



FLYING FOR LIFE

MAF UK'S QUARTERLY MAGAZINE

APR-JUN 2025



Free at last!

MAF Pilot Ryan Koher

Precious time. Precious care

Bringing life into the world



FLYING FOR LIFE
SINCE 1945

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supporter.relations@maf-uk.org

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Front cover

MAF is flying for life in Timor-Leste

 Lobitos Alves



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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Designer: Ben Dyer
Printer: Fretwell Print and Design Ltd
Printed on sustainable paper produced from a managed forest

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Thank you for your prayers!

At the beginning of 2024, we sent an urgent request for prayer to MAF family members asking for immediate intercession for our aircraft, staff, probate and donors.

After a year of God pouring out His blessings on MAF, we are delighted to be able to thank you from the bottom of our hearts for — yet again — responding wholeheartedly to an emergency.

In brief, the number of aircraft, staff and donors increased significantly last year, while an end to delays in the government's probate system meant we finally received dozens of precious gifts in Wills. (Please keep praying!)

God bless you.



Read more about
MAF in Madagascar
on page 10.

Antsa Randrianasolo



MAF is 80!

Thank you so much for helping us reach this milestone! Your faithful, Christ-like devotion keeps our mission of 'flying for life' alive.

For 80 years, MAF has served in diverse climates, cultures and communities. During this time, our staff have taken many leaps of faith – whether negotiating short, grass airstrips, making first contact with a remote community or simply living in dangerous parts of the world.

However, as highlighted in this issue, God is with us no matter what life throws at us – be it false imprisonment (page 4) or environmental disaster (page 5).

While chatting recently to a

woman in a hamlet in Papua, Indonesia, an MAF pilot asked her how things were going. She replied, 'Tuhan selalu ada': the Lord is always present.

For eight decades, this truth has guided us and will continue to do so. And so I urge each of us in the MAF family to follow the words of Joshua 1:9: 'Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.'

Donovan Palmer
Chief Executive, MAF UK



Stuart King and Jack Hemmings,
at the start of the MAF adventure



The first flight: Croydon Airport,
13 January 1948

Free at last!

REPORT BRAD HOAGLUN / STORY RICHARD CHAMBERS
PHOTOS RYAN KOHER

Flying for Life readers who also follow us online were delighted to see MAF Pilot Ryan Koher exonerated after more than two years awaiting justice from the Mozambique legal system

By the time the good news reached us just before Christmas, it was too late to include it in the winter issue of *Flying for Life*. Here is the official press release that announced our joy to the world.

It is with great joy in the Lord that we announce the conclusion of the investigation into Ryan Koher.

The case has been dismissed.

We are deeply grateful for your prayers and support for Ryan and Annabel during this challenging time.

It's hard to believe that two years have passed since Ryan was arrested on 4 November 2022, while preparing to deliver supplies to an orphanage in northern Mozambique. Ryan and two South Africans who brought the supplies were jailed under suspicion of supporting insurgent activity in the region where the orphanage is located.

Ryan spent over four months in prison — primarily in the Machava High Security Prison near Maputo. He was released on 14 March 2023, but was required to remain in Mozambique.

In September 2023, a judge ordered the return of Ryan's passport, and he — along with his wife Annabel and their two children Hezekiah and Elias (pictured here) — returned home to the United States in October.

The support for Ryan and Annabel during this time was a tremendous blessing to them. We greatly appreciate the prayers you offered for Ryan's safety while in prison and for Annabel's strength as she cared for their family.

Ryan is very thankful for your prayers that led to the dismissal of the case. 'I know this would not have been possible without the many people who have been faithfully praying for this outcome. I would like to thank everyone for your prayers and love for our family. I pray that God will receive all the glory for His work in our lives.'

One month after the case was dropped, Annabel gave birth to baby Abbie (pictured right).



Our Mozambique programme was established in 1999. Please pray for the MAF Mozambique team



Scan this QR code to listen to the podcast

What would they do without MAF?

REPORT PUSHPA LAWRENCE

STORY GARY CLAYTON

PHOTOS PUSHPA LAWRENCE + PHILEMON SCHELLING

Missionaries in Chad describe what life is like without the unique support afforded them by the MAF family

It's actually pretty dangerous to be here without MAF,' says Bible translator Diane Vanderkooi.

