

A ROUGH RETRIEVE

by G. W. E. BROWN

The incident had its beginning back in May 1962 when a Vancouver, B.C. television station asked the Glider Council of British Columbia to do some flying for a film. The film was to be used in one of a series of half-hour shows covering a wide variety of outdoor sports which they were running at that time.

Flood airport near Hope, some 100 miles east of Vancouver, was specified as the location because of its topnotch mountain scenery which would make a picturesque background for the sailplanes. As far as we were concerned, several trips to Flood in the past resulted in excellent soaring, therefore everybody was keen on both, the project and its location.

The day of the flight turned out to be somewhat cold and windy, however, the sailplanes were assembled and Ron Colly, who was Instructor in Charge for the day, went off for a check flight in the 2-22. He assessed the conditions as satisfactory upon landing, so with the cameraman in the towplane and the show producer in the 2-22, away they went to film the flight along the mountain ridge lying to the north of the airport and on the farther side of the Fraser river. After releasing from the tow, Ron flew along the ridge at about 3,500 feet, turning right to follow its contour. As he started the turn they hit lift



Photo by G. W. E. Brown

The site of the crash (arrow) was at the 3,200 foot level of the ridge and no road to walk home.

and in Ron's words: "Although I had 70 on the clock she just would not come out of that turn, the next think I knew, we hit".

The impact resulted in a small cut on Ron's forehead from the canopy, but luckily no other injuries to him or his passenger. After assessing their own damage a check of the situation showed that they were on a 45 degree slope with the right wing of the glider wrapped around a tree. The fuselage was broken off just behind the wing, the canopy shattered, the nose bent in various places and the left wing tip just at the edge of a

500-foot cliff. The crash was located at the 3,200 foot level of the ridge, approximately 2,000 feet below its peak and of course with no road to walk home. The 45 degree slope angle continues from the point of the impact down to the 1,500 foot level with trees, rocks and boulders making the descent extremely tough. Below the 1,500 foot level there is a logging road of sorts which ends on the valley floor and at the edge of the swift Fraser river. Flood airport and civilization are across the river but there is no bridge or ferry to cross the stream.

Those on the airport saw what happened and immediately phoned the RCAF Search and Rescue Unit at Vancouver for help. However a helicopter was not available then and the RCN (Royal Canadian Navy) on Vancouver Island had to be called to send one over. To make matters worse, the rescue could not be made at the site of the crash due to the rough and steep terrain, so our unfortunates had to slide and hike down that 1,500-foot rugged slope to the logging road. There, in a small clearing and more or less level ground, they were finally picked up by the helicopter and deposited back at the airport.

Now that the occupants of the glider were rescued, what about the 2-22? It also would have to be



Photo by G. W. E. Brown

The wreckage was disassembled, stripped of the fabric and made ready for its helicopter ride.