



FLYING FOR LIFE

MAF UK'S QUARTERLY MAGAZINE

OCT-DEC 2024



Gospel under gunfire
Spiritual courage

United we stand
National rescue

'I am very grateful to MAF'
A father's joy



www.maf-uk.org

supporter.relations@maf-uk.org

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Front cover

MAF is flying for life in Kenya

 Catherine Jakaiti



Wherever you see this symbol, it indicates a flight where MAF responded to a problem caused by the climate crisis, or transported a partner who supports creation care.



MAF (Mission Aviation Fellowship) is a Christian organisation reaching men, women and children in over 25 countries. Operating more than 115 aircraft, MAF's pilots overcome terrain that has become inaccessible due to derelict roads, natural disaster, or violent conflict. MAF aircraft fly into more than 1,000 destinations — transporting food and water, health professionals and medical supplies, and emergency workers and Christian missionaries where they are needed most. Each flight brings practical help, spiritual hope and physical healing to thousands of isolated people in remote communities for whom flying is a lifeline not a luxury. **MAF is flying for life.**

MAF respects the indigenous people of Arnhem Land. We have tried to ensure that names and photographs of deceased indigenous people do not appear in our publications.

Flying for Life

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Thank you for your gift!

Your loving kindness makes it possible for sight to be restored in Kenya, living standards to be transformed in Liberia and the Gospel to be preached in Tanzania.

Those articles in the summer issue of *Flying for Life* touched the hearts of so many MAF family members, resulting in an outpouring of prayers, gifts and inspirational comments.

In the following pages, you can see the latest stories of your part in a worldwide mission that flies a cargo of care and compassion to isolated people in Arnhem Land (page 6), South Sudan (page 12) and Timor-Leste (page 11).

God bless you.



📷 Jacqueline Mwende



The edge of life

A few months ago, we commemorated the sacrifice made by soldiers, sailors and airmen from more than 30 countries in defeating an evil that threatened to consume the world.

For nearly 80 years, MAF has stood shoulder to shoulder with men, women and children who continue to survive on the edge of life simply because they are born and raised in remote communities. Towns and villages that, in many cases, weren't even mapped when our mission was founded in 1945 — communities that even Google has yet to identify accurately.

In this autumn issue of *Flying for Life*, you'll see how the MAF family continues to answer the urgent call of evangelists who've looked death in the face (page 4), men and women pulled to safety from a ravine (page 5; right) and mums and dads whose babies' lives hang in the balance (page 11).

As our own 80th anniversary approaches, I want to say a heartfelt thank-you for standing with countless people across the MAF world as they strive, in the shadow of isolation, to exist on the edge of life.



Donovan Palmer
Chief Executive, MAF UK

Gospel under gunfire

REPORT + PHOTOS JACQUELINE MWENDE
STORY GARY CLAYTON

Cursed by his neighbours and shot in the face, Daniel Siang'au remains undaunted in bringing the Good News to northern Tanzania

The evangelist came to faith in 1998 after he and his family discovered a church in the village of Pinyin.

'As time passed,' Daniel (below) explains, 'I felt a profound calling to share the Gospel in my own village, where Christianity was unknown.'

But his mission was dangerous. 'I was scorned by my peers, faced opposition and had curses cast on me by my fellow tribesmen who felt I was deviating from our ancestral beliefs. All my flock were stolen and some slaughtered.'

Worse was to come. Daniel was left fighting for his life after an antagonistic tribesman shot him in the face to stop him from preaching.

Later, having recovered, Daniel proposed the development of a dirt airstrip so MAF aircraft could bring students from Malambo Bible School to preach in the remote community of Lemguru.

Although another Maasai tribesman was also hostile, he later declared, 'Let us allow the development of the airstrip. It will not only serve the evangelists but also bring healthcare through MAF's mobile clinics.'

As MAF flew teams of evangelists to several Maasai villages, the atmosphere gradually changed. Songs of praise could be heard as they not only preached the Good News, but also taught and disciplined believers.

Today, some of the villagers who once persecuted Daniel now share his faith as precious brothers and sisters in Christ.



