



One of the Alas de Esperanza (Wings of Hope) seaplanes, shown with a makeshift dock of an isolated Amazon River fishing village that depends on the Quebec organization's services for contact with the outside world.

Below, villagers assist in the unloading of medical and other supplies, material which often means the difference between life and death to the Peruvian villagers.

The priority of the flying service, taken over by the Quebec Wings of Hope organization in 1972, is medical emergencies but an average week for 31-year-old pilot Edward Schertz might take him to the borders of Ecuador, Columbia or Brazil.



Photos by Norma Greenaway

Canadian seaplane lifeline for isolated Peru villages

By Norma Greenaway
Special to the Star-Phoenix

IQUITOS, Peru — Canadian may curse the roar of a low-flying plane but, to the population scattered along the banks of the Amazon River, the same sound is cause for genuine rejoicing.

To a young woman with a troubled pregnancy, the sound means rapid transportation to hospital and, possibly, the difference between life and death for her and her baby.

To other isolated villagers, it may mean mail, fresh food, medical and educational supplies or even visitors.

The sound that shatters the natural tranquillity of the jungle signals the arrival of the Canadian seaplane Wings of Hope.

It usually brings all activity to an abrupt halt while men, women and children trek down the muddy riverbank to watch the silver craft land.

There are warm greetings and refreshments for pilot Edward Schertz, who has been flying this rugged territory in northeastern Peru almost daily for more than four years.

For many Amazon natives who lack mobility and a communication system, Schertz and the Wings of Hope represent their only consistent link with the outside world.

The 31-year-old pilot's days are full and varied.

Based in Iquitos, the business

capital of Peru's jungle region, Schertz arrives at the Francisco mission by 7 a.m. to prepare for a day of flying which could take him as far as the borders of Ecuador, Columbia or Brazil.

Although he develops a rough weekly schedule from the numerous requests for the flying service, the priority of the Wings of Hope organization is medical emergencies.

As a result, a day's schedule often will be dumped or rearranged at the last minute if one of the 12 radio-equipped mission centres calls in with an emergency.

The Wings of Hope flying service, known as Alas de Esperanza to the people here, is supported by a group of Montreal businessmen and private contributors.

The non-profit, non-denominational organization files for any group requiring transportation in these 185,000 square miles of barely-penetrable jungle, where a 50-minute flight can save up to 15 days of boat travel.

Real medical emergencies might account for 100 of my 800 flying hours a year... and there is no charge for these flights," Schertz says.

"We have gradually been cutting down on the number of people brought to hospital in Iquitos. Unless it is a real emergency where there is no treatment in the mission, the people usually get better care if they stay put."

The reduction in emergency flights also stems from the Quebec organization's tougher stand on what constitutes an emergency, he adds.

Because all emergency flights are free, there were instances in the past of the service being abused, Schertz says. The missionaries knew that, if they reported a medical emergency, the supplies scheduled for delivery to their outposts would come with the plane at no cost.

However, in the event of non-emergency flights, the group using the flying service pays half of the \$80 it costs for each flight hour.

Schertz insists the only valid emergency is "a matter of life and death."

"A woman hemorrhaging in childbirth is obviously an emergency. But snake bites are not always emergencies."

The plane is being used more and more to facilitate the successful operation of preventive medicine programs.

Schertz admits this means more work for him and often requires overnight stops in remote villages.

To gain access to one village involves leaving the plane and travelling by canoe for several hours on one of the Amazon's tributaries.

But Schertz refuses to acknowledge any real hardships and says he feels preventive medicine should be a priority.

For the recently-initiated vaccination program, the Peruvian ministry of health is supplying the vaccine. The Franciscans supply qualified medical personnel and Wings of Hope provides transportation.

The plane is also used to transport government medical personnel to isolated spots for the purpose of training natives in basic first aid.

The financial rewards for Schertz's hectic schedule and responsibilities are a monthly living allowance of about \$300 on which he supports a wife and two children.

While high by Peruvian standards, the Schertz family lives frugally in order to meet the daily costs of a city where prices reflect the fact it is accessible only by water or air.

But it was the work—not the idea of making a lot of money—that attracted Schertz to the jungle.

"I always wanted to fly, but could never justify it as a sport," he says.

So, until he became a pilot and joined the Wings of Hope, he worked as a mechanic and Mennonite volunteer in northeastern Brazil.

After three years there, he

returned to the United States in 1968 and trained as a pilot.

"I heard about the U.S. Wings of Hope while I was at aviation school and knew it was the type of work I was looking for."

