RWI-BRIEF-002 — The Wainwright SAR parachute drop, night of 17–18 October 2026

Drawn from the CFB Wainwright series (HC-001, SITREP 013) with a new full scan of the open ADS-B archive for every Canadian military aircraft on 17–18 Oct and every military, business-jet and hidden-registration aircraft within 600 km of Wainwright. Issued 28 Oct 2026. Times MDT with UTC; MDT = UTC−6. LLM-assisted analysis; check quotes against the originals before publishing.

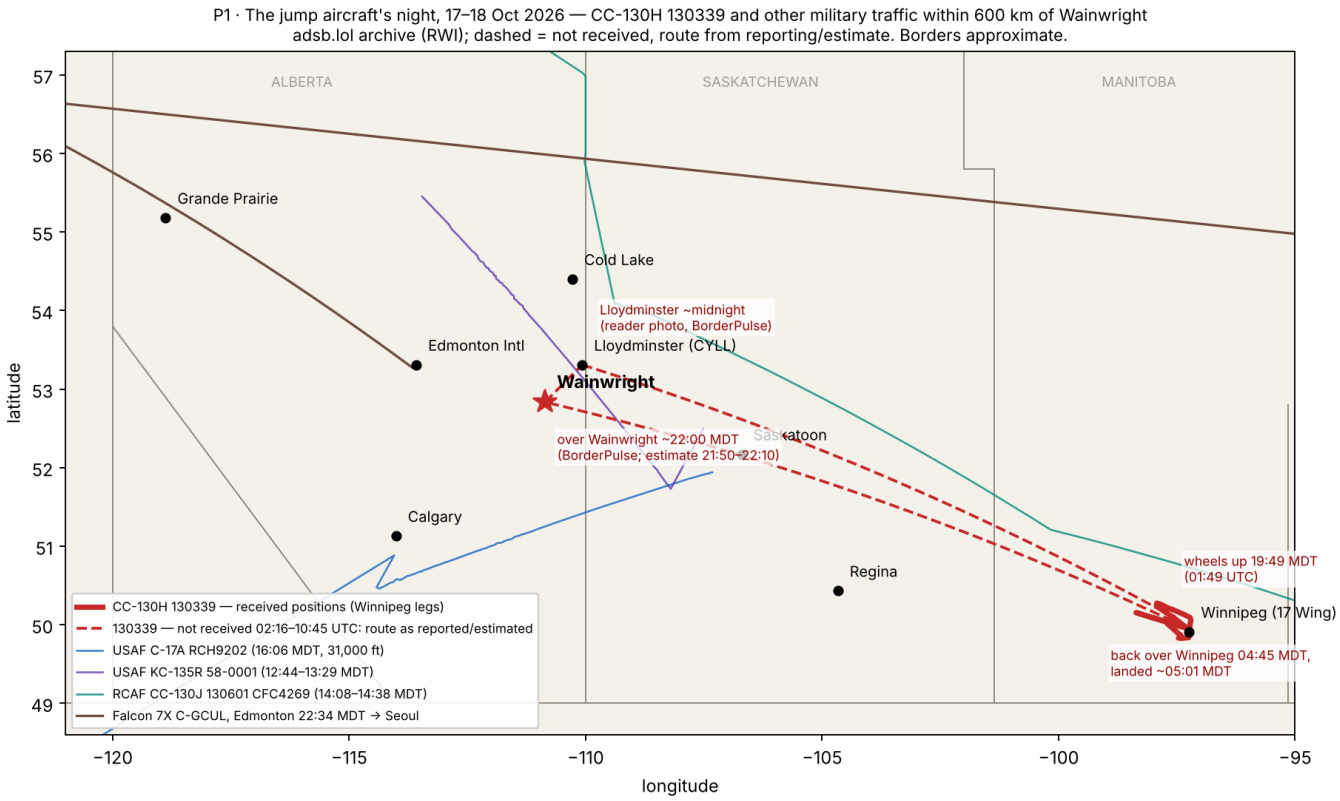
REPORTER LEADS — things in our data that no public reporting explains yet. Leads, not findings: each needs a reporter to confirm or kill it.

