

Billy Gregorioff Dies in Crash

A doughty little fighter for what he thought was right died last month, September 15, near his home village of Illiamna.

William "Billy" Gregorioff, Aleut and Russian extraction, was an air taxi operator and guide.

Due to communications difficulties, Tundra Times was not able to get specific confirmation of the fatal accident at the outset.

This week, Authur Upicksoun, who had been working at Newhalen five miles from

Illiamna and on his way to Barrow to work, said that Billy Gregorioff was taking off Lake Illiamna with a passenger.

"According to witnesses, Billy was airborne taking off, but when he was about 20 feet in the air the plane dipped and headed down into the lake. It hit the water and nosed over," said Upicksoun.

He said that Gregorioff's passenger was unhurt and was able to get out of the

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Gregorioff . . .

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overturned plane but Gregorioff had suffered a broken neck.

Early this year, Billy Gregorioff became well known to many people when he accused the Federal Aviation Administration of discrimination against himself and his operation as an air taxi pilot.

Since that time, and before that time, a running battle between the Aleut pilot and the FAA personnel in and around Illiamna had been going on. Charges and counter charges were made that resulted at a hearing in Anchorage on August 19.

Both parties accused the other of violating air traffic regulations of the FAA.

At the time of Gregorioff's death, the results of the hearing were being reviewed in Washington, D. C. by the chief examiner of the aviation agency.

The ruling on the hearing was expected to be made sometime this month.