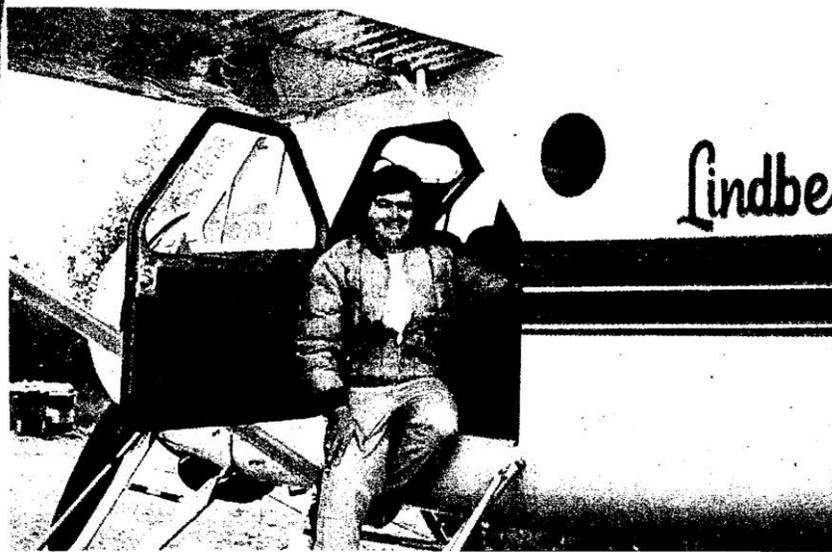
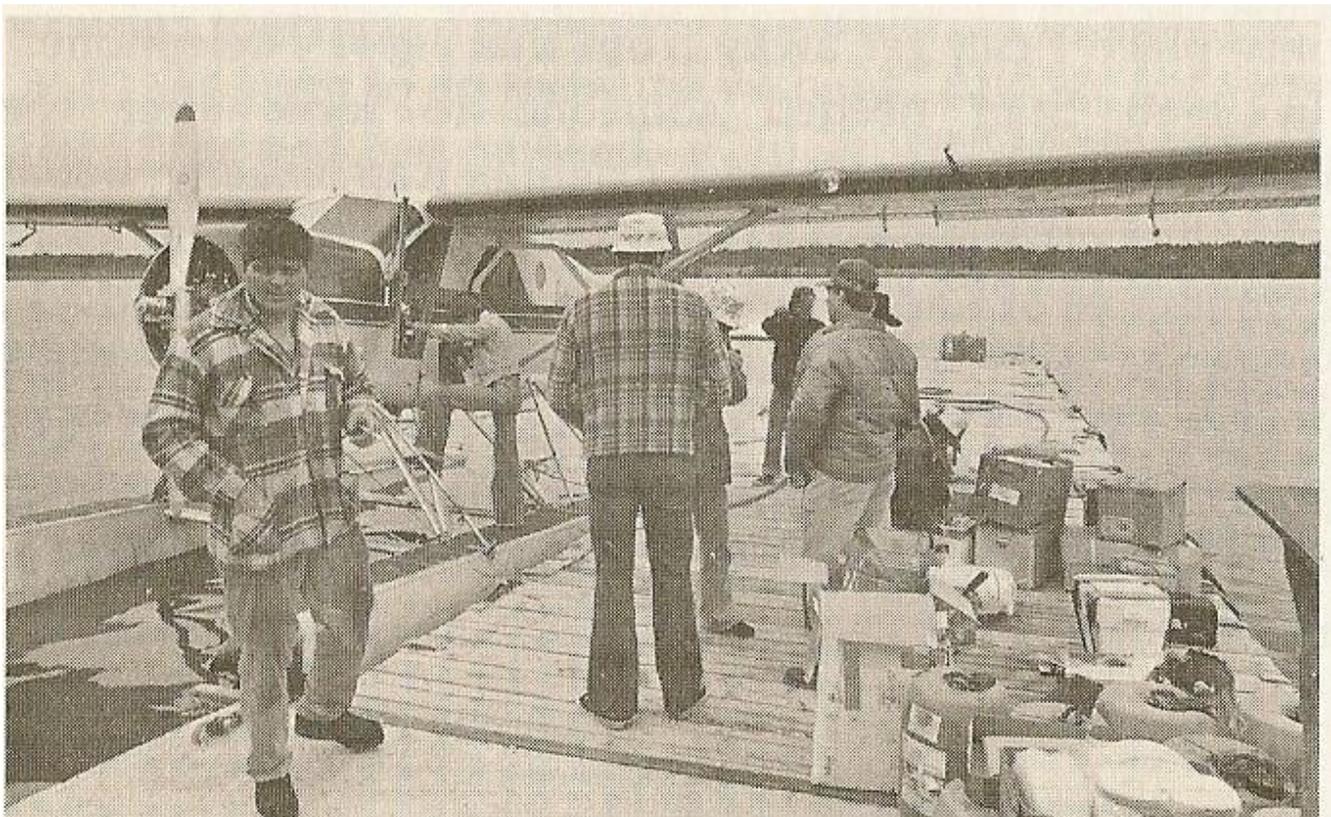