L1. Which Hercules dropped the SAR techs — 130339 or 130325?
Winnipeg → Wainwright → (Lloydminster?) → Winnipeg, 17 Oct 19:49 MDT – 18 Oct 05:01 MDT
Why it is a lead: The open flight archive shows only one CC-130H transmitting on 17–18 Oct: 130339, leaving Winnipeg four minutes before the time BorderPulse reported. The only published photo is captioned 130325, which never appears in the archive. DND has named no aircraft.
What would settle it: DND/RCAF: aircraft tail and callsign; BorderPulse: the original photo (tail on the fuselage). (Plate P1, P2)

L2. When did the SAR techs jump — about 22:00 or just before midnight?
Wainwright, night of 17 Oct 2026
Why it is a lead: BorderPulse has the aircraft over Wainwright at about 10 p.m. and on the ground at Lloydminster around midnight; the mayor says the medics dropped "just before midnight". A 22:00 drop puts them on the ground about six hours after the fire hit the troops — a response interval set by when the request was made, not by flight time.
What would settle it: DND: tasking time, take-off, each pass and jump time; JRCC case log (ATIP). (Plate P3)

RWI's flight archive puts **RCAF CC-130H Hercules 130339** (ICAO hex **c2af27**, broadcasting **"C130H339"**) as the only CC-130H transmitting anywhere on 17–18 October. It **took off from Winnipeg at 19:49 MDT (01:49 UTC)**, about 3 h 50 min after the fire overran C Company, 3 PPCLI. It **landed back at Winnipeg about 05:01 MDT (11:01 UTC)** after **about 9 h 12 min** away. That matches the one published flight timeline (BorderPulse: left Winnipeg 7:53 p.m. MT, over Wainwright about 10 p.m.), so 130339 is very probably the jump aircraft. DND has not confirmed this. Its tail does not match the only published photo, a BorderPulse reader's shot captioned **CC-130H 130325** at Lloydminster around midnight, and 130325 does not appear in the archive at all. On the record, DND (via CBC) has confirmed that **11 SAR technicians from 435 Transport and Rescue Squadron, 17 Wing Winnipeg** jumped "into the vicinity of the Wainwright hospital" to give casualty care. A DND spokesperson called it the largest SAR-tech parachute deployment in recent memory. Maj.-Gen. Wade Rutland confirmed the jump verbally on 18 October. DND has not named the aircraft, the tasking authority or any time. The free archive loses 130339 for **509 minutes** over rural Saskatchewan and Alberta, so RWI cannot place the aircraft over Wainwright. The drop time, the drop-zone track and the reported Lloydminster stop all still rest on BorderPulse, the mayor and estimates. The Falcon 7X **C-GCUL** belongs to ATCO's Canadian Utilities Limited. It left Edmonton at 22:34 MDT for Seoul and the Philippines, and nothing links it to Wainwright.

How to read the sourcing. Each claim below carries one of four labels. **On the record** means DND, the RCAF or named officials, as reported. **RWI data** means RWI's own adsb.lol archive analysis (globe_history 17–18 Oct UTC, files in `primerogueinc/roger-wilco-imaging-pre-alpha`, `data/adsb_rcaf/`), which is authoritative for flight times. **Single outlet** means reported by one outlet and not confirmed by DND. **Estimate** means computed by RWI.