The growing Church, which started with a faithful congregation of just 63, now consists of more than 10,000 believers.

Evangelist Elisha Moita, who's flown with MAF for more than 40 years, explains, 'It's through MAF's help that we have developed many airstrips that allow us to share the Gospel widely among the Maasai.'

'I want to thank MAF for the aircraft that have made it easier for myself and other evangelists to continue with their ministry.'



United we stand

STORY + PHOTOS JOEL CONTE

Following an horrific bus crash in Guinea — one of the worst accidents in the country's history — MAF became part of a national rescue effort

The bus was travelling from the south-eastern town of Macenta to the capital Conakry when a tyre exploded and it plunged into a ravine.

Tragically, 16 people died and more than 50 survivors were injured. Desperate for immediate assistance, the government contacted the few aviation organisations that operate in Guinea.

'We reached out to companies that have planes and helicopters,' says Conte Fodé Badra, Deputy National Director of Hospitals. 'We were satisfied with their prompt response — praise God!'

MAF flew seven patients and local medical staff from Nzérékoré to Conakry on two separate flights, piloted by Jonathan Blomberg and Brad Ballin. The patients' injuries included head traumas, spinal injuries, fractures and dislocations.

Praise God that all those patients have since been described as being in a stable condition.

Colonel Alseni Camara, Nzérékoré Town Prefect, expressed his deep gratitude for the MAF family.

'We would really like to thank the support which frankly relieved us today. Given the seriousness of the accident, we had difficulties with our patients. We have seen that the government's effort has borne fruit.

'Congratulations to MAF! We always stand by them, and we are ready to support them.'

Brad was glad that MAF could respond to the government's request. 'Without our help, the more seriously injured casualties would have had to endure many hours of rough road travel before they could receive medical help in Conakry.

'It's a testament to the entire MAF Guinea team that we were able to demonstrate Christ's love for the people of Guinea through these two medical transfers.'



PLEASE PRAY

- For a nation of nearly 14 million people subsisting on an average of £2 per day
- That MAF Guinea can expand its provision to help meet the urgent needs of a nation slowly improving its transport and telecommunication networks.



Follow us on Instagram

A long way from home

STORY + PHOTOS JOSHUA OLIVER

MAF UK Finance Officer Joshua Oliver reports on how isolation in the vast wilderness of Arnhem Land looks and feels to a first-time visitor

'There's only one hospital in an area the size of Scotland and Wales put together.'

Months after my return from Arnhem Land, I can still remember IT Manager Nevin Urey telling me that as we sat in the office at Gove Airport. Having seen a small part of this vast land on my first ever MAF flight that morning, I believed him.

To say Arnhem Land is isolated is a huge understatement.

Upon my arrival, I'd looked out of the window intently at a sea of green trees broken by the occasional field of red soil. There had been large trucks and diggers cultivating the landscape, working their way along dirt tracks, but no sign of a proper road.

Later, when Country Director Matt Henderson showed me around Gove Airport, he explained that the only paved roads in Arnhem Land are in and around Yirrkala and Nhulunbuy — where MAF's offices are.

I could see why most people drive a 4x4 here — although even vehicles built to go 'off-road' eventually get beaten up by the dirt track that is the only way into the area.

It's no wonder this MAF programme stocks a massive variety of old equipment. When something breaks in northern Australia, it can take six weeks for a replacement to arrive. With no such thing as 'next day delivery', you need to be well prepared for shortages.



For example, various meat products had been off the table for several weeks while Nhulunbuy's only supermarket awaited a shipment to restock its shelves. Along with a single food shop in Yirrkala, the supermarket has to serve the majority of people for miles around.

That afternoon, I was booked on an MAF flight to bring some indigenous Yolŋu passengers to Gove to buy essentials. The flight would take 40 minutes, as opposed to several hours by truck — 'walking to the shops' in these parts takes days.

I'd already had the chance to see how vital MAF is to life in Arnhem Land. Our morning flight had been a school run, taking boys from boarding school in Garrthlala back to their home villages at the end of the week.

