

FLYING FOR LIFE

MAF UK'S QUARTERLY MAGAZINE

JAN-MAR 2025



Sky high!

New pilots take wing

Heed the call

Is God calling you to join our Board?



FLYING FOR LIFE
SINCE 1945

www.maf-uk.org

supporter.relations@maf-uk.org

01303 852819

Front cover

MAF is flying for life in Papua New Guinea

 Kowara Bell

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

Editor: Richard Chambers
Email: editor@maf-uk.org
Copy Editor: Gary Clayton
Designer: Ben Dyer
Printer: Fretwell Print and Design Ltd
Printed on sustainable paper produced from a managed forest

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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.



Thank you for your gift!

Your continued support is a glad tidings indeed as MAF stands upon the cusp of its 80th anniversary. Tens of thousands of people with hearts as big as yours have ensured the survival of remote communities throughout eight miraculous decades.

Thanks to the enthusiastic response to Christmas items offered in the autumn issue, we've enclosed a catalogue with brand-new gifts for you to peruse.

Meanwhile, this issue's *Legacy Newsletter* is a reminder that gifts in Wills have been at the heart of our 80-year-old mission. And, for all you do to keep MAF airborne, we send you our heartfelt thanks.

God bless you.



Heed the call

As you read this issue of *Flying for Life*, there are less than three weeks until the New Year — one which will mark eight decades of MAF.

We praise God for bringing us on a journey of help, hope and healing that began with one aircraft and a few pioneering individuals.

The global landscape has evolved significantly over time, yet one constant remains: the commitment to following Jesus in all we do, and our steadfast reliance on His blessing to operate aircraft in the service of the hardest-to-reach people of the world.

We will use this 80th anniversary to double our efforts as we look towards a future full of Gospel opportunities. And, while the obvious challenge for any visionary organisation is financial, MAF finds itself needing **people** like never before.

On pages 11 and 14, we're recruiting for teachers and trustees, in addition to our never-ending cry for more pilots and engineers. Please pray with us that people with the same passion to serve as our founders had all those years ago will also heed the call.



Wishing you a blessed Christmas.

Donovan Palmer
Chief Executive, MAF UK

'Some think it's witchcraft'

REPORT + PHOTOS DAMALIE HIRWA
STORY GARY CLAYTON

In neighbouring Uganda, crucial flights made possible by your prayers and donations gave nine South Sudanese babies a new lease of life

Although one of the main causes of hydrocephalus is neonatal meningitis, Dr Emmanuel Okello, a surgeon at CURE Children's Hospital of Uganda, says, 'Some Sudanese think it's witchcraft, with babies discarded in trash cans due to ignorance.'

Last year, Godfrey Matala and his mother Ide Harriet were flown by MAF with eight other babies and their carers from Juba, South Sudan, to Tororo, Uganda, to receive treatment for this curable but potentially life-threatening condition.

We'd flown Ide and her eight-month-old baby to the CURE children's hospital before and were doing so again because Godfrey's condition had worsened. Severely malnourished and in great pain, he hadn't been able to cry for three months.

'His development is going to be very slow,' Dr Okello explains. 'We have to work on his nutrition and will have to do regular physiotherapy because the head is too big. Before that, we're going to tap water from his brain to relieve him of some pressure.'

MAF's flights for CURE enable children like these to receive free, expert medical treatment. When asked about his patients, Dr Okello replies, 'God keeps them until they get here. It's a miracle!'

Angelina Akoi, another young mother, shares, 'Flying us here is very helpful because travelling by road with a sick baby is very uncomfortable. Thank you, MAF, for making this possible.'

'We appreciate the collaboration we have with MAF,' says the hospital's Executive Director Tim Erickson. 'It would be very challenging getting patients down here by road, as it's very exhausting. MAF also helps us bring these patients more urgently, and we're very grateful.'

Pilot Dave has served with MAF for 20 years and was the pilot on the

medical emergency flight.

'It's because of flights like this,' he explains, 'that I still love what I do! Thanks to MAF and CURE, we were able to bring nine precious souls to a hospital where specialists could give them a new lease of life.'