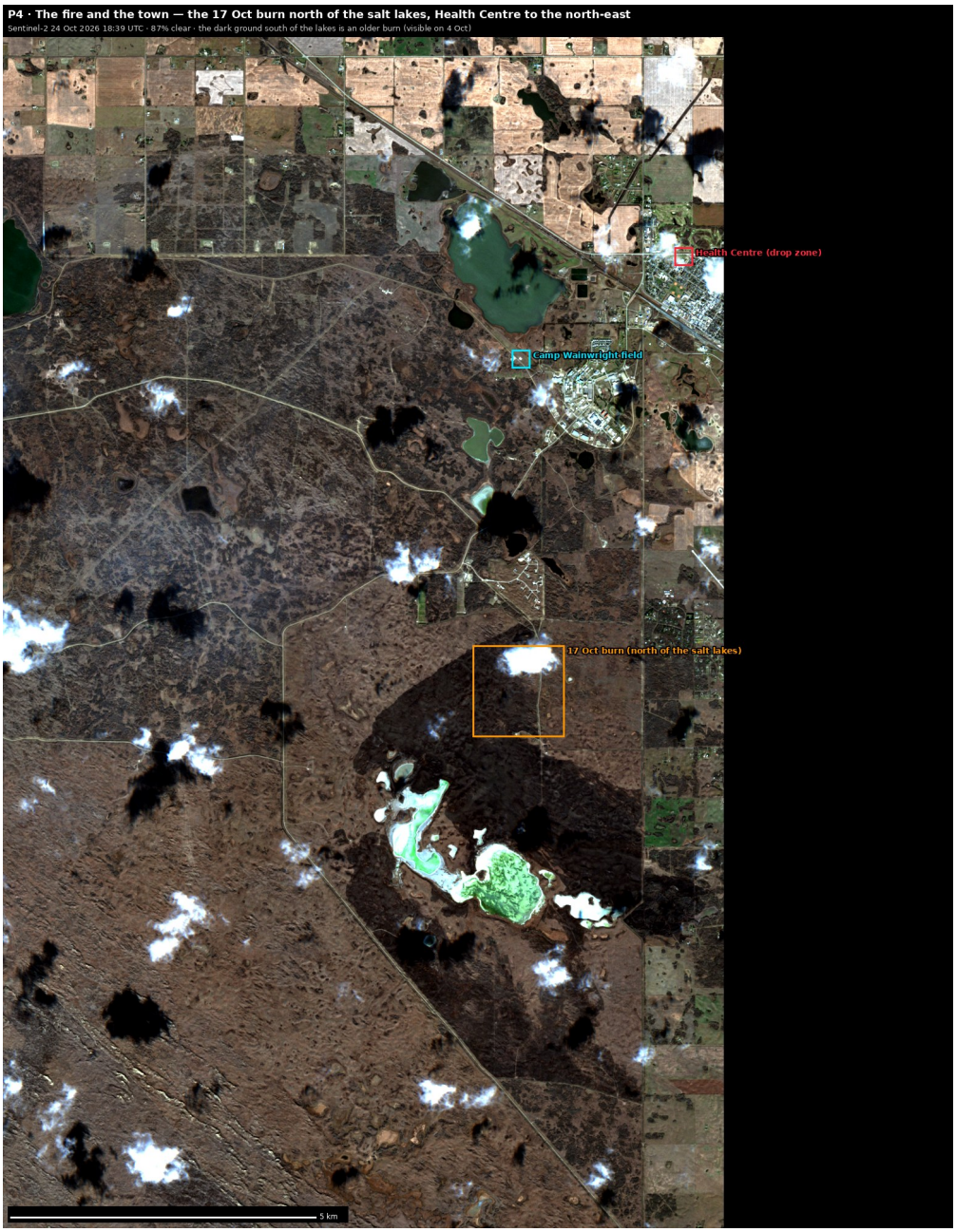
P1 · CC-130H 130339 on the night of 17–18 Oct: received positions (solid) and the route through the 509-minute gap as reported and estimated (dashed), with the other military aircraft within 600 km and the Falcon 7X C-GCUL. Borders approximate.