Among the passengers were three friends from Rorruwuy who were very interested in this strange, new visitor sitting next to the pilot! They told me they'd enjoyed school that week — particularly playing basketball.

During our conversation, it struck me that these students have a very different way of getting to and from school than most children.

In the Outback, you — and your bag — must first get on the scales to ensure the plane doesn't exceed its weight allowance. Then you must sit patiently while the MAF pilot checks sheets, charts, fuel levels, wind direction and speed, and then prays before take-off.

On the day I flew alongside the borders, this detailed pre-flight preparation was also accompanied by the noise of two other planes' engines as they landed on the runway in quick succession.

It's a world away from getting a lift to school or running for the bus.

Obviously, education is an absolute essential for all children but — having listened to Matt's Flying For Life

podcast before flying out from England — I knew there was an extra dimension to school here.

In Arnhem Land, it is hoped that the high rate of domestic violence among Yolŋu people will be reduced by educating younger generations to change an aspect of their culture that causes so much misery.

Isolation makes everyday life more difficult — whether one needs shopping, school or shelter — so let's praise God that our fleet continues flying for life in the Outback.



Scan me to hear more about MAF and its partners' vital role in tackling domestic violence

'We are super thankful for MAF!'

For nearly a century, Baptist Mid-Missions has been working with Christians in Chad to grow and equip the Church.

In 1974, more than 130 Chadian pastors and lay church leaders were martyred for their faith. Despite the persecution which persists to this day, MAF continues to support the Church by flying Pastor David Mumford from the capital N'Djaména to the southern city of Sarh.

'One significant help to our ministry over the years,' says David, 'has been MAF. Instead of a 16-hour bus ride, a 2½-hour flight is very easy and quite comfortable. We are super thankful for MAF!'



Supporting the Church in a predominantly Muslim country is a challenge



Hear the good news!



Money's too tight to mention

Cash is in short supply these days, with global debt rising to alarming levels not seen for 200 years. President of the World Economic Forum Børge Brende has declared, 'We hope to reduce debt and take the right fiscal measures, without getting into a situation where we will see a global recession.'

Christian charity Anglicare supports vulnerable communities in hard-to-reach parts of Arnhem Land by providing people with financial counsellors. MAF flies its staff out to remote towns when roads become impassable during the November-to-April wet season.

'We feel safe flying with MAF,' says Anglicare's Monique Achterberg.



Read how our partner is helping people solve their money problems

Downpour in the desert



See how MAF captured vital survey footage of the floods

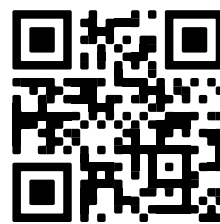
Devastating floods in Kenya have claimed hundreds of lives and displaced thousands of people since torrential rain lashed the country last spring. MAF's Disaster Response Team has been undertaking survey flights and delivering food, blankets and water purification tablets.

Kenya's rainy season started in March and continued into the summer. Communities near lakes and rivers were hardest hit when banks and dams burst under the unexpected downpour.

People were evacuated, schools closed, crops ruined, livestock drowned and roads submerged. The destruction of sewage systems and public toilets exacerbated the poor sanitation in rain-ravaged areas, causing outbreaks of malaria and cholera.



Your introduction to all of MAF's online news stories, available in full at www.maf-uk/news



scan me



Flying in the face of insecurity

Given Papua New Guinea's recent fuel crisis and escalating civil unrest, how do MAF staff stay safe in such a volatile country? This is the most important question that the latest episode of the Flying For Life podcast puts to Pilot Andrew Symmonds, who was caught up in recent riots. And MAF's International Security Manager Andy Hedley-Smith — a former close protection manager at the Metropolitan Police — shares his top tips for staying safe in dangerous times.



Hear the good news in the words of your fellow MAF family members



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MAF UK 2025 Calendar

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FSF ffrnv

More than just a job: it's been a privilege

STORY + PHOTO DAVID LEEK

After serving in various roles for many years, Head of HR David Leek is leaving MAF. He is one of countless people over the decades who can attest that working for the world's largest humanitarian airline is, indeed, more than just a job

Over the last couple of years, we've run the 'More than just a job' recruitment campaign where overseas staff members highlight just how true that phrase is for them.

