

3 Crashed C-130s Had Sequential Numbers

By JASON BRADY
Staff Writer

The Lockheed C-130 Hercules transport that crashed at Fort Bragg July 1 is one of three airplanes with sequential serial numbers that have crashed since early 1984, according to Air Force accident reports.

All three were 1968 model airplanes with serial numbers 68-10944, 68-10945 and 68-10946. The first crashed into a mountainside 26 miles northwest of Zaragoza Air Base, Spain, on Feb. 28, 1984. The second slid out of control on a runway at Giebelstadt Army Airfield, West Germany, on Nov. 2, 1984.

Both of those airplanes belonged to the Military Airlift Command's 435th Tactical Airlift Wing stationed at Rhein-Main Air Base in West Germany, and both were flown by aircrews of the 37th Tactical Airlift Squadron.

The C-130 that crashed on Fort Bragg's Sicily Drop Zone during a low-altitude parachute extraction system demonstration carried the middle of the three serial numbers.

That plane was delivered to the Air Force on May 19, 1969. It was assigned to the 317th Tactical Airlift Wing at Pope Air Force Base on Feb. 23, 1976. It had previously been assigned to the 314th Tactical Airlift Wing based at Little Rock Air Force Base, Ark.

The C-130, belonging to the 40th Tactical Airlift Wing, hit the dirt landing strip at Sicily Drop Zone after failing to flare out of a rapid descent. It slid about 2,000 feet before erupting into a ball of flame, killing four of six crew members on board and a soldier on the ground. The accident occurred before a crowd of about 5,000 military and civilian spectators at the Fort Bragg-Pope capabilities exercise.

The crash destroyed the \$6.4 million aircraft, \$63,000 in Army vehicles and radios and \$7,865 in LAPES equipment, according to a report on the crash investigation.

The airplane had charted 12,506 flight hours, according the accident report obtained by The Fayetteville Observer from the Air Force Inspection and Safety Center at Norton Air Force Base, Calif. Its four engines at the time of the crash had from 10,119 to 16,575 flight hours on them. The Air Force routinely changes engines on its C-130s.

While two of the reports on the three crashes give conclusions about cause of the accidents, the report concerning the Fort Bragg crash omits that portion of the report.

According to the reports, the accident at Giebelstadt, which reinjured three crew members and a passenger, occurred immediately after the plane touched down and a main landing gear collapsed, causing the aircraft to skid along the runway.

Those in the rear were injured when pieces of propeller punctured the fuselage.

The accident in Spain occurred when the C-130 was flying an "adverse weather aerial delivery system" training mission that required it to discharge Air Force combat controllers and pararescue jumpers over a drop zone then drop cargo parachutes onto another drop zone.

(Continued From Page 1B)

According to the report, the crew aborted the first scheduled jump over the drop zone because of misalignment. A second approach

over the drop zone seemed to normal.

The airplane crashed into a 2,395-foot mesa, about 180 feet from the top of the mountain. Nine

crew members and nine parachutists died. Conclusions submitted by investigators stated there were no malfunctions of the airplane prior to the crash.

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Squadron Sets Up Fund For

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Staff Writer

Members of the 40th Tactical Airlift Squadron at Pope Air Force Base have established a fund to help families of victims of the July 1 crash of a C-130 cargo plane at Fort Bragg.

Two airmen from the 317th Tactical Airlift Wing at Pope Air Force Base were severely burned during the ill-fated low-level flying maneuver that left four airmen and a soldier dead.

Lt. Marc A. Lenke and Sgt. Tony P. Holmes, who survived the crash on Sicily Drop Zone, are in critical and satisfactory condition, respectively, in the burn unit at Brooke Army Medical Center near San Antonio. Family members are staying near the Texas military hospital, and leaving Fayetteville and their jobs has resulted in a financial strain.

Members of the aircrew's unit set up a fund to help relatives of the survivors bear out-of-town living expenses and to provide

scholarship money for the children of pilot Capt. Garry M. Bardo, who was killed in the crash.

The 40th TAS Survivors' and Memorial Fund also will accept donations to any charitable program in the name of the aircrew. "But the biggest reason is to help family members of the survivors living at the burn center," said MSgt. Emmett P. Starnes, the 40th TAS 1st sergeant who, along with Lt. Col. Stephen Acuff, squadron commander, established the fund.

Crash Victims' Families

Starnes said family members are living in a military guest house near the hospital, paying for room and board and suffering lost income because they had to leave their jobs behind.

Starnes said donations from as far away as Tampa, Fla., and Charlotte have come in. That money came from civilians who were at Sicily Drop Zone for an annual capabilities exercise when the crash occurred, Starnes said.

The crash occurred before a shocked

crowd of about 5,000 people, some of them friends of the victims.

Killed were Bardo; Capt. John B. Keiser, the navigator; and TSgt. Timothy J. Matar and Airman 1st Class Albert G. Dunse, loadmasters. Also killed was SSgt. Douglas L. Hunter, of the 82nd Airborne Division's 3rd Battalion, 73rd Armor Regiment, who was hit by the plane before it exploded. Douglas' unit also has established a scholarship fund for his two children. The Douglas

(See SURVIVORS, Page 6B)

Hunter Memorial Fund is located at the Fort Bragg Federal Credit Union on the U.S. 401 Bypass, 82nd officials said.

The 40th TAS fund is open-ended with no specific goal. Starnes said the fund will try to raise as much money as possible.

Most of the survivor's fund initially was raised by the flight engineering section of the 178 remaining members of flying squadron. So far, \$1,208 has been raised for the survivors' family members and another \$645 from outside contributions to be divided equally among the other categories, which include the charitable contributions in each of the deceased's names, the scholarship funds for Bardo's children, the survivors' fund and a non-preference fund to be used where needed.

A separate offering at the base chapel on Sunday also raised \$1,300 for the survivor's fund, Starnes said.

While the fund is currently administered through the squadron's activity fund, Starnes said efforts are under way to establish a trust fund at the Pope Federal Credit Union. Starnes said a three-member board of trustees will be appointed to oversee the administration of the trust.

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