Exact times, MDT and UTC

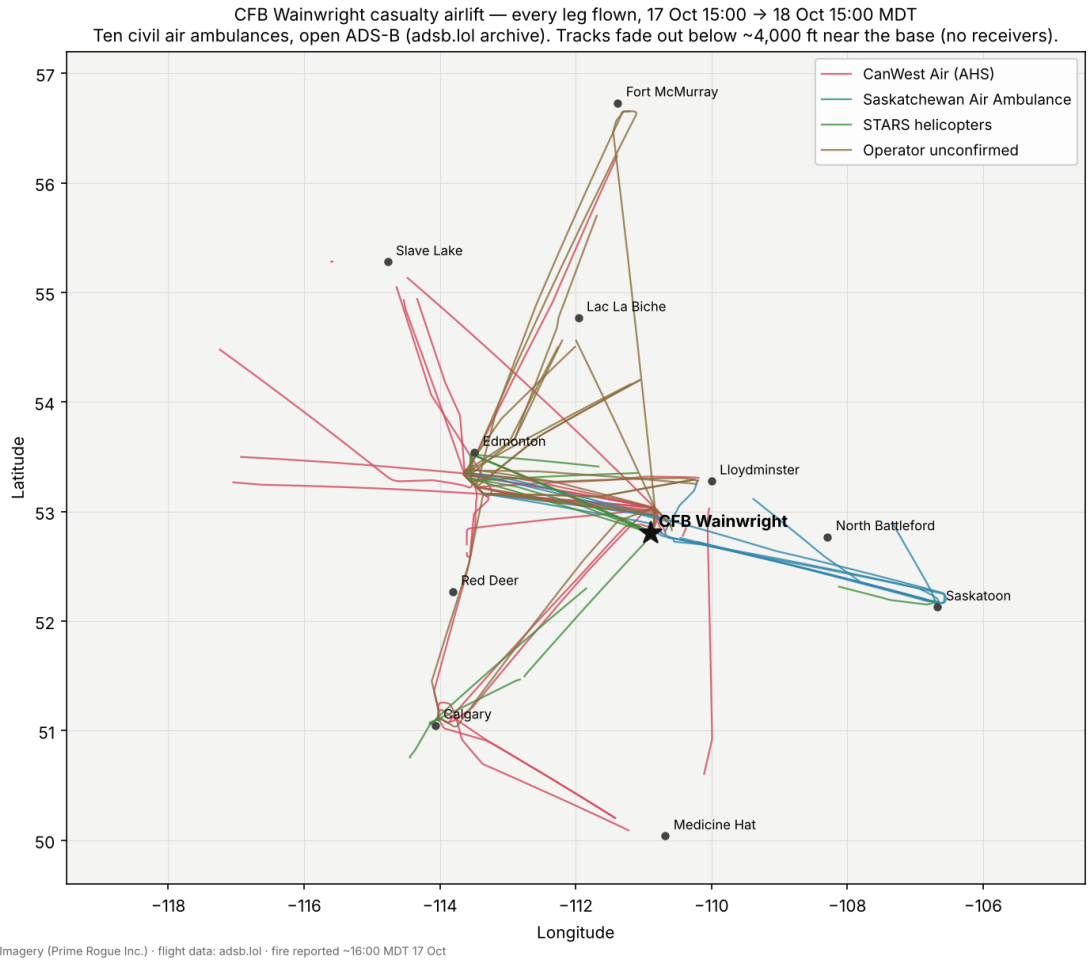
MDT = UTC−6. Winnipeg was on CDT (UTC−5), so the 19:49 MDT take-off was 20:49 local in Winnipeg.

MDT	UTC	Event	Status / source
17 Oct, "several hours" before ~16:00	—	Grass fire known to leaders about 1 km away, judged contained; training continues	On the record (Rutland) (CP24)
~16:00 ("just before 4 p.m.")	~22:00	Wind shift drives fire about 1 km in 30–60 s onto C Company on the pairs range	On the record (Narcity/CP)
~16:00	~22:00	RCMP called	Wikipedia, citing CTV/Global (Wikipedia)
16:06	22:06	US C-17A RCH9202 at its closest point: 167 km, 31,225 ft, in transit	RWI data
17:28	23:28	First civil air ambulance tracked inbound to Wainwright	RWI data (SITREP 013)
by 18:00	by 00:00 (18 Oct)	Health command centre set up; Code Orange declared	On the record (Global)
18:16	00:16	First CTV/CP24 story ("significant casualties")	Published (CP24)
19:30	01:30	McGuinty announces fatalities	On the record (Global)
~17:49 or earlier	~23:49 or earlier	Latest likely tasking, if the full 2-hour weekend standby was used	Estimate
19:48–19:49	**01:48–01:49**	**130339 takes off from Winnipeg (CYWG)** (FR24 "ACTUAL 1:48 AM" UTC; archive 01:49)	**RWI data**
19:53	01:53	"Left Winnipeg at 7:53 p.m. Mountain time"	Single outlet (BorderPulse)
20:11–20:16	02:11–02:16	130339 climbing through 20,000 ft west of Winnipeg; last archive position before the gap	RWI data
~21:50–22:10	~03:50–04:10	130339 over Wainwright (998 km at C-130H cruise)	Estimate

