



PHOTO: JONATHAN BUCKMASTER

## The last of MAF's founders takes flight

A great wave of sadness engulfed the MAF world when news came through of Jack Hemmings' death at the age of 103.

The last of MAF's early pioneers died peacefully in hospital on 24 January 2025.

Born in Yorkshire, Jack won a bursary to prestigious Christ's Hospital in West Sussex, where he studied accountancy.

At 19, he joined the RAF, serving in India and, in 1942, becoming Leader of 353 Squadron — cheating death several times.

He later received the Air Force Cross for 'exemplary gallantry while flying' and, in 2017, was awarded the Master Air Pilot award.

One of the few British pilots to take light aircraft from London to Africa's remotest regions, Jack and fellow MAF co-founder Stuart King left for central Africa in 1948, visiting 100 isolated mission stations to see if they could assist those serving there.

In 1950, having prayerfully raised funds for a second aircraft after their first — the *Mildmay Pathfinder* — crashed, they launched MAF's first programme in Malakal, southern Sudan. 80 years later, we now serve more than 25 low-income countries.

In old age, Jack raised over 50,000 for MAF, performing aerobatics in a Slingsby Firefly, piloting a Miles Gemini similar to the he once flew

to Africa, and — at the age of 102 — a wartime Spitfire.

A tireless encourager of young pilots, Jack told one of MAF's newest recruits, 'I've never got into an aircraft and regretted it. Flying with MAF will give you the adventure of a lifetime!'

In 2024, the 102-year-old went to Normandy, taking part in the D-Day commemorations and honouring the late Stuart King, who Jack once described as 'a great friend, a man of vision, devoted to MAF since the early days in 1947.'

'Lovely Jack', the last of MAF's founders, leaves behind his wife Kate, son Adrian and grandchildren William, Beatrice and Olivia, who all describe him as a 'legend'.

### Pause for prayer

Do pray for Jack's family and all who knew the man described by his wife Kate as "Lovely Jack" — the phrase that tripped off the tongue of so many people who met him. Jack's desire to fly for life has made an incalculable difference to countless lives and livelihoods in remote and isolated communities worldwide.

### Jack's Tribute Fund

This Wings of Hope tribute fund is a place to remember Jack and his incredible achievements throughout his 103 years, as well as celebrating his passion for MAF. If you would like to donate to MAF in Jack's memory, please visit [www.jackhemmings.muchloved.com](http://www.jackhemmings.muchloved.com)

### Read Jack's story

After seeing the devastation aircraft could cause during World War II, Jack and Stuart wanted to use planes as vehicles for good. If you would like to find out more about Jack's story and read about his wonderful achievements, please visit [www.maf-uk.org/jack-hemmings](http://www.maf-uk.org/jack-hemmings)