Last year, when both our Chad aircraft were in Uganda for maintenance, flight services were temporarily suspended. With heavy rains making much of the country inaccessible by road, those working there had no option but to wait for our flights to resume.

Mark and Diane Vanderkooi, the latter the headteacher of the Christian School in Tchaguine, are in the final stages of translating the New Testament into Kwong. They also run a small FM radio station, a Bible school for pastors and a clinic staffed by Chadian Christians.

'The waters run deep,' Mark explains. 'In a medical emergency, there's no way to evacuate except by a ten-hour motorcycle and canoe ride.'

Dave and Sonja Naverson, who work with Lutheran Brethren International Mission, agree.

'There's been horrific flooding,' says Dave. 'Roads, terrible in this season, are now impassable. We've been stuck in N'Djamena for a month now.'

The heavier rains meant an increase in mosquitoes, malaria, typhoid and stagnant water, causing sickness among the Fulani — the very people the Naversons were serving.

The supply of medicine from N'Djamena was also affected. With doctors unable to reach isolated communities, the lives of pregnant women and patients needing urgent operations were in jeopardy.

A 155-mile journey that takes most of the day had become a 48-hour nightmare — the rains having washed roads away and caused mud-built houses to collapse.

'We really love MAF,' says Dave, 'and look forward to when we can fly back.'



**'IT'S ACTUALLY
PRETTY
DANGEROUS
TO BE HERE
WITHOUT MAF'**



Our Chad programme was established in **1966**. Please pray for the MAF Chad team

Our Timor-Leste programme was established in **2007**. Please pray for the MAF Timor-Leste team

Precious time. Precious care

REPORT AND PHOTOS LOBITOS ALVES

When a nine-month-old boy's life was at risk, MAF Timor-Leste reacted with its legendary speed to bring relief and joy to his family

Natacio Gusmão (right) lives in Adara, a remote village on the western coast of Atauro Island.

When he contracted a fever that required urgent medical attention, his parents had to find someone in their small community to take him to the main healthcare centre in Vila Maumeta, which is a two-hour journey from Adara.

Nurses at the clinic realised that Natacio's fever was caused by a serious throat wound, leading to the abdominal distension and convulsions that had worried his parents in the first place.

It was quickly decided that the boy would need an emergency transfer to the Hospital Nacional Guido Valaderes, which is in the capital Dili on the Timor-Leste mainland.

As is typical in Timor-Leste, only an MAF plane could provide a sufficiently rapid response to save Natacio's life.

'MAF saved my son's life during this tough situation when there seemed to be no hope for us,' says the boy's father Abio (left). 'I'm thankful to MAF for providing us with a safe flight that helped us arrive in Dili quickly, compared to travelling by boat. It saved our son!'

A boat trip from Atauro Island to Dili takes between one and three hours, depending on the state of the sea. With MAF, it took 15 minutes.

Estela Noronha is MAF's Closing the Loop Co-ordinator. Closing the Loop aims to extend the support MAF gives its medevac passengers by providing their family and friends with items that are essential during hospital visits.

The care packs provided by Closing the Loop contain toothpaste, toothbrushes, soap, tissues and bottled water among other items that visitors cannot buy at hospitals.

'I saw that Abio was worried as he carried Natacio in his arms — the baby was obviously in a critical condition,' says Estela.

'When we went back to the hospital, I expected to see that he was still enduring the same condition as before and would need more observation. Surprisingly, the baby looked very good and his father said that his tummy was getting better. I was very happy to see his condition improve.'

Abio also expressed his gratitude for the extra gift of a care pack made possible by generous MAF supporters.



'PLEASE CONTINUE HELPING THE PEOPLE IN TIMOR-LESTE. YOU MEAN A LOT TO THEM.'



'We received a bag as a special gift that contained essential items: baby clothes, food, water and sanitary supplies,' he recalls. 'I'm really grateful for the extra support provided by MAF which helped us greatly during our stay in the hospital.'

After nearly a week in the hospital, baby Natacio was well enough to be discharged. He and his parents (below right) returned home to Adara in a plane piloted by MAF Timor-Leste's new Country Director Ping Domtta.