MDT	UTC	Event	Status / source
~22:00	~04:00	"Over the Wainwright area at about 10 p.m."	Single outlet (BorderPulse)
22:34	04:34	Falcon 7X C-GCUL departs Edmonton International	RWI data
22:41 / 22:50	04:41 / 04:50	Business jets N44GJ (G-IV "MVJ44") and C-FSDS (Citation X) depart Edmonton Intl	RWI data
just after 22:45	just after 04:45	Fire reported "held" (MD of Wainwright)	Wikipedia (Wikipedia)
23:10–23:15	05:10–05:15	C-GCUL at about 40,000 ft near Grande Prairie, track 302° (user's FR24 screenshot matches the archive)	RWI data
"just before midnight"	~05:45–05:59	Mayor Bruce Pugh: medics "literally dropped from the sky," red parachutes lit by flares	Single source, mayor (Global live)
~00:00, 18 Oct	~06:00	CC-130H seen at Lloydminster Airport (photo caption: 130325)	Single outlet, reader photo (BorderPulse)
~02:45–03:00	~08:45–09:00	Implied Lloydminster departure for Winnipeg (900 km, ~1 h 50 min)	Estimate
03:33	09:33	User's FR24 screenshot shows the Herc near Edmonton; the position was probably stale	RWI analysis
04:45	10:45	130339 reappears west of Winnipeg, descending from 22,975 ft	RWI data
~05:01	~11:01	130339 lands at Winnipeg	RWI data
05:42–06:13	11:42–12:13	Belgian Falcon 7X BAF75 transits at FL390, 391 km away	RWI data
07:55	13:55	BorderPulse corrects "parachuted onto the base"	Single outlet (BorderPulse)
09:57	15:57	C-GCUL lands Seoul Incheon; departs 11:15 MDT (17:15 UTC)	RWI data
13:35	19:35	Code Orange lifted: 22 ground ambulances, 6 planes, 2 helicopters	On the record (Global)



P4 · The fire and the town. Sentinel-2, 24 Oct 2026: the 17 Oct burn north of the salt lakes (orange); the large dark area south of the lakes is an older burn, already visible on 4 Oct. The garrison, Camp Wainwright field and the Health Centre on the north side of town where the SAR techs came down.



P6 · The civil airlift into Wainwright, 17–18 Oct (RWI SITREP 013): air ambulances from 17:28 MDT; no RCAF aircraft received within 80 km.

The record confirms 11 jumpers from 435 Squadron, nothing more

DND's on-record account is thin. CBC reported on 21 October that **"the 11 SAR techs were members of the 435 Transport and Rescue Squadron,"** based at 17 Wing Winnipeg. According to CBC, they jumped "into the vicinity of the Wainwright hospital" to provide casualty care and support medical staff. None were injured, and all have since returned to Winnipeg. An unnamed DND spokesperson told CBC it was "the largest parachute deployment of search and rescue technicians" in recent memory. The CBC article mentions no aircraft (CBC via Yahoo). At the 18 October briefing in Edmonton, Rutland said "military search and rescue technicians also parachuted into the site" (CGTN/Reuters). Global paraphrased him as saying they came "to add capacity" (Global News). The formal DND release of 18 October says nothing about SAR techs, parachutes, the RCAF or any aircraft, and thanks "first responders and medical teams" generically (Canada.ca). No published source says who tasked the jump. JRCC Trenton is the normal authority for Alberta, but that is background knowledge, not reporting.

The **jumper count is contested**. Global's Jeff Semple posted video overnight of "more than a dozen CAF personnel literally parachuting into Wainwright, arriving at the local health centre" (BorderPulse embed), and Wikipedia repeats "more than a dozen" (Wikipedia). DND's **11** is the on-record number and should be preferred. The higher count is probably a video estimate, or it may include non-SAR-tech jumpers such as a jumpmaster, which is worth asking. The **drop zone** is also described in conflicting ways. Reuters has "into the site." The New York Post had techs "landing at the base" (DNYUZ/NY Post). BorderPulse withdrew its "onto the base" wording at 7:55 a.m. on 18 October. CBC's "vicinity of the Wainwright hospital" agrees with a CTV caption, "A person parachutes near the Wainwright Health Centre" (CTV). A Western Standard bartender compared the sight to "Red Dawn" (Western Standard). The mayor's account of flare-lit red parachutes and

witness reports of flares being dropped point to an illuminated night drop. BorderPulse says it has not verified the flare reports.

