern County area prompted the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) to give the CNG notice last Thursday that their assistance might be requested. By 3 p.m. Sunday, CNG aircraft had received launch orders to drop on active fires. A Proclamation of Local Emergency is currently in effect for Kern County.  For more information, please contact Maj. Kimberly Holman, 146th Airlift Wing public affairs officer at (805) 340-7301.  -30- |