Estela conveyed her deep gratitude to the many MAF supporters whose donations support the Closing the Loop team.

'Thank you so much for your kind support — please continue helping the people in Timor-Leste. You mean a lot to them.'



SPECIAL UPDATE!

In November 2023, we sent MAF family members a special letter telling the story of baby Hajam's first Christmas. Both he and his then pregnant mum Eliazefa da Silva were saved by an emergency flight that took them from Atauro Island to Dili.

'I was in a critical condition at that time,' says Eliazefa, when the MAF team made a follow-up visit last year. 'I had fever and felt cramping on my belly. From the bottom of my heart, I want to express how much MAF has supported us. They provided a medevac flight and a bag containing basic needs, and arranged a return flight to our home town.'

After reading about baby Hajam, nearly 3,000 MAF family members sent Christmas donations.

God bless you!





Last of the few

STORY JO LAMB

PHOTOS JONATHAN BUCKMASTER, JENNY DAVIES,
SIMON DUNSMORE, OLLY NUNN + MAF ARCHIVE

Jack Hemmings, one of MAF's founder members who survived against the odds to 'lavish 103 years of love into the world', passed away on 24 January 2025

“Lovely Jack” is the phrase that tripped off the tongue of many people who met him for the first time,’ says Kate Hemmings, wife of MAF’s much loved co-founder and RAF Veteran. ‘He was always young, engaging with everyone from young children up to centenarians. His drive was humanitarian, providing hope and relieving human suffering.’

The 103-year-old former RAF Squadron Leader, who co-piloted a wooden Miles Gemini aircraft alongside Stuart King in 1948 to perform MAF’s first survey of Central Africa, was still flying well into his centenary. In February 2024, Jack became one of Britain’s best-loved World War II Veterans after taking control of a Spitfire to raise money for MAF.

Thankfully, his Spitfire stunt ended with a smooth landing. But not all his flights resulted in success, affording him the name ‘Crasher Jack’, by which he was affectionately known among the aviation community and close friends.

The MAF Gemini, notoriously lost on a Burundi mountainside, was not his first prang. In a World War II account of exploits with 353 Squadron in India, he documented being pulled unconscious from the burning wreckage of a Hudson that encountered an engine failure on take-off. His gallantry afforded him the Air Force Cross.

Jack’s bravery, determination and commitment to use aviation as a force for good have rarely been witnessed in our lifetime. It was a passion which drove him to join MAF after demobilisation in 1946, to volunteer with the RAF Air Cadets during the 1970s, and to pioneer a life-saving partnership with Friendship Floating Hospitals in Bangladesh in 2000. He overcame every obstacle with an inspiring resilience and an uncanny ability to survive.

‘I remember in 1997, when Pa was flying his Sipa aeroplane, one of the wheels fell off the undercarriage, causing a catastrophic crash on landing,’ explains his son Adrian. ‘He broke his neck and ribs and was told by his surgeon he would never walk or fly again.’



Despite losing nearly an inch in height, Jack proved both predictions wrong. It wasn't until Adrian saw Jack return to the controls of a Gemini aircraft in 2022 to remember Stuart King, he truly grasped the enormity of their journey to Africa and the extent of his father's courage. 'It's amazing what he achieved,' says Adrian. 'All his stories were filled with adventure and triumph over adversity. They will be very much missed.'

Describing the charity he co-founded 80 years ago as the 'Good Samaritan of the Air', Jack was an inspiring advocate for the life-saving work of MAF until the very end of his life.

'Landing' a replica MAF aircraft in a tiny primary school playground in July 2024, Jack wanted to thank pupils for raising £1,500 as well as inspire them about the work of MAF.

'I've never got into an aircraft and regretted it,' Jack said, printing his hand to a plane-shaped mural print on the wall of Seabrook School. 'I love flying because I have a feeling of detachment from all the problems of the world. Seeing aircraft used as weapons of war — as we did as young RAF airmen — reminds me of MAF's initial purpose: to use aeroplanes to bring peace and hope to needy places.'

Honoured by aviators including the Red Arrows, who performed a special birthday smoke salute to mark his 102nd birthday, Jack was described as one of the great flying legends of our time.

