

Prince Rupert News photo by Gladys Blyth

**Wreckage of amphibious aircraft rests on its nose in trees and snow near Prince Rupert.**

*Prince Rupert air crash*

# Smoke seen, seven saved

Special To The Province

PRINCE RUPERT — Three people were killed and seven rescued from an amphibian that crashed near Prince Rupert Tuesday night and was not found until Wednesday morning.

Dead are the pilot, Bill Norman Anderson, 26, of Prince Rupert; and a brother and sister, Richard Yeltatzie, 19, and Celeste Winnifred Yeltatzie, 14, of Masset.

Prince Rupert coroner E. T. S. Moore said an inquest will be held.

The Grumman Mallard aircraft of North Coast Air Services Ltd. was on a regular 45-minute commercial flight between Prince Rupert and Eden Lake on the islands.

The seven survivors include a baby, and a toddler. They were spotted by charter helicopter pilot who was on a routine flight.

Listed in satisfactory condition in Prince Rupert Regional Hospital Wednesday night were the following, all of Masset:

Roger Rajotte, 25, teacher; Edward Richmond, 34, teacher, of Port Clements; Donna Frances Haldane, 27; Rock Collison, 1 year; Laura Yorke, 39; Seldon Yorke, 4; and Frederick Davis.

Clifford Schwindt, the pilot for Vancouver Island Helicopters Ltd. stationed at Seal Cove close to Prince Rupert, said he saw smoke from a small fire coming from the trees less than two miles along the coast as soon as he was airborne Wednesday.

"You could almost see it from the runway," he said in a telephone interview. "I wouldn't have noticed them but for that smoke. The area had been thoroughly searched the evening before."

Schwindt said the Mallard had crashed "almost vertically" among trees about 100 feet tall, set back about 500 yards from a beach.

"Both wings were off, tail torn, and it was upside down. The survivors couldn't have got back to Prince Rupert because there's half a mile of water to cross," he said.

Schwindt landed on the beach. Two B.C. Hydro crewmen rushed to give assistance while Schwindt flew back for blankets, first aid packs and more assistance. A ministry of transport helicopter and boat soon rescued the survivors.

Schwindt appears to be making a habit of being in the right place at the right time.

Last October, the 37-year old pilot discovered the body of a man who had been missing in the Skeena Mountains north of here for weeks.

In January, he was first to spot and report a massive avalanche that buried a highway service complex in Terrace, killing seven persons.