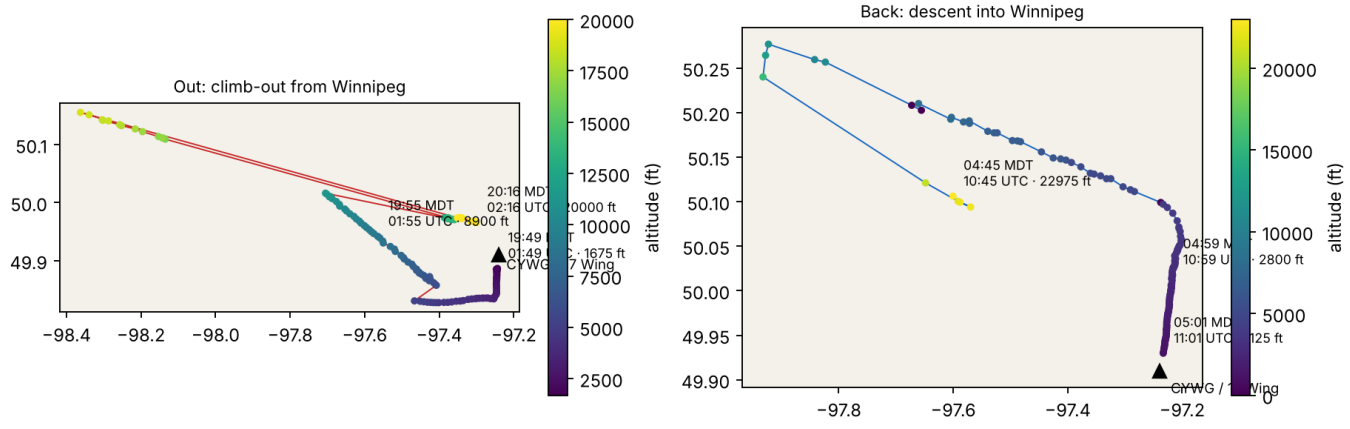
RWI's archive fixes the Winnipeg legs but goes dark over the prairies

The airframe identification is RWI's own work and is the most important new finding. A full-day scan of every Canadian military hex shows **130339 as the only CC-130H transmitting on 17–18 October**. It departed CYWG at **01:49 UTC**. Flightradar24 also tracked it live as "C130H339," operator Royal Canadian Air Force, with an "ACTUAL 1:48 AM" departure on a UTC-set display. The user's screenshot shows it at **#3 worldwide, tracked by 1,955**, which means the flight was publicly visible in real time that night. The archive then **loses it at 02:16 UTC** after a climb through 20,000 ft west of Winnipeg. It **picks it up again at 10:45 UTC** descending from 22,975 ft west of Winnipeg, and the aircraft lands about **11:01 UTC**. The 509-minute gap reflects missing community receivers across rural Saskatchewan and Alberta. It is not evidence that the transponder was switched off. FR24's own feed did draw a track as far as just east of Edmonton, so FR24 or MLAT data might fill the gap. The user's 03:33 MDT screenshot showing the Herc near Edmonton cannot be a live position: 72 minutes later the aircraft was descending into Winnipeg, about 1,200 km away. FR24 was probably showing a stale end-of-track.

BorderPulse's 19:53 MT departure is within four minutes of the archive's 19:49. The archive gives no reason to doubt BorderPulse's "over the Wainwright area at about 10 p.m." either: 998 km at C-130H cruise puts the aircraft overhead at about **21:50–22:10 MDT** (estimate). Unit, timing and type all point to 130339. One caveat: RWI's notes list 130339 among **435 Squadron's CC-130H(T) tanker airframes**. That needs confirming. If it is right, 435 Sqn launched a tanker-configured Herc as its jump platform, which may reflect an airframe shortage. Skies said 435 Sqn would keep four Hercs "until late 2026" (Skies Mag). Its first CC-295 Kingfisher arrived on 19 June 2026, and the squadron would "continue to operate the CC-130H" in the meantime (Totem Times). A Royal Aviation Museum event in August marked the type's retirement from the Winnipeg region (Royal Aviation Museum). A CC-295 is not ruled out by reporting, but no RCAF CC-295 transmitted anywhere near Wainwright that night. The only one RWI saw was 295505 "SNAK505," flying locally at Comox.

The **tail discrepancy** has two explanations, and the evidence favours the first. BorderPulse's reader photo caption reads "CC130-H 130325 out of CFB Winnipeg," and the alt text says it was at Lloydminster "after attending CFB Wainwright to drop SAR Techs" (BorderPulse). Either the caption misreads the tail, or a second Hercules flew the mission without ever being received. The second would require 130325 to stay unreceived for both its Winnipeg departure and its return, a stretch where 130339 was received cleanly. The photo itself, if BorderPulse will share it, could settle the question.

P2 · CC-130H 130339 (hex c2af27, callsign C130H339): every position the open archive received, 18 Oct 2026



P2 · Every position the open archive received for 130339 (hex c2af27): climb-out from Winnipeg 19:49–20:16 MDT and the descent back 04:45–05:01 MDT. Nothing in between.