'Meeting pilots like Jack — and witnessing the positive impact he achieved through aviation — many of us still working in this field can use it to spur us on to continue to do great things,' says Red Arrows Squadron Leader Graeme Muscat.

'A true hero and role model,' concludes BBC broadcaster Paddy O'Connell.



'You are one of the delights of the world!'

This was Jack's final, heartfelt message to the tens of thousands of MAF family members who received his special Christmas letter. More than 2,400 supporters have responded to date with a donation to Jack's last act of fundraising. If you would like to make a gift honouring his memory, please use the enclosed response form or scan the QR code to visit his tribute page.

jackhemmings.muchloved.com

Thank you.





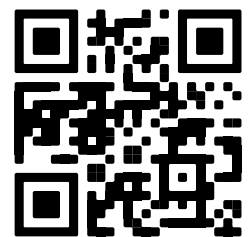
**YOU KEEP US
FLYING FOR LIFE!**

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 Timor-Leste, baby Natacio's throat wound caused a fever that led to abdominal distension and convulsions.

The full story on page 6 tells how your commitment to MAF made an emergency flight possible. 'MAF saved my son's life,' says the baby's father Abio.

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 Supporter Relations team on **01303 852819**, or give securely online by visiting **www.maf-uk.org/fflgive**

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

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'Suddenly, thieves came'

REPORT AND PHOTOS ANTSA RANDRIANASOLO
STORY GARY CLAYTON

Thanks to MAF partner HoverAid, medical aid and reassurance reach a region plagued by violence, insecurity and cattle theft

For Bendalana and the people in remote Ankavandra, western Madagascar, the sight of an MAF plane is a promise that, no matter how isolated they are, they are not forgotten.

Bendalana, a 53-year-old farmer, says he was caught up in a living nightmare one evening, when he was checking on his two cows and 'suddenly, thieves came'.

As Bendalana tried to flee, a shotgun blast hit him in the back. The father of seven collapsed. His attackers stole both cows and left him for dead.

Though he thought he was going to die, Bendalana was rushed to a local health facility where his condition was stabilised.

Later, aware of the bullets still embedded in his back, Bendalana decided to go to the hospital in Tsiroanomandidy for additional help.

Having made the 2-day journey there in the blistering heat — the bumpy roads causing him agony — an X-ray revealed the presence of 12 small pellets.

Although feeling a little better after the visit, Bendalana was still worried about the bullets in his body. He felt sick whenever he tried to eat.

So, when MAF's plane landed with a team of HoverAid medics who'd come to treat patients in a village where gunshot and machete wounds are only too common, he knew help was at hand.

The surgeon who examined him removed one of the pellets, explaining that the safest thing would be to leave the other fragments alone until the medical team returned with MAF a few months later.

Reassured by the doctor, who later told us he'd heard gunshots every night, Bendalana smiled, saying, 'I'm looking forward to the next mission in our village. The doctor coming here is priceless for us.'



Our Madagascar programme was established in **1988**. Please pray for the MAF Madagascar team



Good news by the bucketload

STORY JENNY DAVIES

PHOTOS JENNY DAVIES + THE BUCKET MINISTRY

Based in the USA, The Bucket Ministry is committed to providing both clean drinking water to remote families and 'living water' through spreading the Good News of Jesus

MAF passengers Ronald Rotich (Africa Director) and Victor Dihanda (Research Analyst) spent a week in Mvolo County, South Sudan, to assess the need for a Bucket Ministry project.

'What we do,' explains Roland, 'is to give out water filters to each and every home. We use it as a tool to share the Gospel.'

Having had great success with this message in Kenya — where 90,000 filters were delivered by evangelists in Kibera alone — Roland and Victor have turned their attention to South Sudan.

A 40-minute flight took them to Mundri from where they had to drive for nearly three hours before they reached Mvolo, where diseased water is collected from the local swamp. The nearest borehole is a three-mile walk away.

'When the villagers go there,' says Roland, 'they don't have clean containers, so the water is contaminated by the time they get it home. It's pointless to go all the way over there for something that is dirty.'

'We partner with like-minded local churches and look for local missionaries to share the Gospel. When we find someone in Mundri we can partner with, we'll bring them to Kenya for training for a period of one month. After a month, they'll come back and start the project.'

