

Lake Named for Johnson

A scenic lake located 200 miles north of Fairbanks and just east of Wiseman was recently renamed Bob Johnson Lake

by the U.S. Board of Geographic Names. A long-time landmark for pilots, the lake was formerly named Big Lake.

The renaming was the culmination of two year's efforts by sponsoring to commemorate the late Robert R. (Bob) Johnson, a long time pilot and Fairbanks resident.

A time-honored member of Alaskan bush aviation, Johnson was lost while flying with three other on a mission over the Gulf of Alaska in 1974.

Born in Sebeka, Minn, Johnson initially worked for United Airlines, as an aircraft mechanic. During World War II, he flew B-24 bombers, spent

over a year in a German Prisoner of War Camp and earned both the Purple Heart and Distinguished Flying Cross.

Following the war, he studied at the University of Minnesota, married the former Pat Shepard and moved to Alaska in 1949. After short flying stints in Anchorage and McGrath the Johnsons moved to Fairbanks to begin a long career with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). At the time of his death, he was senior pilot of the Interior Department's Office of Air Service for Alaska. Johnson's wife and three children continue to live in Fairbanks.