Two clocks for the jump: 10 p.m. or just before midnight

The unresolved timing problem is that **Mayor Bruce Pugh placed the drop "just before midnight"** (Global live), while BorderPulse has the aircraft over Wainwright **at about 10 p.m.** and on the ground at Lloydminster, 55 km away, **at about midnight**. Both cannot be exact unless the aircraft orbited for nearly two hours. That is possible if it made several passes (drogue, streamer and flare runs, then separate sticks), or if it held while the ground situation was assessed. Alternatively, the mayor's time is an approximation recalled the next day. A drop near 22:00 fits the flight data best. It would put the SAR techs on the ground about **six hours after the fire reached the troops**, around the time the MD of Wainwright said the fire was being held (22:45). Rutland's "add capacity" description also fits a drop at that hour: this was reinforcement of the Wainwright Health Centre during a long night of medevac flights, not first response. By the time the Herc took off, the health command centre had been running for nearly two hours, McGuinty had already announced deaths, and civil air ambulances had been flying into Wainwright since 17:28 MDT.

The rest of the Herc's night is inference. If it landed at Lloydminster around midnight and was descending into Winnipeg at 04:45 MDT, it would have left Lloydminster at about **02:45–03:00 MDT** (estimate), roughly three hours on the ground. CBC says the techs "have since returned to Winnipeg" but not how. The archive cannot confirm a Lloydminster landing, because the aircraft was out of coverage. The launch time also says something about tasking. Under 435 Sqn's **two-hour off-hours/weekend standby** (Wikipedia 435 Sqn), a 19:49 take-off fits a tasking **no later than about 17:50 MDT** if the crew used the full two hours. That is close to when Alberta health agencies set up their command centre (estimate). It may also mean the request came hours after the 16:00 casualty event, which is a question only DND can answer.

P3 · The drop zone as DND describes it: "the vicinity of the Wainwright hospital". Red: Wainwright Health Centre heliport (CWH2, 52.8430 N 110.8647 W); yellow: 1 km box. Sentinel-2, 4 Oct 2026 (last clear pass before the jump).

P5 · Lloydminster Airport (CYLL), where a BorderPulse reader photographed a CC-130H around midnight (caption: 130325). Sentinel-2, 21 Oct 2026.

The rest of the sky was nearly empty of military traffic

RWI scanned every military, business-jet and hidden-registration aircraft within 600 km of Wainwright from 17 Oct 18:00 UTC to 18 Oct 18:00 UTC. Every military aircraft it found was in transit and none was involved in the response. Under the 509-minute caveat, "not received" does not mean "not flying."

Aircraft	MDT (UTC)	Closest approach	Assessment
USAF KC-135R 58-0001	17 Oct 12:44–13:29 (18:44–19:29)	63 km, 38,000 ft	Transit, before the fire
RCAF CC-130J-30 130601 "CFC4269"	17 Oct 14:08–14:38 (20:08–20:38)	344 km, 24,025 ft	Transit, before the fire
USAF C-17A 08-8200 "RCH9202"	17 Oct 15:42–16:19 (21:42–22:19)	167 km, 31,225 ft at 16:06 MDT	High-altitude transit, close to the moment the fire hit
Belgian Air Component Falcon 7X OO-LUM "BAF75"	18 Oct 05:42–06:13 (11:42–12:13)	391 km, 39,000 ft	Haneda → Vancouver → Melsbroek transit; unrelated

No other military aircraft transmitted a position within 600 km between about 22:00 UTC on 17 October and 11:00 UTC on 18 October. There was no CC-295, no CH-146 Griffon and no CC-130J. RWI's earlier SITREP 013 found no RCAF aircraft within 80 km of Wainwright in the open archive, which fits the jump Herc being unreceived over the prairie. The absence of a 408 Squadron Griffon from Edmonton Garrison, about 190 km away, is notable but not conclusive. Reporting describes the air response as civil: Alberta EHS's "22

ground ambulances, six planes, two helicopters" (Global), STARS from Edmonton, Saskatoon and Calgary (CP24), and at least 14 FR24-tracked trips by Saskatchewan Lifeguard 2 and 3 and STARS 1, 3 and 11 (BorderPulse). Nothing published says whether the Herc counts among Premier Smith's "eight" aircraft. Patients went to the University of Alberta Hospital, the Royal Alexandra, Foothills and Red Deer Regional (Global).