Lindy, the Happy Eagle



By Ernie Bies
February 4, 2015

Lindy Louttit is Bush Pilot and Caterer to Fly-In Fishermen
A Cree Indian, He Has Established 11 Outpost Camps in Northwoods



Lindy Louttit

photo by Paul J. Savoie

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Walking through the Cochrane, Ontario graveyard you may be drawn to a beautiful granite head stone adorned with an image of a Beaver float plane. (Paul Lantz photo). The inscription reads:

LOUTTIT LINDBERGH JOHN

"LINDY" THE HAPPY EAGLE

OCT. 27, 1938 – DEC. 21, 2006.



Lindy Louttit, a legendary bush plane pilot in northern Ontario, was born in Attawapiskat on James Bay. His aunt Jenny Chum, who was a big fan of world famous aviator Charles Lindbergh, suggested the name Lindbergh for the new baby and his



mother Susie agreed. Young Lindy went to school in Moose Factory and Moose River Crossing where he was cared for by his grandmother Mary Louttit. He tried his hand at many jobs in the Moosonee area, such as trapping, logging, sawmill worker, lineman and construction worker. The local game warden, Andy Gagnon, formerly of Hearst, took Lindy on as an assistant and interpreter in 1956. Gagnon encouraged the



local natives to benefit from their knowledge of hunting and fishing by providing tourism services to southerners. This made a lasting impression on the 18 year old Lindy who had not yet found his true vocation. He was fascinated by airplanes and would hang around the Austin Airways base in Moosonee doing odd jobs for the pilots, sometimes for no pay and then as a part time cook. In 1959 Lindy was working for a construction company in Moosonee that was building a military bunkhouse. Bill Bies, a Hudson Bay Company clerk, recalls Lindy's last day on that job when he had a mishap while backing a truck up. He inadvertently clipped the corner of the almost completed bunkhouse reducing it to a pile of sticks and couldn't believe it when they gave him his pink slip. That was a blessing in disguise as Lindy then found a job with the ground crew of Austin Airways.

Noticing his keen interest in learning to fly, Jim Bell, the Austin Airways base manager, encouraged him to get his pilot's license. Bell arranged with Vern Gran, an Indian Affairs official, to provide a \$2,500 loan and in 1960 Lindy found himself at the flying school of Laurentide Aviation in Montreal. Flying instructor Chris Merriam soon had the eager Lindy applying for his license and he became one of the first native bush pilots in Canada. He stayed with Austin



Airways for several years. He married Doris Gagnon, Andy's daughter and on May 15, 1968, Lindy and his growing family, which now included daughter Danis, moved to Kapuskasing. He took over as base manager for Stan Deluce's White River Airways at Remi Lake with Doris as his office manager. As a youth, Lindy had perfected his bush survival skills under the guidance of his Grandmother Mary and his step-father Chris Paulsen who was an experienced trapper. Lindy knew every tree and lake and rarely used charts. If forced to land by bad weather, he quickly set up a tent, caught fish, snared rabbits and gave his guests an unexpected added bush experience to talk about when they got home. On one occasion he replaced a damaged wing tip with tanned deer hide after a minor mishap near James Bay and continued flying until the replacement part could be brought in. He logged well over 10,000 hours with only a few minor mishaps flying for White River Airways.



Four years later, Lindy and Doris decided they could run their own business. On May 1, 1972, with a grant from the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs and a



huge mortgage, Lindy was able to buy his first Beaver airplane and Lindbergh's Air Service Ltd. was born. He bought 87 acres of land on Lillabelle Lake, four miles north of Cochrane where he



This is Lindbergh's Fishing Cabin on Nettogami Lake
Cabin Is Located On 10-Acre Island In Middle of the Lake

cleared land for his home and office and built a plane dock. Lindy was soon ferrying prospectors, hunters and fishermen into the far north, while scouting lakes for potential fishing destinations. Soon he built eleven 24'x24' log fishing cabins on lakes north of Cochrane. By 1975 he had a clientele of 500 hunters and fishermen requiring the addition to his enterprise of a second Beaver aircraft as well as a single engine Otter and more pilots. Pickerel, pike and speckled trout were in abundance. The guest log book at the Nettogami Lake cabin indicates that the first visitors in June 1974 were from West Virginia: Bob Glotfelty of Clarksburg and Jack Burnside and Lew Davis from Good Hope, Harrison County. They were



also the first to visit the Lindbergh cabins at Inglis, Detour and Edgar Lakes. Lindy sold his company to Rogerson's Enterprises in 1980 and continued to fly with other charter companies for years after.