In May, 1971, he joined the organization as a skilled mechanic and pilot and came to Peru where the Missouri-based group had been active since 1968.

When the U.S. Wings of Hope team turned over its two planes and Peruvian operation to the newly-founded Quebec group in 1972, Schertz decided to stay on as one of the pilots.

The second plane is stationed in the Andean community of Satipo, located 2,000 feet above sea level and surrounded by mountains ranging from 5,000 to 18,000 feet.

Pilot Jean Valiquette, a volunteer with the French Canadian counterpart of Canadian University Students Overseas — (CUSO) — recently completed a public relations tour in Quebec and Ontario.

The Peruvian government has extended the Wings of Hope contract for another five years and Schertz hopes a third plane will be in operation soon.

Another goal is to have Peruvian pilots take over the actual flying, but, so far, efforts to keep the people they have trained have failed.

The major problem is that, once they have received the necessary training, they take the first opportunity available to join a commercial airline where the money is much better, he says.

To counter this, the organization tells all interested persons they must get a private license on their own and guarantee at least two full years of service once their Wings of Hope training is completed.

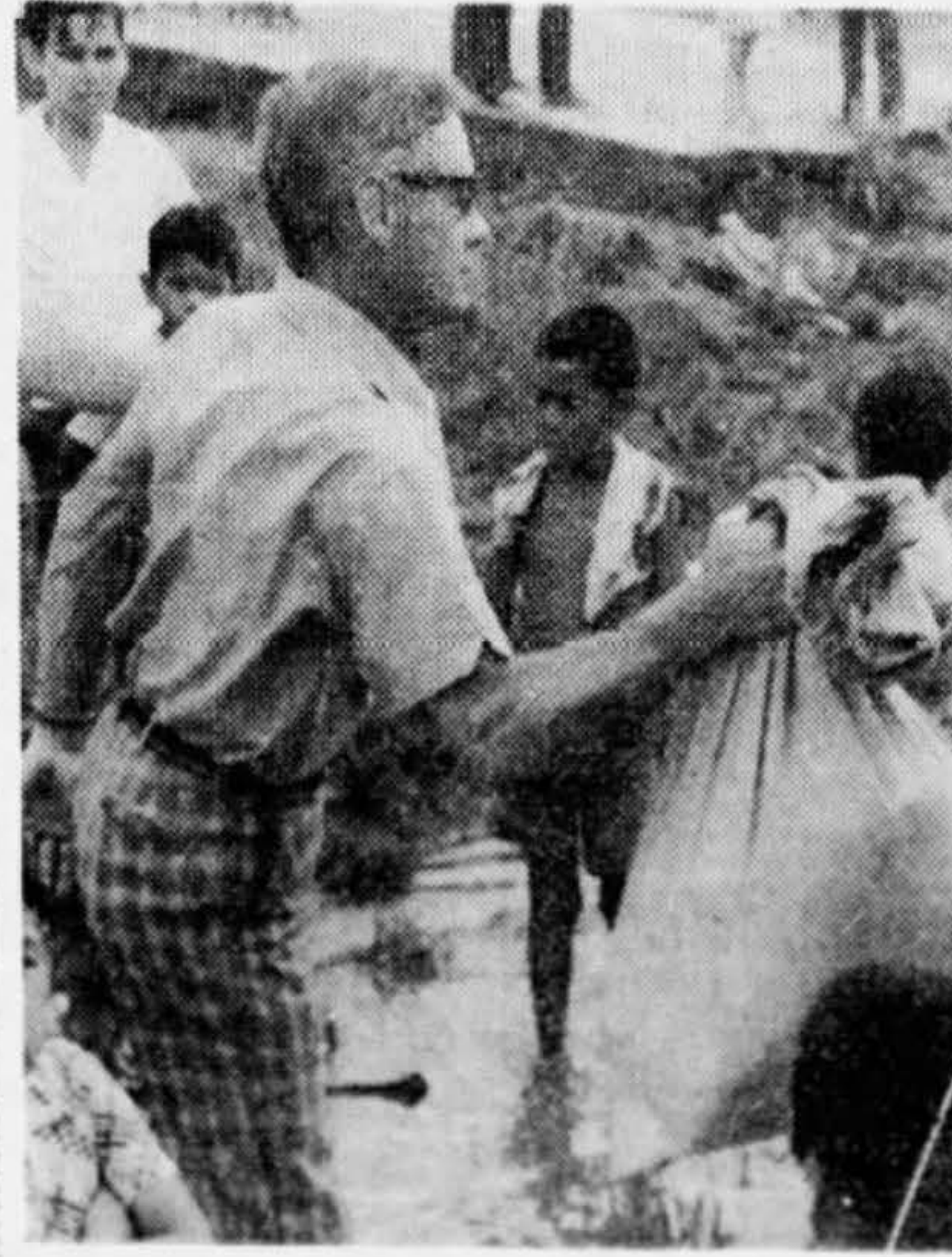
Prior to the Canadian group taking on the Peruvian operation, U.S. Wings of Hope gained international recognition when pilot R. J. Weninger located the wreckage of a Lanza airliner that had plunged into the jungle on Dec. 24, 1971, carrying 92 passengers.