**GOD KEEPS
THEM UNTIL
THEY GET
HERE. IT'S A
MIRACLE!**



KEY

- ★ Capital city
- Destination
- ✈ MAF base

20 MILES

SOUTH SUDAN

Juba

UGANDA

DRC

Tororo

Kajjansi ★ Kampala

KENYA

Lake Victoria

'Jesus, I don't want to die'

REPORT + PHOTOS MATT PAINTER
STORY RICHARD CHAMBERS

Having spent most of his life in Port Moresby — where he was pronounced dead — Joseph Ako took an MAF flight to return to his home village

Last summer, newly retired Joseph Ako boarded an MAF Cessna Caravan in Mount Hagen, Papua New Guinea (PNG), on his way home to Wanakipa.

Joseph left Wanakipa as a boy and spent his working life as a security guard in the nation's capital, Port Moresby. Fellow church members there gathered together to pay for his air fare home.

'I rejoice that I'm going back!' exclaimed Joseph. 'I'm looking forward to going home. I went to Port Moresby, now I'm coming back again. I'm already old, I want to go to the village and stay there.'

During his time in the city, Joseph was injured in a terrible motor accident. 'I died there. They put me in the morgue, but they took me out again. I stayed in hospital for one year and three months.

'I said, "Jesus, I don't want to die." I didn't stay dead. Jesus resurrected me. He truly is real.'

Wanakipa is one of PNG's many roadless communities, surrounded by thickly forested mountains and raging rivers.



It's possible to take a bus from Mount Hagen to Kapiago at the very end of the Highlands Highway,' Joseph explained, 'but then it's a two-day walk over Mount Kinaiyu to Wanakipa.

'Without a plane, I have no way to go today. There are no cars in my village — just an airstrip for planes only. My village does not have roads. MAF is our road. Bandits are here and it's hard — we only fly.'

Joseph reflected on how he shared the Gospel in Port Moresby, often preaching in the marketplace.

'In Wanakipa, I will keep listening to God's Word and I will preach it, too,' he promised. 'Jesus will come back. He will come and get me.'

'MAF IS OUR ROAD.'



Sky high!

STORY JANNE RYTKONEN

PHOTOS IAN PURDEY

After months of intense flight training, our newest pilots took to the vast skies of the Australian outback on a 10-day, 3,000-mile round trip known as the Mareeba Safari

The epic adventure started at MAF's Mareeba Training Centre in Far North Queensland and was the culmination of flight training for the students who've been working so hard to gain their Commercial Pilots Licence.'

The planes headed north-west to the Gulf of Carpentaria (main picture) before cutting inland across the Outback.

'This is where they start to be introduced to the essence of remote area navigation,' says Flight Instructor Ian Purdey (pictured inset, left). 'The feedback we've had over the years has been overwhelmingly positive — most students say this is the highlight of the course.'

'That compressed training, combined with real operational needs over remote and unfamiliar areas, leads to greater development of our student pilots. The safari really develops their captaincy and enables students to fully test the skills they've learned up to this point in the course.'

Students are also responsible for planning all aspects of the trip, including payload, fuel stops, distance calculations, emergency landing sites — even their accommodation.

Here's what the Mareeba Safari means to them:



I really gained a lot of confidence and jumped forward a huge amount in those ten days. I was especially impressed by the amazing airstrips they [MAF Arnhem Land pilots] land on and the relationships they've built with the Yolŋu students and teachers, and other regular passengers.

– Abigail Duff



It was important to me to be able to discover and experience an MAF programme in Arnhem Land. I had the impression, for a day, of being in a dream that I had been trying to imagine for ten years and — at the same time — I had this awareness of what it is to experience it in real life.

– Timothée Berger



I got to fly into Darwin, which is a military airport, and that was a very cool experience! But the most challenging thing on the safari is being in charge of all the things that could go wrong. It's the first time you're stepping up to be the responsible pilot yourself, outside the training environment.

– Gavin Cochrane



Follow us on Instagram



PLEASE PRAY

- That our newest pilots will experience His peace, protection and provision as they fly aircraft to the remote communities we serve
- For more Christians to be called to fill the many vacant roles that exist throughout the MAF world, including pilots, engineers and teachers.