He moved to Matheson where he served as Chief of the Wahgoshig

First Nation from 1985 to 1989 and as Deputy Grand Chief of the Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) in 1985.



Later he lived in Chapleau where he was elected to the Band Council. He encouraged his daughter Betty Albert-Lincez (Wabimeguil) to follow her dream to become an artist.

Lindbergh's Air Service was well known in Northern Ontario but few may realize the Moose River connection with Charles Lindbergh who had completed the first solo non-stop flight across the Atlantic in 1927.

Charles Lindbergh, "the Lone Eagle": Charles "Lucky Lindy" Lindbergh, who was also known as the "Lone Eagle", was on top of the world in 1931. His wife Anne was also a pilot who served as radio operator and navigator on many of their flying adventures. She was the daughter of U.S. Senator Dwight Morrow. Charles and Anne decided to take a vacation flight to the Orient. Leaving their one year old son Charles III at home they chose the shortest route between New York and Tokyo, through Canada and along the shores of the Arctic seas, North to the Orient. The Temiskaming and Northern Ontario

Railway had just been completed to Moosonee, allowing them to ship drums of gasoline by train and then to Moose Factory by canoe. They also relied on fuel cached by the Canadian government and private sources like the Hudson's Bay and Revillon Frères Companies. Lindbergh owned a two-seated single engine plane, "The Sirius", purchased from Lockheed in 1929, at a cost of \$22,825. It had a fuel capacity to travel for 2,000 miles at a cruising speed of 150 mph. Charles modified the open cockpits, adding sliding canopies for their Arctic adventure.

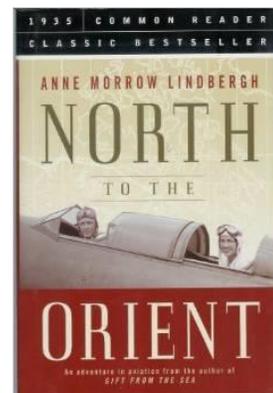
The plane was outfitted with survival gear, two radio sets and provisions for sixty days. Leaving Long Island, New York on July 27, with stopovers in Washington and North Haven, Maine, they arrived in Ottawa at 4:36 P.M. on July 30, 1931. They were hosted by U.S. Minister Col. Hanford MacNider and enjoyed a surprise visit from Canadian Prime Minister R.B. Bennet. They left Ottawa at 10 A.M. on August 1, flying to Moose Factory where they landed at 2 P.M. Anne was experiencing difficulties with the radio and anxious followers of their journey in south were left on the edge of their seats until word came back that they were safe. They spent the rest of the day in Moose Factory and obviously made a big impression on the local population.



At eleven A.M. on August 2, they left Moose Factory for short stopovers at Churchill, Manitoba and Baker Lake, NWT, where Anne was the first white woman to visit. Their next leg was a twelve hour flight to Aklavik, NWT which required taking turns flying the plane and sleeping. After a few days rest and refreshment, they proceeded to Point Barrow, Alaska, thence to Nome, Alaska and Siberia, Russia. When flying over water, they wore both a parachute and a life jacket which further cramped their seating space. Then, after a series of hops on remote islands in the Pacific Ocean, they arrived in Tokyo, Japan on August 26. Their next stop was Nanking China where they were pressed into service to assess flood damage along the Yangtze River. In October, their plane was damaged while being hoisted onto the

British Carrier Hermes and their trip ended when they learned of the sudden death of Anne's father Dwight Morrow. They returned home by boat and their damaged plane was shipped back to the Lockheed factory in California for repairs.

The next year the world was shocked by the tragedy of the kidnapping and death of the Lindbergh baby, the crime of the century. In 1935 Anne wrote a book about their adventures entitled "North to the Orient". News of their exploits and loss certainly would have reached the Louttits in Attawapiskat, influencing the naming of Lindbergh John Louttit in 1938.



Returning to our original story, Lindy Louttit passed away on Dec. 21, 2006 but will never be forgotten for his contributions to Northern Ontario. Fittingly, he became renowned as a pilot in his own right. The "Lone Eagle" would have been proud of his namesake, the "Happy Eagle".

Ernie Bies

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