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Story of a "BI"

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As I sit here in the courtroom awaiting selection of jurors (the other guy or me), I find a lot of free time to think. My recent return from the Portland, Oregon area keeps me thinking of old tractors, especially the "BI" Lindeman crawler.

Red Gaede of Limon, Colorado was displaying the "BI" Lindeman crawler in 1999 at the Two-Cylinder Expo in Missoula, Montana fairgrounds, where I obtained my first real look at this machine. Previously, I had seen it only in photos. Keith Clark acted as go-between with Skip Paquin of Woodburn, Oregon in Mr. Gaede's acquisition of the equipment. In real life, it looked nothing like the photos I had seen of the military Lindeman—it had all different running gear castings and a different back plate.

In a letter to Red, I explained my connections with the Lindeman equipment. I informed him that I have several photos of this particular piece, plus the 16 mm demo movie which the Lindeman Brothers produced at

the time they were trying to secure the military contract. About 1-1/2 years later, Red contacted me and we made an appointment to get together.

When he came out to the Pacific Northwest, he met with Bob Smythe (a very avid Lineman collector) in Portland. Then he went to see Mike Koskela of Astoria, Oregon, who was planning to reproduce for him the V blade which had been used on the "BI."

Red arrived in Yakima for our appointment. After going through all the information I had on the "BI," I made copies of the information which he would need to convert the "BI" to the original specifications. Red and I drove to Ellensburg and met with Buck Charles, who owned a flat back Lindeman (very early model), which Red needed for the conversion. They did some trading and Red got what he needed.

A few months later, we learned that Red was very sick. After Red's passing, there was a huge auction where

most of Red's tractors were sold, but not the "BI" Lineman. Bob Smythe contacted Red's family with an offer to purchase the "BI." Before Bob received a reply from Red's family, Bob and I began discussing what would be needed should he be able to purchase the "BI" and restore it. We remembered that Paul Pearman of Olympia has a Lindeman with one of the only early hydraulic units. Bob went to Olympia, talked with Paul and took photos and measurements of his Lindeman. It was a later model, but a great help.

Bob's search for a V blade and hydraulic unit was short and successful, but the equipment was in poor condition and needed a lot of work. It was also missing the blade and some other brackets. So before Bob actually owned the "BI," he had an almost complete V blade.

On a trip to Yakima to pick up some other tractor, Bob received a call from Beth Gaede (Red's daughter). If he still wanted the "BI," he could buy it. Bob shared the news with me as we loaded the other tractor. He returned to his home in Portland to unload his truck, then proceeded to the Gaede Ranch in Limon to collect the "BI." Red's illness had prevented him from starting any work on the "BI."

At home with the crawler, Bob's first job was to rebuild the engine and get it moving. Next was the decision of which flat back was needed for the correct final drives, etc. Luckily, Bob had a few from which to choose.

My little contribution to the restoration has been providing dimensions to Bob from photos which I have scanned into my computer. When Bob needed a particular measurement, I would locate a picture which showed the best details, scan it and provide the correct measurements



Lindeman





Paul Pearman's Lindeman, above.

The "BI" Lindeman as it was purchased from Red Gaede, at left.

Below: The finished piece.



for the item. I wish I had more and better pictures, but I guess this is what makes it so interesting. I am just thankful for what we have.

Bob has done an excellent job restoring the "BI" thus far. He still has to get the winch done, but it looks like that is next year's project. This is not the first time Bob and I have worked together on a project. We've worked together on the Lindeman model "D" crawler (see February 2004 *Green Magazine*) and the "BO" Lindeman Hi-Crop (April 2005 *GM* back cover).

Bob also has a "GPO" Lindeman, "BR" Lindeman and many more "BO" Lindemans in his vast collection. I am very proud to have had a small part in these projects.

To learn more about the history of the Lindeman crawler and other equipment, I invite you to my website at www.lindemanarchives.com. There is a link to my e-mail if you have any questions.

For those who would like to see Bob's "BI" Lindeman, it will be at the Northwest Two Cylinder Exposition VI on June 24-26, 2005 at the Southwest Washington Fairgrounds in Chehalis, Washington.

