

Bodies recovered from C-130 crash

ZARAGOZA, Spain (AP) — Rescuers recovered the bodies Wednesday of 17 U.S. servicemen and a Spanish air force captain killed when a U.S. Air Force transport plane crashed in heavy fog in a snow-covered mountain range in northeast Spain.

The plane, a Hercules C-130, crashed Tuesday night in the foothills of the Sierra del Moncayo mountains 50 miles northeast of here. It had been headed to Abitias airfield for routine parachute jumps, U.S. officials said.

Rescuers said the jump doors of the plane were open and several victims were hooked up to the aircraft's jump line, apparently preparing for a parachute jump, the independent news agency Europa reported, quoting Spanish air force sources.

Spanish radio reports said the pilot of the aircraft shouted "Out, out, out!" just before the control tower at the Abitias airfield lost contact with the plane.

Neither U.S. nor Spanish air force officials could confirm either report.

However, U.S. Air Force spokesman Capt. Roger Davis at the Zaragoza base said a "curious communication" had been recorded. He declined to elaborate.

Lorrie Kropp, a spokeswoman at the U.S. Air Base in Ramstein, West Germany, said, "It would be logical if they had been hooked to the line since they were on a drop mission."

The area where the plane crashed was covered with several feet of snow, and rescue teams were hindered by



heavy fog and bad weather.

The names of the 17 American servicemen would not be released until 48 hours after their relatives had been notified, Davis said.

Spanish Air Force headquarters in Madrid identified the sole Spanish passenger as Air Force Capt. Francisco Guardiola Gago, and said he was traveling in the aircraft as an observer.

The aircraft was on temporary duty from the Rhine-Main U.S. Air Base near Frankfurt, West Germany. All but one of the 17 U.S. crew and combat controllers were stationed at Rhine-Main. The other was stationed at Zaragoza.