

# **Bob Baker Dies In Plane Crash Near Savoonga**

A bush pilot widely known in the Arctic, especially in the northwest area, crashed on St. Lawrence Island near Savoonga and was killed March 7.

Bob Baker, owner of Baker Aviation based at Kotzebue and former mayor of that city, was flying Public Health Nurse Mary Hayes to Savoonga to attend to a boy, Brantley Kogassatoon, who, according to a radio message, had had a brain concussion.

Baker was apparently killed

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instantly while Mary Hayes survived a 16-hour ordeal in bitter cold before she was rescued by an unnamed Savoonga Eskimo.

Miss Hayes had suffered cuts, bruises, cracked and broken ribs when the crash occurred about eight miles west of the village of Savoonga.

Mary Hayes spent two hours trying to free herself from the wreckage despite her injuries and then spent the next 14 hours painfully moving around to keep warm resting only for brief periods.

Bob Baker ran into difficulties when the Savoonga airport was closed by white-out conditions. He apparently tried to set down the plane about eight miles from Savoonga when the mishap occurred.

The plane cartwheeled and

then flipped over killing the pilot and injuring Mary Hayes and leaving her in a dangerously difficult situation but from which she heroically managed to free herself despite her wounds.

Savoonga Eskimos began searching the island when Baker's plane failed to land after circling the airport.

"I never knew a man could look so beautiful," Mary Hayes said after being rescued by the Savoonga Eskimo who had made a search with a sno-go.

Miss Hayes was flown to Nome where she had emergency treatment at the Maynard McDougall Memorial Hospital. She was taken to Anchorage Public Health Service Hospital last Sunday accompanied by Dr. Owens of the Kotzebue PHS hospital.

Miss Hayes is 45 years old. She came from Wisconsin and has been a nurse for many years in the Public Health Service system in Alaska.

Bob Baker, a former Wien Air pilot, is survived by his wife and seven children in Kotzebue.

His body was recovered by the Savoonga Eskimo searchers.