Aircraft Maintenance Engineer Dave Waterman told *Flying for Life* readers that working for MAF was a 'dream come true'. Others described it as a 'calling', an 'adventure', an 'opportunity to serve', a 'life-changer' and 'finding their purpose'.

I feel the same.

MAF has been an adventure not only for me but for my wife and children. From my initial service in one of Australia's remote Aboriginal communities, followed by several fantastic years in Kenya and — most recently — at our MAF UK office in Folkestone, I've loved every minute!

***I've
loved
every
minute!***



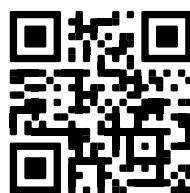
- ✈ Sitting on a sand dune around an open fire singing songs of praise with Aboriginal Christians in Arnhem Land
- ✈ Sharing the Word of God in a tin-roofed, mud-clad church in a Nairobi slum
- ✈ Being greeted like royalty by hundreds of singing, dancing women when visiting a refugee camp in northern Kenya
- ✈ Flying surgeons to a remote hospital and joining them on their handover rounds.

These are just a few of the reasons why I count my service with MAF as such a privilege.

Finally, it's been a calling. I've been challenged and motivated to serve isolated people in remote communities where there's often no road, no hospital, no grocery store and no church.

While it can be incredibly exciting at times, the motivation has always been about using what I've been given to benefit people who don't have access to the things we take for granted.

Perhaps the Lord is calling you to serve with MAF overseas?



**EMAIL HR@MAF-UK.ORG,
PHONE 01303 850950 OR
SCAN ME TO LEARN MORE
ABOUT WORKING WITH MAF**

'I am very grateful to MAF'

STORY GARY CLAYTON
PHOTOS LOBITOS ALVES



Every week, our small team responds to multiple medevac requests, flying to and from Dili to save hundreds of lives

Macadadi is one of the highest settlements on the southern side of Atauro Island. It has no roads and no electricity, so Marcia Pereira de Sousa was forced to walk for four hours to receive help from a rural health clinic on the eastern side of the island.

She was pregnant.

Because of her high blood pressure, the 31-year-old was dangerously close to losing her baby.

With more than 20 miles of water still separating Marcia from the capital — and with a potentially turbulent ferry crossing likely to take 3 hours — a nurse at the clinic asked MAF to perform an emergency medevac.

'I could see Marcia was in pain,' explains Ping Domtta, who piloted the life-saving flight.

'She managed to walk to the aircraft from the ambulance, then we laid her on a stretcher. The sea had been rough for the past few weeks, and it would have been a bad experience for someone in her condition to be on the boat.'



Marcia's husband Clementino, who joined the 15-minute airlift to Dili, says, 'I am very grateful to MAF for their extraordinary service to evacuate us and save the lives of my wife and baby during this tough situation.'

Having given birth to a healthy baby girl at Guido Valadares National Hospital, Marcia named her daughter Francelina. Then, after a week spent recovering in Dili, Marcia and her family flew back to

Atauro Island with MAF.

Ping has carried out more than 200 medevacs and, earlier this year, celebrated 2,000 hours of flying.

'It made my day to hear that she is well and discharged,' he says. 'It brings me great joy to help people in times of need!'

'We're able to do what we do here in this country because of people in the background giving generously to our medevac project.'

Worth a thousand words



For many people throughout South Sudan, finding clean water is a huge chore. The nearest source is not only far away — sometimes several hours' walk — but the water is often filthy.

MAF Pilot Dave Forney took these fantastic photos during a ten-day trip flying staff from our partner Every Village to numerous locations throughout South Sudan. He was also privileged to stay with them throughout.

The images illustrate how Every Village employs its well-drilling rig in remote communities to create boreholes for people who are truly desperate for clean drinking water.

In the background of one photo, you can see the Every Village radio tower, which broadcasts worship songs and Gospel messages throughout the region in the heart language of the local people.

