

In 1931 CNAC answered China's call for help in time of need. During the devastating Yangtze flood of that year CNAC flew supplies into the stricken areas, conducted surveys and transported officials. Prominent among those officials was Charles Lindbergh, America's famed lone eagle, employed at the time as a consultant to Pan American.

On September 19, 1931, a black and orange Lockheed Sirius monoplane on pontoons, commanded by Charles Lindbergh and co-piloted by his wife, Anne Morrow, set down on Lotus Lake outside the wall of Nanking. The Lindberghs were on the last leg of their survey flight over the Great Circle route to Asia. It had been a grueling air expedition—up the coast of Maine, across Canada and Alaska, across the Bering Strait, down the coast to Siberia to the Chishima Island chain of Japan, on to Tokyo and across the Yellow Sea to China.

First on hand to greet the famous pair were CNAC's chief pilot Ernest M. "Allie" Allison and operations manager William L. "Bondy" Bond. The two men predicted the Lindberghs would land on nearby Lotus Lake instead of the swirling waters of the Yangtze where they had been scheduled to alight and where a bevy of dignitaries awaited them. Jumping in a sampan, Allie and Bondy arrived at the lake just as the Sirius touched down, in time to help Lindbergh secure his plane and cover his engine and cockpit.

Allie knew Lindbergh from air mail days. Unlike Allie, Lindbergh had not been a U. S Air Mail Service pilot. The Lone Eagle had flown the mail for Robertson Aircraft Corporation, a feeder line operating

THE LONE EAGLE FLIES CNAC

between St. Louis and Chicago.

Lindbergh listened with interest as Allie envisioned a day when flying boats would cross the mid-Pacific from Hong Kong to Manila, Guam and one or two other Pacific small islands then fly to Honolulu and on to San Francisco. But at this meeting there was little time for dreaming about the future of air travel; the worst flood in modern history had swamped the Yangtze valley, leaving 50 million people homeless.

Allie flew Lindbergh over the inundated areas showing him the flooded villages and cities and taking motion pictures. Horrified at the sight of refugees huddled on dikes or crouched on ancestral grave mounds, Lindbergh agreed to cancel his scheduled round of social engagements and survey the flood disaster for the National Flood Relief Commission.

After a week and a half of charting the borders of the flood, the Lindberghs met near disaster. In Hankow the British airplane carrier Hermes, which had provided the pair a safe refuge from the dangerous Yangtze currents, nearly proved their undoing.

After each day's flight a cable was hooked on the plane to hoist it on board the carrier's deck. In the morning the procedure was reversed. On the last day of the survey flights, as the Sirius was being lowered into the roiling waters, the current swept the floats out from under the plane before it could be unhooked, dumping the Lindberghs into the muddy river. Fortunately, they were uninjured and swiftly climbed aboard the lifeboat.

COLLECTOR'S SERIES XII



Photo courtesy Museum of Flight, Seattle, WA.

The Sirius, still attached to the derrick cable and with one wing and the tail submerged, fared less well. After its retrieval, Bond and Allison placed the plane in the hands of the CNAC mechanical crew who greased and reassembled it before shipping it back to Lockheed.

"I have been looking after Lindbergh's plane for him," wrote Allie to his family. "The Lindberghs are very nice, a real credit to America."

Nancy Allison Wright

C.N.A.C.

COMPLIMENTS OF
CAPTAIN BOB RENGO
CHINA NATIONAL AVIATION CORP.
HONG KONG



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
DECEMBER 1993 S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31	FEBRUARY 1994 S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28					1 NEW YEAR'S DAY
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15 MARTIN LUTHER KING JR'S BIRTHDAY
16	17 MARTIN LUTHER KING JR'S BIRTHDAY OBSERVANCE	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

1994

JANUARY

1994