Remote learning

Isaac Monah, a refugee orphaned by war, has transformed more than 1,000 young lives thanks to founding the first ever school near his isolated village in eastern Liberia. MAF helped build Dougbe River Presbyterian School, which opened in 2012 to provide free education – a golden opportunity that Isaac never had.

The school is situated deep in the isolated jungle region of Twarbo. Its 150-acre site contains a nursery, as well as primary and junior schools. Twarbo is so remote, there's no mobile phone coverage. Its ten teachers live on site and – to reach the school – many students walk the four miles there and back every day.



'The school is like a safety camp for girls who run to school for refuge'



Hear the good news!



Simple as ADP

Director of Association pour le Développement et la Paix (ADP) Mark Ortman has spent the last 30 years working with the Teda people in northern Chad.

ADP developed the first written Teda alphabet, publishing in Teda for the first time in 1998. Based in Bardai in the far north of Chad – the furthest destination MAF flies to from the capital N'Djamena – Mark looks back on an incredible three decades of growth enabled by MAF.



Without MAF, it would take a five-day trek through the Sahara to reach Bardai

Kenyan farmers face crisis

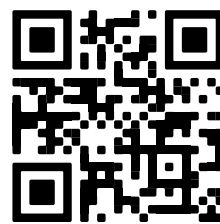
In the wake of Kenya's devastating floods from March to May 2024, which saw historically high water levels turn northern Kenya's Chalbi Desert into mud for the first time, the lives of farmers and their families have been turned upside down.

More than 168,000 acres of crops have been destroyed by unprecedented floods, according to Kenya's government. As a food crisis looms, MAF's Jacqueline Mwende spent time with cut-off farming communities in both southern and northern Kenya where MAF has been delivering aid.



Even elephants have drowned as swollen rivers wash everything away

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



scan me



Feed the world

In 1984, Sir Bob Geldof saw the BBC's horrific famine report from Ethiopia — a country MAF had served for years. He promptly assembled a group of musical artists to record 'Do They Know it's Christmas?'

In the Flying For Life Podcast, MAF's Keith Ketchum recalls how he enabled the BBC to capture the devastating footage that flew round the pre-internet world.



Hear the good news of how MAF was ready, willing and able to help save a nation.



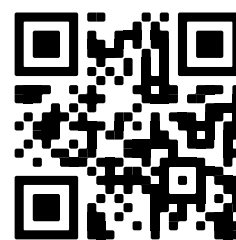
**YOU KEEP US
FLYING FOR LIFE!**

The men, women and children you read about in this magazine receive help, hope and healing because **YOU** continue to pray and give to MAF.

In Papua New Guinea, newly-retired Joseph Ako says simply, 'My village does not have roads. MAF is our road.'

The full story on page 5 tells how an MAF flight was his only way to avoid forests, mountains and rivers on his way home to Wanakipa.

Please **scan the QR code** or **make a gift overleaf** so that our pilots and planes can bring you more stories of the people whose lives your love has changed.



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PLEASE USE MY GIFT TO HELP TRANSFORM PEOPLE'S LIVES FOR GOOD

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To make a gift, please phone our
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by visiting **www.maf-uk.org/fflgive**

Please phone 01303 852819 if you would like to update how you hear from us, or if you no longer wish to receive MAF communications.

I wish to give a single gift of £ for the vital work of MAF for use where most needed

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FSF ffnw





Where there's MAF, there's brass

STORY + PHOTOS DAMALIE HIRWA

Award-winning charity Brass for Africa is combining forces with MAF to help rebuild the lives of South Sudanese refugees in Uganda's Bidibidi settlement

Music can have an extremely beneficial effect on the mind and body, especially when it comes to those who've endured highly traumatic events.

Brass for Africa reaches out with instrumental music to vulnerable communities to create relationships, bring healing and develop a strong sense of belonging.

One of the biggest burdens refugees grapple with is the horrific long-term effect of witnessing or experiencing violence. However, thanks to this highly imaginative project, the number of suicides among refugees at Bidibidi is already falling.

'We are happy that cases are significantly dropping since we started our interventions,' says Brass for Africa's Project Health Officer Molly Nabwami. 'This is very good progress, because the previous years' cases were much higher.'