We are delighted to help Every Village in its mission to build a nation for Christ by partnering with the people of South Sudan to provide every village with sustainable access to safe water, healthy churches and the Good News of Jesus Christ.





***When you
travel with MAF
you don't worry
about safety.***

Daniel Lual, General Manager
Every Village



SPEAK MAF!

As MAF prepares to celebrate 80 years of flying for life, we're showing no signs of coming in to land – in fact, we believe God is calling us to climb even higher!

We have ambitious plans to increase our impact with more planes and staff leading to more people physically and spiritually transformed in Jesus' name.

These plans will be costly in terms of time and money. We are so thankful for how you partner with us through your faithful prayers and generous gifts but there is something else you could do for us, and for all those we serve.

What we need is more people to share the joy of participating in God's work. We want more people to be blessed by sowing the harvest we wish to reap.

Will **YOU** tell someone about MAF today?

Will **YOU** pray that God will provide opportunities to speak about MAF's work serving isolated communities?

Will **YOU** share our needs with your family and friends, your brothers and sisters at church, your work colleagues... at the supermarket checkout?

Word of mouth is a powerful tool and it's free. Our staff know when we 'speak MAF', people respond. We don't need to 'sell' what we do because people are keen to help – but they do need an invitation.

Climate, conflict, disease and the very nature of isolation are major reasons why thousands of communities continue to need your help. To meet this need, the MAF family must recruit more people like you – generous, prayerful, loyal partners who will take us from 80 to 100 years.

We're doing everything we can to raise awareness of MAF's life-saving work. One way we can raise up a new generation of prayer and financial partners is to share our passion. We call on YOU – our passionate supporters – to get us from 80 to 100 and beyond!

God is preparing people's hearts to pray, to give or to go. **They just need the invitation.**

If you've told someone about MAF lately or want to know more about our volunteering opportunities, phone us on **01303 852819 or email **supporter.relations@maf-uk.org****





Global Week of Prayer

It gives us great joy that you love to partner with us in praying for our staff, our programmes and the people we serve. So we're hoping you'll join us for MAF's digital Global Week of Prayer, 3-10 November

This year, we'll be reflecting on the names of God to remind us of the nature of the one we are praying to: our Father, our Provider, and our Peace... to name but a few!

Visit www.maf-uk.org/gwop24 or scan the QR code and sign up to receive daily emails encouraging you to pray for MAF during the week of prayer.

If Jesus had a plane

Sandy White was born into a Christian family in Twyford, Berkshire, in 1931. Alongside his primary occupation as a timber merchant, he also served in the Army Reserve for 30 years

Sandy's fascination with aircraft dates back to his childhood and culminated in him obtaining his Private Pilots Licence in 1955.

Navigating the skies in a humble de Havilland Tiger Moth, he relied on Shell Road Maps and low altitude confirmations of railway stations to find his way!

Introduced to MAF through one of our volunteer speakers at All Saints' Church, Milford on Sea, Sandy soon became one himself.


A passionate MAF advocate, he witnessed our impact in Tanzania and Uganda and — by showing the *Jesus* film in several remote locations — helped to spread God's love far and wide.

This included Lake Victoria's Ssesse Islands where Sandy forged a close friendship with Sam Tsapwe, Director of Jesus Film Ministries Uganda (below left), who is one of our frequent flyers.



Sandy has decided to include a gift to MAF in his Will. 'It seemed natural,' he says. 'I wanted to help them continue the work that Jesus would have done if He had a plane!'

We're so thankful to everyone who chooses to remember MAF in their Will, bringing life and hope to future generations. To request our free Will guide, please phone Miriam Wheeler on 01303 852819 or email her at miriam.wheeler@maf-uk.org

*Where there's a Will
there's a plane* 



You write MAF's history!

These people are waiting in the baking heat of South Sudan for a day they will remember forever.

MAF partner Every Village is drilling a borehole so they can have safe, clean water (see page 12).

Your loving prayers and heartfelt gifts made this possible — this is what flying for life feels like for the people we serve.

God bless you



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