Falcon 7X C-GCUL: a utility jet with no demonstrated link

C-GCUL (hex c04c04, Dassault Falcon 7X c/n 57) is registered to **Canadian Utilities Limited**, part of the ATCO group in Calgary, according to registry and photo-caption checks in RWI's notes. FR24 hid the registration. RWI data shows it leaving **Edmonton International at 22:34 MDT (04:34 UTC)**, reaching 35,000 ft by 04:53 UTC and about 40,000 ft near Grande Prairie at 05:15 UTC. The user's 05:10 UTC FR24 screenshot (40,025 ft, track 302°) matches the archive exactly. From there it flew over Yukon and Alaska to **Seoul Incheon (landed ~09:57 MDT / 15:57 UTC)**, left at 17:15 UTC, and was last seen near Mindanao at 20:58 UTC. It departed 189 km from Wainwright, about 6.5 hours after the fire reached the troops, in the same half-hour as two other business jets. The only reason to flag it is context. ATCO is the natural-gas utility for much of Alberta, and Global News reported an **unverified military-source theory that a round struck a gas line or well**, which Rutland said he did not believe (Global News). On 22 October, military police said there was "no indication that there was an explosion of any kind" (Narcity/CP). A trans-Pacific executive trip planned in advance is the default explanation. Put the question to ATCO and do not assert a connection.

Questions to put to DND / RCAF

1. Which aircraft dropped the 11 SAR techs: type, tail and callsign? Was it CC-130H 130339? Did CC-130H 130325 fly on 17–18 October?
2. Is 130339 a CC-130H(T) tanker airframe? If so, why was it the SAR platform, and how many 435 Sqn Hercs and CC-295s were serviceable and on SAR standby that weekend?
3. Who requested and who tasked the jump (JRCC Trenton, CJOC, 3rd Canadian Division, AHS, the base), and at what time? What is the JRCC case number?
4. What were the exact times of the 435 Sqn take-off, the first pass over Wainwright, each jump, and departure from the area? How many passes and sticks were there, at what altitude, and were flares or illumination dropped?
5. Was the drop zone at or near the Wainwright Health Centre, the school, or on the base? Can DND give coordinates or a field name?
6. Was the mayor's "just before midnight" a second drop, or is about 22:00 MDT the correct jump time?
7. Did the aircraft land at Lloydminster? When did it arrive and depart, and how and when did the SAR techs return to Winnipeg?
8. Why does DND say 11 jumpers when Global/Wikipedia say "more than a dozen"? Did anyone other than SAR techs jump?
9. What did the SAR techs do on the ground, how long did they stay, and how many patients did they treat or escort?
10. Is the RCAF aircraft included in Premier Smith's eight aircraft? Were any other CAF aircraft (408 Sqn Griffons, a 424 Sqn CC-130J, 4 Wing Cold Lake) tasked or considered? If not, why not?
11. When was CFB Wainwright first aware of the fire, and how much time passed between the 16:00 casualty event and the request for SAR techs?
12. Why does DND's 18 October news release omit the SAR deployment? Will DND release the 435 Sqn mission report or JRCC log, or should RWI file an ATIP request for them?

Conclusion

The jump is better documented in open flight data than in DND's own statements. RWI's archive confirms the Winnipeg legs to the minute, and the 01:49 UTC departure matches BorderPulse's independent timeline. That gives a defensible, attributable identification of **130339 as the probable jump aircraft**, provided it is framed as RWI flight-data analysis and not as confirmation. The aircraft-level gap now comes down to two contradictions DND can resolve in one answer: 130339 or 130325, and 22:00 or just before midnight. The second matters beyond chronology. A drop near 22:00 means the CAF's own parachute reinforcement arrived about six hours after the casualty event, a measurable response interval set by when the request was made, not by flight time. That interval belongs in the Board of Inquiry questions.

For RWI's method, the 509-minute blind spot is the lesson. Free community ADS-B cannot see the prairie at night, so "no military aircraft" over Wainwright is a coverage statement, not a finding. Buying FR24 or MLAT history for 130339's 02:16–10:45 UTC gap, and asking BorderPulse for the original Lloydminster photo, would close most of the remaining questions without waiting for DND.

Sources: RWI flight archive (adsb.lol globe_history 17–18 Oct 2026; data/adsb_rcaf/ in the RWI pipeline repository); Copernicus Sentinel-2 L2A (Element 84); research notes with every link are cited inline above.