

## Equipment men "angels" to Guatemala quake victims—via "Wings of Hope"

*"There was great joy in Santa Cruz del Quiche, Guatemala, when the sound of the new Cessna came over the village airstrip. The isolated people of the Zona Reyna in the jungles of Guatemala had been desperately awaiting the arrival of that plane for more than a year."*

IT WAS 11:15 A.M. on a December day in 1975, and Guy Gervais, Chief Pilot and Field Director of the Wings of Hope, was waiting to accept delivery of a 1975 model Cessna 185, equipped with short take-off/landing capability and the latest in instrumentation. Arrival of the aircraft had been long awaited because of its intended use in ferrying food, medical supplies, and patients from various parts of the jungle to Quiche's base hospital or the national one in Guatemala City.

But, while the need of those Central American jungle inhabitants was a desperate one, neither Gervais nor the people he serves were fully aware then of how desperate that need was yet to become.

Moreover, most of the people greeting that plane probably never heard of Roy C. Wayne, Sr.—founder of Wayne Supply Co., and the man after whom the plane is named—nor the names of more than two dozen other distributor and manufacturers, members of something called the American construction equipment industry.

But those Guatemalan villagers were aware that someone had helped send that plane. And, they were soon to become very grateful, indeed, for its presence—to a degree impossible to communicate in any language.

At approximately 3:10 a.m. on February 4th, 1976, as Gervais tells it, "... my wife Ruth and my 15 month old son, Pablo, and I were sleeping soundly. Then came a violent shaking of the bed and a cracking from the wall. I heard tile falling from the roof. Ruth was the first to cry out: "An earthquake!"

"I simply could not tell you how

long it was from the moment we first felt the earthquake until the instant we got out of the house. I just don't remember," Gervais says. Fortunately, he, Ruth, and Pablo survived without injury. Somehow, the three made their way in a pickup truck through the rubble strewn streets of Quiche, to the airstrip. There they spent the night huddled near the Cessna with several others, ready to take off should another quake strike.

By dawn, the full extent of the disaster became evident in the early light. Quiche was badly damaged, some were dead and many injured, and, imagining what other parts of the country looked like, Gervais decided that "... the time had now come to go help the others."

The story of what took place in the days and weeks which followed—and which still continues—in the skies over earthquake ravaged Guatemala could easily constitute a best-selling, non-fiction book. Tons of food, water and medical supplies were flown to starving quake victims, hundreds of injured received hospital treatment, and thousands of air-miles were covered by the Roy C. Wayne Memorial Aircraft as it hopped from

one mountain or jungle airstrip to another with Gervais at the controls.

And there were others, too, who piloted aircraft donated by Wings of Hope to other relief organizations in Central America and helped sustain a nation in the time of its distress.

"And a good portion of the credit for what we've been able to accomplish," says William D. Edwards, Executive Director of Wings of Hope, "should go to the members of AED who have supported us."

Edwards cited an article in the December, 1974, issue of CED magazine, by AED Past President P.E. MacAllister, and describing the work of Wings of Hope, as the call for help which more than a dozen AED members answered.

"The Cessna 185 used by Guy Gervais, named the Roy C. Wayne Sr. Memorial airplane, was in Guatemala at the time of the earthquake because the Wayne Supply Company donated various used machines which, when sold, allowed us to purchase the Cessna and ferry it to Central America."

Wings of Hope also has purchased six new single engine utility airplanes, which are now serving on four continents, from the value of used equipment donations from such AED members as:

John Fabick Tractor Co., Fenton, Mo.; MacAllister Machinery Co., Indianapolis, Ind.; Furlow-Laughlin



**ROY C. WAYNE** Memorial Aircraft, purchased by Wings of Hope with the aid of donations from AED members, was loaded with supplies and ferried from St. Louis, Mo., to Quiche, Guatemala. Wings of Hope Exec. Dir. Bill Edwards (l) and President, Joe Fabick (r) posed with American Airlines flight engineer volunteers Charles M. Hunt and John Guthrie (c) who flew the plane to Guatemala, where it arrived just before the earthquake.

## Wings of Hope

Equipment, Inc., Baton Rouge, La.; and Waukesha-Pearce Industries, Houston, Tex.

Other AED members have donated machinery and checks enabling Wings of Hope to purchase used airplanes and much needed support equipment, as well as supporting operating costs.

"There are also a number of other AED members who have sent in personal donations, but without identifying their company. Although we have no way of identifying and saluting them" Edwards said, "we do know that they're not only generous and compassionate. They also possess an uncommon insight into the marvels and remarkable efficiencies of modern aviation and communications when applied to the remote places aided by our humanitarian program."

**Wings of Hope can trace** its origins back to 1962, when a Roman Catholic missionary named Father Houlihan returned to St. Louis after 20 years service in Africa. Through a mutual friend, he met Joseph G. "Joe" Fabick, Executive Vice President of John Fabick Tractor Co.

Fabick—who professes to being "no more than an average churchman"—was struck by the priest's description of how an airplane could have been instrumental in bringing medicine to fight diseases, flying the ill to hospitals, and ferrying food to the starving—if the missionary had had one.

As P.E. MacAllister described it in his CED article, "Joe hit on the idea of persuading his more kindly colleagues in the equipment business to donate pieces of used equipment—for which they could get a tax write-off as a donation—and which he, in turn, could fix up and sell through Fabick Tractor Co. to generate the cash required to buy a plane."

The ultimate upshot was a non-profit, non-sectarian, non-political charitable corporation with Fabick as its President, George Haddaway, publisher of *Flight* magazine, as its Chairman, Officers, a Board of Directors, and Edwards as the group's Executive Director.

That was 14 years ago, and in the

intervening time, Wings of Hope has been responsible for helping to place and/or support some 30 airplanes into the hands of various missionary, charitable, and relief groups in such diverse locations as Peru, New Guinea, Surinam, Brazil, the backwoods of Alaska, and Canada.

"In many of those cases," Fabick told CED, "donations from distributors, contractors and manufacturers were directly responsible either for the purchase of the airplane, or for the operational support needed before full responsibility for the aircraft and its use was given over to an organized charitable group in a given area.

"But with the increased participation by members of the equipment industry, Wings of Hope has been able to become more actively involved in such relief work"

The Cessna 185 sent to Guatemala, he pointed out, is wholly owned by Wings of Hope and will probably continue to be based at Quiche under Field Director Gervais for many months to come, as the remote villages continue in desperate need of its service as they rebuild on the earthquake's rubble.

**Fabick added** that members of Wings of Hope are already in the process of raising more funds to purchase still another Cessna, a model 185, to add support to the work already in progress by Gervais and the Wayne Memorial aircraft.

"The new plane has yet to be named for someone, but a portion of its purchase price and the cost of putting it into operation has already been covered because of the help provided by equipment manufacturers and distributors," Fabick said. "Wings of Hope now needs a further substantial gift of used equipment to complete the funding requirement," he added.

"And I hope they take as much pride and satisfaction as I do," he added, "in the fact that next time there is an earthquake—or anytime someone in the remote regions of the world needs help—he will get it by air from Wings of Hope or another relief group because someone in the construction equipment industry cared and got involved." ●



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