

Two dead, two injured in crash on Denali

The Associated Press

Two men who survived a plane crash and four days of hallucinations and freezing temperatures on the icy slopes of Mount McKinley's Kahiltna Glacier remained in serious condition early this week.

While two men died of injuries they received in the crash, the Cessna 185's pilot, Ed Hommer, 26, and 30-year-old passenger Mike Klauser of Darlington, Ind., survived.

They suffered hypothermia and severely frostbitten hands and feet after the plane crashed Dec. 15 at the glacier's 10,300-foot level.

"They still need lots of nursing care . . . close attention," Said Susan Cosper, a nursing supervisor at Providence Hospital in Anchorage. "They'll be here quite a length of time. Extreme frostbite requires quite an extended treatment."

Both underwent minor surgery late Sunday to increase circulation to frostbitten portions of their bodies, she said. Both remain in the hospital's Thermal Unit, an intensive care ward for frostbite and burn cases.

Meanwhile, National Transportation Safety Board investigators are trying to piece together why the plane went down.

"I've only been able to talk to his (Hommer's) doctor," said Jon Osgood, the chief of the safety board's Alaska field office. "It'll be a couple of days before I can talk to him."

While Hommer and Klauser had parkas, sleeping bags and food, they had no ground pads or stove to melt snow for drinking water, said Pete Penares of the Alaska Rescue Group.

Art Mannix, a climber who organized a volunteer rescue party of six climbers from the mountain village of Talkeetna, about 55 miles southeast of the crash, said both men were dehydrated when rescuers arrived Saturday afternoon.

The six-man team struggled through whiteout conditions and waist-deep snow for nearly two days to reach Hommer and Klauser.

"Both of them told me they hallucinated a lot during the four nights they were stranded on the mountain," Mannix said. "Mike (Klauser) told me he thought he saw a cabin just a few yards away and he had to stop himself from walking over to it."

The dead were identified as Dan Hartman, 29, of Talkeetna, and 25-year-old Pat Scanlon, reportedly of Clarks Hill, Ind., but recently of

Talkeetna.

Hartman's body, the two survivors and members of the Talkeetna rescue team were plucked off the glacier Saturday afternoon. Alaska State Troopers said Scanlon's body was trapped in the wreckage. Army helicopters airlifted his

body and remaining rescuers off the glacier Sunday.

The Cessna crashed below a snow and ice cornice and later slid to within 60 yards of 2,000-foot dropoff.

The six-man Talkeetna rescue team was joined by the Alaska Rescue Group of An-

chorage and an Army high-altitude rescue team from Fort Greely.

High winds and poor visibility kept rescue helicopters away from the crash site until Thursday, when the Talkeetna team was dropped off below the downed plane.