Reports indicate there were around 40 deaths last year compared to more than 160 in 2021. This downward trend has been attributed in large part to initiatives like Brass for Africa's and Music for Healthcare Inclusion, which trains people to play instruments both for relaxation and as a means of gainful employment.

MAF flies Brass for Africa staff from our Kajjansi Airfield near Kampala to Arua in the north, vastly reducing the time spent on the road to Bidibidi.

'This project is our second biggest after Kampala,' says Brass for Africa's Programmes Manager Ronald Kabuye. 'So it requires proper monitoring to ensure we reach our intended objectives. Key members of the staff teams have to travel to Bidibidi often to do project quality visits.'

'Before MAF, this would be an entire day of travel and then another day recovering from the 12-hour journey, which sometimes became 15 hours — or even more — due to bad roads.'

Now MAF is working with local leaders in Yumbe, the nearest town to the refugee settlement, to construct an airstrip. Please pray for its swift completion — another precious two hours that is currently wasted driving from Arua Airport to the settlement will be saved.



A mission of love and learning

STORY TRICIA HOLLEY / PHOTOS JENNY DAVIES

Tracey Feil has spent a lifetime teaching, but her current role at South Sudan's Juba Christian Academy (JCA) is unlike any other

After many years teaching in the UK and around the world, God led Tracey to use her skills in support of the children of missionary families, including many from MAF.

JCA is a small but vibrant primary school serving around 24 children aged 3-12 years who represent countries from Kenya to Canada.

'It's a place of joy,' says Tracey.

'We laugh, we learn about the world, we learn to read and write, we play with language and numbers and find ways of glorifying God through learning about the world around us!'

Despite its limited resources, JCA provides an international standard education which is crucial for missionary families who often have few other options. Without JCA, many families simply wouldn't be able to serve in South Sudan.

'More than 60% of our students are from MAF families,' Tracey explains. 'Without a stable education, these families couldn't stay and continue their vital work.'

JCA's impact extends far beyond the classroom. From Bible translators and pilots to peace and reconciliation workers, these families can focus on their mission knowing their children are in a safe, nurturing environment.

However, the challenges are significant — not least the critical need for more teachers.



'Right now,' Tracey shares, 'we need at least one excellent primary school teacher and are keen to find an administrator for the years to come.'

Teaching in Juba isn't easy. Resources are scarce, the climate is extreme and the student body is constantly changing. Yet, for Tracey, the rewards far outweigh the obstacles.

'To be part of the learning and faith journey of these children who are growing up in a different culture, away from extended family and often facing change, is a huge privilege.'

For those considering serving in mission schools like JCA, Tracey's message is clear.



'It's an adventure, a challenge and an incredible joy. It is also an opportunity to make a lasting difference.'

**'IT'S AN
ADVENTURE,
A CHALLENGE
AND AN
INCREDIBLE
JOY.'**



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

Worth a thousand words



When MAF Pilot Jono Pound collected boxes of chicks at Yambio Airfield in South Sudan, the 600 fluffy passengers were on their second flight of the day! They'd already travelled a long way from Uganda and were now *en route* to their final destination: Maridi.

The chicks had been requested by South Korean missionary Reverend Park, who has spent the past decade combining his love of telling people about Jesus with raising chickens for egg production.

Jono and Operations Project Manager John Feil took these super snaps during a visit to the farm which provides a vital income for local workers.

'It's really well organised, with lots of happy, healthy chickens,' says John. 'On Saturdays, Reverend Park invites around 800 children and young people to hear Bible stories and sing songs.'

'I really like his approach,' says Despatch Team Leader Thomas Titus. 'Reverend Park is showing our people there is money in farming, if you go about it the right way.'





'AROUND 800 CHILDREN HEAR BIBLE STORIES AND SING SONGS.'

JOHN FEIL, MAF OPERATIONS PROJECT MANAGER





Heed the call

MAF Trustee Carl Knightly asks whether God is calling you to help guide us into a future even more adventurous than our past

In 2023, MAF flew more than 3.9 million miles — that's the equivalent of circling the equator more than 150 times! Each flight brought God's love and life's essentials to the men, women and children of our planet's most remote communities.