'This is our first visit to South Sudan. Getting to some of the communities is very challenging. If you want to bring more friends to see the work, it is a challenge to travel to Mvolo — particularly during the rainy season. It can be hard to get a car to travel on the road.'

'We loved our flight with MAF — it was so awesome! The pilot was so friendly, and it is nice when you know someone is a Christian because they say, "Let's pray before we go!" It is our prayer that we can fly with you in the future.'



'IT IS OUR PRAYER THAT WE CAN FLY WITH YOU IN THE FUTURE.'



Our South Sudan programme was established in 1950. Please pray for the MAF South Sudan team





'THANK YOU FOR THINKING ABOUT US'

BISHOP MISANGO FRED



Our Uganda programme was established in **1987**. Please pray for the MAF Uganda team

Worth a thousand words

Lake Victoria is home to more than 3,000 islands — 84 of which form the Ssese group where healthcare, education and spiritual support are in short supply. Furthermore, to visit their neighbours, Ssese islanders must first return to the mainland by boat — a journey of many hours — before a long wait for the next available boat to carry on to their destination.

MAF's East Africa Regional Finance Manager Sam Baguma visited Lingira Island, along with Africa Region Content Producer Paula Alderblad who took these fantastic photos. There he spoke with Bishop Misango Fred, who gave examples of the daily obstacles faced by the islanders. 'To get teachers to move here is a real problem,' says Bishop Misango.

Everyone agrees that an MAF floatplane would make these journeys so much quicker and safer, encouraging stronger communities and successful development for thousands of islanders.

The MAF Uganda team is determined to bring help, hope and healing to the islands by floatplane, and fundraising plans are underway. 'Thank you for thinking about us,' says Bishop Misango. 'Your support means so much to us — may God bless you abundantly!'





FLYING FOR LIFE
SINCE 1945

The MAF family was started by a handful of faithful airmen in 1945. Five years later, God blessed us with our first base in Sudan (pictured below).

Over the course of eight miraculous decades, thousands of people with hearts as big as yours have swelled our ranks to bring help, hope and healing to countless isolated brothers and sisters.

Prayers and gifts as numerous as the stars in the sky turned Mission Aviation Fellowship from ambitious vision into glorious reality.



The full story of our unique journey together can be enjoyed by **scanning the QR code** or by visiting **www.maf-uk.org/our-history**

Meanwhile, here are a few snapshots to remind you how your love helps bring joy and salvation to the MAF world.



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MAF PNG. Isolated schools sustained by textbook deliveries #PNG #Education

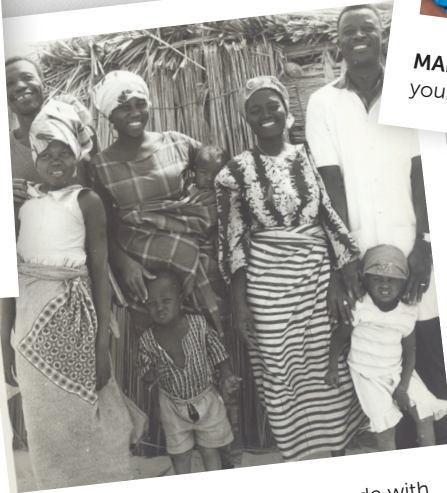


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MAF Liberia. Life-saving evacuations at a moment's notice #Liberia #Life-saving



MAF Madagascar. Bibles received with praise and thanksgiving #Madagascar #Gospel



Timor-Leste. Children inspired to become next MAF pilots #Timor-Leste #Children



MAF Uganda. Unwavering commitment to millions of refugees #Uganda #Refugees

By leaving a gift in your Will, you can help us keep flying for generations to come.

Today, one in five flights is made possible by gifts in Wills.

For the many ways in which you keep us flying for life – **THANK YOU!**

Where there's a Will there's a plane





You are help, hope and healing!

This young man is one of countless isolated people whose future you are connected to through your prayers and gifts.

MAF is committed to spreading the love of God to remote communities like the islands on Lake Victoria where life is so very hard (see page 12).

Your steadfast love will change the world — this is what flying for life looks like for the people we serve.

God bless you