The only survivor was a 17-year-old German girl, Juliane Koepche, who emerged 10 days later, guided by two Indian woodcutters.

While isolated Amazon inhabitants may never have heard about that particular event, they are certainly aware of what Wings of Hope has meant for many of their own people.

As one older lady put it recently:

"If it weren't for Eddy Schertz and his plane, there would be a lot fewer mothers and children in our village."



WINGS OF HOPE PILOT EDWARD SCHERTZ... unloading supplies at isolated village

Arabs protest Jordan occupation

Arabs in Jordan protested against the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip by Israel on Monday.

The protests were held in Amman, the Jordanian capital, and were organized by the Arab League and other groups.

The protesters demanded the withdrawal of Israeli forces from the occupied territories and the restoration of Palestinian self-determination.

The Jordanian government has consistently supported the Arab cause and has been a member of the Arab League since its founding in 1945.

The occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip by Israel in 1967 has been widely condemned by the international community.

The United Nations Security Council has passed several resolutions calling for the withdrawal of Israeli forces from the occupied territories.

The Arab League has also issued several resolutions condemning the occupation and calling for a just and lasting settlement of the Palestinian question.

The protests in Jordan are part of a larger movement of Arab solidarity against the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

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Funerals

HOWARD — The funeral service of Evelyn M. Howard, who died on March 6, 1976, was held from the Chapel of the Saskatchewan Funeral Home on Wednesday March 10th at 1:30 p.m. conducted by Rev. W. J. Phillips. Rev. Pallbearers were: David Hallatt, Douglas Paulson, Jim Howard, Jim Howard, Ken Kynoch, Ira Turnbull. Interment took place in Woodlawn Cemetery.

BODRUG — The funeral service of Mr. Michael Bodrug who died on March 6, 1976, was held from the Seventh Day Adventist Church on Wed. March 10 at 2:00 P.M. Conducted by Pastor W. G. Sokoluk and Paster W. H. Frazer. Pallbearers were: Bryan Bodrug, Delwin Bodrug, Dennis Bodrug, Dwight Bodrug, Leon Bodrug, Steve Frazer. Interment was made in the family plot in Woodlawn Cemetery. Arrangements in the care of Park Funeral Chapel.

BUNNAH — The funeral service of Mrs. Lillian Bunna who died on March 8, 1976, was held from Park Funeral Chapel on Wed., March 10 at 3:30 P.M. Conducted by Rev. Fred Davies. Pallbearers were: Bud Moss, Stan Stonehouse, Jack Archibald, Colin Ashmead, Alex Archibald, James Werekak. Interment was made in the Family Plot in Woodlawn Cemetery. Arrangements in the care of Park Funeral Chapel.

SKELDON — The funeral service of Lloyd Frederick Skeldon, who died on March 3, 1976, was held from the Chapel of the Saskatchewan Funeral Home on Wednesday March 10th at 3:30 p.m. conducted by Rev. W. R. Wall. Pallbearers were: Jack Middleton, Arvin Parker, Glenn Skelton, Arthur McEwen, Robert McEwen, Ronald McEwen. Interment took place in the Soldier's Field Woodlawn Cemetery.

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Notice of Appointment

First Change of Name

Notice is hereby given that the following persons have been appointed as trustees of the following trusts:

1. Trust of the Estate of Mrs. M. J. Smith, deceased. Trustees: J. A. Brown, R. C. Green, and P. D. White.

2. Trust of the Estate of Mr. T. H. Jones, deceased. Trustees: K. L. Black, M. N. Grey, and O. P. Blue.

3. Trust of the Estate of Mrs. Q. R. Black, deceased. Trustees: S. T. Green, U. V. White, and W. X. Brown.

4. Trust of the Estate of Mr. Y. Z. Grey, deceased. Trustees: A. B. Black, C. D. White, and E. F. Brown.

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