MAF aircraft are the 'secret ingredient' for a vast number of mission and aid organisations as they strive to help people in war-torn or disaster-hit areas. Food, medicine, technology and expert professionals won't reach those who desperately need them without the immense range and capacity of our planes.

Furthermore, without your loving commitment to MAF, thousands of life-saving flights would never leave the ground. The unique combination of prayer and financial support you give to our fleet makes a life-long impact in the lives of the people we serve.

You are probably familiar with the different roles of MAF staff around the world. However, behind the scenes, a volunteer Board of Trustees carries the ultimate responsibility for the governance and guidance of MAF UK.

The Board of Trustees makes a crucial contribution to MAF by combining the skills and experience gained by its members from a wide variety of professions and outside interests.

Trustees set the charity's strategic direction and oversee three vital aspects: galvanising prayer support, generating vital income and recruiting people to serve overseas.



So the question is: Do you hear God calling *YOU* to become a Trustee?!

We want to hear from people with experience in one of the following areas:



Fundraising



Legal



Missiology



Finance

We meet formally four times a year. Most Trustees are also members of a sub-committee. The total time commitment is approximately eight days a year.

When you volunteer for the role of Trustee, you become part of an inspirational team seeking God's heart for people around the world in desperate need of MAF.

As a Trustee, you'll be doing something wonderful — delivering help, hope and healing... every day.



If you think God is calling you to be an MAF UK Trustee, please **scan the QR code** to meet the Board and **phone 01303 852819** for an information pack





Joan's gift of compassion

Joan Manicom was born in Malvern in 1931. Although she felt called to serve in Africa after hearing a missionary speak at her church, she resisted initially because she didn't want to leave her parents – and was afraid of encountering snakes!



However, thanks to the Holy Spirit's persistence, Joan went to Birmingham to train as a teacher so she could serve Jesus overseas. It was there she met Peter Manicom, who was preparing for

missionary work in the Belgian Congo (now the Democratic Republic of Congo).

They married in 1954 and immediately sailed to Africa. There they taught Congolese students and trainee pastors for 14 years and raised their children Hilary, Hugh, Rosalind and Rachel.

During this time, Joan did encounter snakes, one of which slithered through her toddlers' playpen. Thankfully, no harm came to the youngsters!

Returning to the UK in 1968, Joan taught French part-time and — driven by her compassion for the vulnerable — dedicated her free time to volunteering at Childline for a short period.

Another of her passions was MAF. This connection became more personal when, following a serious motorbike accident, an MAF plane airlifted her son Hugh to the Namibian capital Windhoek.

Joan passed away in December 2022, continuing her support for MAF by leaving a thoughtful gift to us in her Will.

Legacies help us reach future generations with God's love. We're truly grateful to everyone who chooses to partner with us in this special way.

If you're interested in leaving a gift to MAF in your Will, please phone Miriam Wheeler on 01303 852819 or email miriam.wheeler@maf-uk.org

To request a copy of our FREE Will guide, visit www.maf-uk.org/legacy

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

**It's not
just a gift...
it's a lifeline.**

Christmas is here!

The decorations are up. There's a familiar chill in the air. The marketplaces are bustling with festive shoppers. There's a gift for everyone, ready to be wrapped — but sometimes they aren't what you expect.

The enclosed MAF gift catalogue allows you to view and buy a range of gifts that will make a significant difference for someone. And, together, we can transform lives — one gift at a time.

Paying for an eye care specialist to fly on one of our planes may not seem like much of a gift, but it means the whole world to the people in Kenya who will have their sight restored. Buying a Bible might seem a simple act, but there are communities in Papua New Guinea who will walk miles and miles to get their hands on a copy.

Every gift you make will have a big impact, because it's not just a gift... it's a lifeline.

So, please buy a lifeline this Christmas by looking through your new catalogue, scanning the QR code, or visiting www.maf-uk.org/gift to browse the full range of gifts online.



Your love always delivers!

This fluffy cargo will play a crucial part in bringing the Good News to hundreds of isolated children.

MAF has devoted 80 years to ensuring remote communities receive whatever they need, from the technological to the timeless (see page 12).

Your commitment and generosity made this happy landing possible – this is what flying for life looks like for the people we serve.

God bless you



www.maf-uk.org

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