One disaster victim's body found; search for eight missing resumes

By RANDY DEVINE Telegram Staff Writer

Rescue operations were scheduled to resume today for eight people still missing and presumed drowned following the burning late Thursday night of the \$2-ton motor schooner, Del Roy, two miles northeast of the tip of Merasheen Island in Placentia Bay.

A search of the disaster area Friday by six vessels, two helicopters and two planes was successful in locating one body - that of Mrs. Leo (Regina) Pomeroy, It was flown to St. John's

Nine of the 15 people aboard the 16year-old Del Roy are presumed to have drowned around 11:30 p.m. Thursday after fire broke out in the engine room and spread to most areas of the schooner forcing abandonment of the vessel. The passengers took to a dory that overtuned shortly after passengers and crew were aboard.

Those who lost their fives in the icy waters of Placentia Bay were: Mrs. Leo (Regina) Pomeroy, 44; her six-year-old son William, her 10-year-old daughter Shella, and another daughter Linda, aged 12, all of Placentia; Mrs. Patrick (Nellie) Pomeroy, 52, of Placentia (it's not known if they are related); Earnest Pitcher, 24, a member of the armed forces stationed in British Columbia: and three crew members of the ill-fated Del Roy, William Garrett of English Harbour West, and John Yard and Leo Bullen, both of Mose Ambrose, Fortune

Those who survived the disaster were Captain Reuben Evans and his brother Clarence, 16, of English Harbour West: Carmen 'Pitcher, --26, of Placentia; --Marjorie Ennis, 14, of St. John's: Lovola (Roy) Pomeroy of Placentia, son of Mrs. Leo Pomeroy; and Judy Snow, address the radar about half a mile away. We surrounding the cause of the accident. not immediately known.

The survivors were brought to the Come By Chance cottage hospital around 4 a.m. Friday where they were treated for exposure and exhaustion. Carmen Pitcher was transferred to the St. John's General Hospital where she received further medical treatment and a hospital spokesman said Friday night that her

spokesman said Friday night that her condition is satisfactory. The others have been released from hospital. The Del Roy was owned by Gordon. Petite of English Harbour West and was under charter to National Sea Products ent at Arnold's Cove.

plant at Arnoid's Cove.

Captain Ray Burkshire, 34, of Arnoid's

Cove, skipper of the 60-ton schooner,

Bertha Joyce, the vessel that saved the

six people from a watery grave, was

interviewed by the Telegram aboard his

schooser Friday at the site of the lisaster and he told of the rescue.

"We left Isle Valen about the same me as the Del Roy but we were about ight miles ahead of him. I saw his light sland but he went out of sight behind



Captain Ray Burkshire

some islands and it was about minutes before I saw him again. But this time his light did not look right.

"It looked too red so I look a better look; through the binoculars and it appeared to be fire so we turned around, When we had covered half the distance I sawithat there was a fire on board and I was concerned about all those people because the skipper had told me earlier on the two-way radio that he would be moved to Placentia four or five years taking them in from Merasheen.

We arrived at the schooner and did program. not see anyone about so we went to White Island, about a mile away, to see if they had gone there in the dory. There went to investigate and found three men and three women clinging to the bottom Clarence were in the wheelhouse of the of the dory. We took them on board our schooner 1

women was unconscious and a man-was

"All the others were pretty good after seemed to have taken a lot of water in her and we worked on her all the way to-Arnold's Cové " he said

I never had time to talk to the vors because I was interested in perform mouth to mouth resuscitation." rth for the other people "because it dark and we only had one small

if we continued searching so I this it would be better to get the that were sick back to the

in their finding the distressed people.

"Usually the radar will not pick up anything small unless the weather is calm," he told this reporter.
"In another 10 or 15 minutes they

would all have been gone." He said the water is about 50 fathoms

in the area where the mishap took

The Del Roy had a crew of five and the remaining people were friends and families of fishermen who were using the 25-mile-long Merasheen Island as a summer fishing base. They had gone to the island Monday and were on their way home when the blaze broke out.

"The fishermen want their women to visit - you do these things to oblige these fishermen," Mr. Petite, owner of the Del Roy, said in explaining the probable on why women and children were aboard the schooner.

The Del Roy is one of several vessels used in carrying fish from the islands in the bay to the plant at Arnold's Cove.

Mr, Petite said the vessel was not intended to carry passengers. She was fitted with a dory but the lifeboat had been left on the wharf at Arnold's Cove. The schooner was powered by two 83 horsepower motors

It is believed that this was the first time the fishermen's families had been back to Merasheen Island since they

Meanwhile, Transport Minister Don inquiry will be held into the disaster. A was no sight of them so we went back to preliminary inquiry was held Priday the boat again and we were just about "evening at Arnoid's Cove and Mr. to leave when I spotted something on Jamieson released some of the details

Captain Evans and his 16-year-old son Del Roy when the captain noticed that the radar had gone blank. The son went Captain Burkshire said one of the and informed the chief engineer of the trouble and the engineer went below deck to try and correct the problem.

"When he opened the door to the engine room he was roreed flames and heat escaping from room," the minister said in

"The two 88-horsepower engine still running and the captain had no way of stopping them. The schooner making eight or nine knots."

The captain decided the vessel have to be abandoned and the dory was put over the bow of the Del Roy. All-passengers were put aboard that dory while the captain held the small craft to

"About this time there was an explosion but not enough to injure anyone," said Mr. Jamies

"Captain Evens let go of the dory and plain Burkshire, a medium-built the Del Roy was still travelling at a rate with rugged hands, said the calm of eight or nine knots and either the schooner came in contact with the dory or he wake of the vessel overturned the

The blaze was discovered about II Thursday and it was an hour and a half later before the survivors were

Joyce sent off a distress signal after discovering the burning schooner but it became "scrambled" and all of the message did not get out. However, he said part of the message was picked up by a Cape Breton station who advised the Air, Sea Rescue Centre in Halifax. Nova Scotia.

"An RCMP spokesman said the fisheries patrol vessel Acadian sighted the charred remains of the Del Roy "but as they approached it slipped beneath

The RCMP natrol vessel Standoff an RCMP helicopter, and the provincial government's jet ranger helicopter as well as a Twin Otter aircraft, also owned by the provincial government, a Rescue Centre and a number of local longiliners took part in the search Priday.

Captain V, Evans of the rescue centre

said their craft was dispatched to the area about 8:30 a.m. and arrived back about 12 hours later "without spotting anything." He said they will not be aking part in the search today

Conditions on Placentia Bay were ideal. The sky was clear, visibility vas good and the water was claim with



