

Serum musher dies

Veteran dog musher Edgar Kalland of Kaltag, one of 20 mushers who ran a relay from Nenana to Nome in 1925 to deliver life-saving diphtheria vaccine died Saturday.

Kalland operated a family store and post office in Kaltag until he suffered heart problems recently. He died aboard an airplane carrying him to Anchorage for treatment.

This year's honorary number one spot in the Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race from Anchorage to Nome was reserved for Kalland.

Kalland was the second musher to carry the diphtheria

serum in the winter of 1925, driving from Tolovana to Manley Hot Springs.

In 1925 a diphtheria epidemic threatened the ice-locked city of Nome located on the Seward Peninsula. No serum was available in Nome. Officials decided the only way to bring the serum was by a dog team relay.

A volunteer group of 20 mushers was organized within hours of that decision.

January 28, 1925, the first team picked up the serum from the Alaska Railroad depot at Nenana. After 20 teams, 674 miles in a total of 127 hours and 30 minutes, the serum arrived in Nome.

"Wild Bill" Shannon carried the serum from Nenana to Tolovana where he transferred it to Kalland. Kalland ran the leg to Manley Hot Springs through sub-zero weather and hazardous trail conditions.

Today three of the original serum mushers are alive: Edgar Nollner, Charlie Evans and Billy McCarty, who all live along the Yukon River.

Edgar Kalland's body was returned to Kaltag for burial.