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organization in 1972, is an average week for 31year-old pilot Edward the borders of Ecuador Columbia or Brazil



Canadian seaplane lifeline for isolated Peru villages

By Norma Greenaway Special to the Star-Phoenix

IQUITOS. Peru - Canadians 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 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 fly

ing 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 jurgle region. Schertz arrives at the Francis can 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 flies 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

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. Schwertz 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 nonemergency flights, the group using the flying service pays half of the \$86 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 suc cessful 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 Schwertz refuses to acknowledge any real hardships and says he feels preventive medicine should be a prior-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

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

So, until he became a pilot and oined the Wings of Hope, he worked as a mechanic and

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

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 Cana dian 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 train-

ing 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 17year-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 re-

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3: 90 p.m. from Park Funeral Chare streduction flow Work C. M. Adeadourstone The family gradefully decline force viving are: three same, fluid or and Coorge of Katylegton, back. one daughter, Eileen of Prince peorge, B. C. / 15 grandchildren; and grandchildren, three surfletord, hask., William Hosel of Delmar Hoegs of Victoria, B.C. Mrs. Errison was pre deceased by her hundward Chartes in 1965, also by one sister and four brothers and one grandson. Burn in Orchant. Ont. Mrs. Erixon moved to Quill Lake. 1920 she moved to the Clavet District and married her husband Charles. 1923, residing in the Clavet Farming District until she moved to Saska toon in 1950, where she has resided until her passing. Interment will be made in the Hillcrest Memorial

Gardens. Courtesy parking north of

the Chapel. Arrangements in the

HARSHEY-The death of Lee Roy

care of Park Funeral Chapel.

E. Erison age 75 years of \$160000

Harshey, age 87 years, of 417 5th Street, East, Saskatoon, occurred at his residence on March 9th, 1976. Prayers will be offered in the Chapel of McKague's Funeral Home at 8:30 p.m. Thursday evening. The Funeral Mass will be held on Friday. March 12th, at 3 p.m. in St. Josephs Roman Catholic Church, 8th Street & Broadway Avenue, con ducted by Rev. L. Kaufmann, Surviving are his loving wife, Gladys, three daughters, Mrs. Frank (Joyce) Broccolo, of Vancouver, Mr George (Gladys) Bachmai er, Thunder Bay, and Mrs. Michael (Jean) Sawchyn, of Borden, Sask one son, John Harshey of Courtney, B.C., twenty-two grandchildren, seven great grand children, two sisters, Mrs. Olive Durant, and Mrs. Frances Pearson, both of Artesia. New Mexico. Mr. Harshey was predeceased by a daughter, Frances Emily Olson, on April 1st, 1957, by a son, Sylvester (Chester) Harshey on June 3rd, 1965, and by five brothers. Mr. Harshey was born in the USA. He came to the Maidstone district in 1912, married Gladys Simmonds in 1921 and farmed in the Standard Hill district near Maidstone until moving to Edam in 1940. He farmed in the Edam district until moving to Saska toon in 1950, where he worked at Millars Flower Shop Greenhouse and A.A. Murphy and Sons Ltd. as a gardener. Mr. Harshey retired at the age of 76 years. The family would appreciate donations to the Heart Fund, or the Cancer Society. McKague's Funeral Home will be in charge of arrangements. Interment will be made in the Hillcrest Memo-

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hourth-sectorred in a local hospital or the Chapet of the tosk atoon Funeral tipe Rees. Mrs. Rostone is survived scettern. Nhe was predecessed by her eartier years Mrs. Rothnie had been a member of the LO.D.E. and had interment will take place in Wood

Funerals

HOWARD-The Funeral Service of Evelyn M. Howard, who died on March 6, 1976 was held from the Chapel of the Saskatoon Funeral Home on Wednesday March 10th at 1:30 p.m. conducted by Rev. W. . Phillips Rees. Pallbearers were: David Hallatt, Douglas Paulson Jim Howard, Jon 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. Soloniuk 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, Arrange ments in the care of Park Funeral Chapel.

BUNNAH-The Funeral Service of Mrs. Littian Bunnah 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 Ar chibald, Colin Ashmead, Alex Arch bald, James Werezak, Interment was made in the Family Plot in Woodlawn Cemetery, Arrange ments in the care of Park Funeral

SKELDON—The Funeral-Service of Lloyd Frederick Skeldon, who died on March 3, 1976 was held from the Chapel of the Saskatoon Funeral Home on Wednesday March 10th at 3:30 p.m. conducted by Rev. W. R Wall. Pallbearers were: Jack Mid dieton, Alvin Parker, Glenn Skel don, Arthur McEwen, Robert McE wen, Ronald McEwen, Intermen took, place in the Soldier's Field Woodlawn Cemetery.

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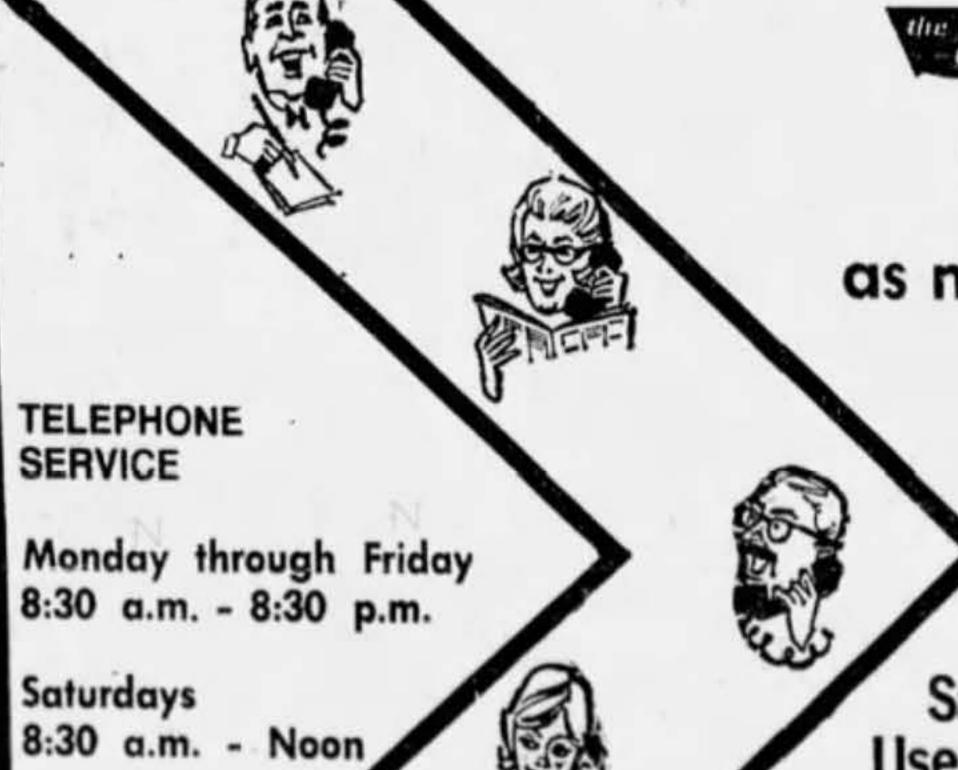
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