



FLYING FOR LIFE

MAF UK'S QUARTERLY MAGAZINE | OCT-DEC 2025



Fish tale

Marine conservation
in Timor-Leste

Eighty years young!

Into the future with MAF



FLYING FOR LIFE
SINCE 1945

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Front cover

MAF is flying for life in South Sudan

📷 Annet Nabbanja

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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Your response to the previous issue kept us flying for life in Kenya.

Thank you for your love!

With the end of our 80th anniversary year on the horizon, thoughts turn to the miracle of Christmas and the words of 2 Corinthians 9:15, 'Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!'

The love shown by the Father in sending His Son to save us is — of course — the reason MAF was established in 1945, when a war-torn world was in desperate need of a guiding light.

The support for isolated men, women and children that pours from your heart is similarly hard to describe. Love is the gift that makes MAF a dynamic force for Gospel transformation. Love recreates a broken world in His image.

God bless you.



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



A season of growth and gratitude

It has been a tremendous privilege to serve as MAF UK's Chief Executive for the past 2½ years.

In that short time, I have witnessed God do extraordinary things — lives transformed, barriers overcome and hope reaching the most remote corners of the world.

It has been a time of growth and renewed vision. We've seen increased support, deeper engagement with our partners and fresh energy in our commitment to serving those in greatest need.

I am immensely proud of the MAF UK team — passionate, faithful, dedicated people who embody the heart of our mission.

A personal highlight was when His Majesty King Charles joined us at RAF Northolt to commission our newest aircraft for Papua New Guinea. That celebration of MAF's 80th anniversary was a powerful

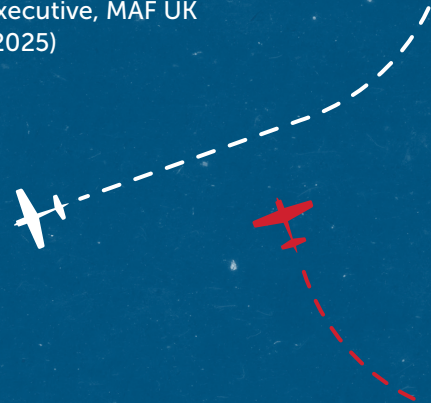
reminder of how far its ministry has come and how God continues to use aviation to bring the Good News of Jesus to people in hard-to-reach places.

It is with deep gratitude and humility that I now take up the role of MAF International's CEO. I remain committed to the same vision, that every person — no matter how isolated — will experience God's love through the work of MAF.

Please accept my heartfelt thanks for your unwavering prayers, generous support and enduring partnership — none of this would be possible without you. It has been a joy to serve alongside you.

All glory to our God!

Donovan Palmer
Chief Executive, MAF UK
(2022-2025)



Susan Kigen-Kolum,
MAF Kenya
Country Director

**Read about
your impact
in Kenya on
page 9**



'I dream of building a house for my mother'

STORY + PHOTOS
ROSEMARY KALAMATI
ANNET NABBANJA

Over one million refugees from war-torn South Sudan have sought safety in northern Uganda. Many of them are young children — the next generation of the world's youngest nation

"Education is the key."





MAIN Achol Bol Mabior and her son Akech
BELOW Children now experience play, learning, and a sense of belonging at school
CUTOUT Rosemary Kalamati, PEACE International

At Peace Nursery and Primary School in Olua, northern Uganda, run by MAF partner PEACE International, hope is taking root. Children are completing their education.

The playground is teeming with life. Laughter is loud, and children in school uniform play happily. Achol Bol Mabior, mother of 15-year-old graduate Akech, fled with her children when the war became too dangerous for them back home in South Sudan.

That Akech got the opportunity to go to school feels like a dream come true for both mother and son.

'I want my children to get an education,' says Achol, 'because I never had that chance. I hope they can study and support their siblings. I want to start sewing clothes and save a little every day so that Akech can continue his education. I used to do a lot of work, but now I have less strength and can only see with one eye.'

And the young graduate knows that education will be the key to a much brighter future.

'I want to become an engineer — watching people work with electricity really inspires me!' Akech explains. 'By studying, I'll be able to help my family. I dream of building a house for my mother.'

Civil war broke out in South Sudan in December 2013, just two years after the country gained its hard-won independence from Sudan.

The conflict began with ethnic violence and quickly led to a major humanitarian crisis. Thousands of families fled south to neighbouring Uganda and many children grew up without access to even the most basic education.

PEACE International responded to this urgent need. Its mission is to promote peace by offering hope through general teaching, leadership training and support for women.

Today, its school provides formal education, trauma care and 2 daily meals to more than 850 students from nursery to the age of 11.



'Education is the key to shaping the life of a refugee child,' says PEACE International founder Rosemary Kalamati, whom we flew in for the graduation ceremony.

'A good education makes it possible to resolve conflicts with words instead of violence. Education is a peacemaker and, through our Christ-centred teaching, we provide children with knowledge and teach them the values they need to build a better future.'

MAF has been an important partner for PEACE International for several years, transporting staff who are experts in providing trauma care and peacebuilding techniques for teachers and pastors. Our aircraft have also flown school supplies and more than 1,000 Bibles to students and leaders.

Time and again, our passengers have expressed how important MAF is to them, because our aircraft make their work much easier and more efficient.

Those cherished blessings are a direct result of your dedicated support — thank you!





Fish tale

STORY RICHARD CHAMBERS

PHOTOS LOBITOS ALVES + WORLD FISH

Fishing is crucial to the livelihoods of many who live in Bikeli in the north-eastern part of Atauro Island. However, Timor-Leste's marine ecosystem is under serious threat, forcing communities to find new ways to sustain themselves and the next generation

I am a Bikeli fisherman,' says Antonio Pereira. 'I've been doing it since I was 11. Some of my catch we eat. Some is sold to earn money to support my children's education.

'But life is now very difficult. There are fewer fish compared to the past. We are now shifting to seaweed harvesting. So I went to our neighbouring village Beloi to learn about fishing using **Tara Bandu** principles.'

Tara Bandu is the Timorese concept of conserving natural resources for their long-term survival. In fishing communities, it employs designated marine activity areas to protect the natural ecosystem from overfishing.

Marine conservation organisation Blue Ventures uses **Tara Bandu** principles to support remote coastal villages seeking to rebuild ocean ecosystems. Its staff fly with MAF to Atauro from the Timorese capital Dili.

When Antonio returned to Bikeli, he began working with Blue Ventures. Programme Officer



Armindo Marques — another Bikeli resident — explains how his team works with the community.

'By overfishing and using tools that destroy coral reefs, our behaviour has harmed the marine ecosystem. **Tara Bandu** establishes restrictions on fishing activities, including the use of nets and spearfishing. This also helps protect coral reefs and supports the growth of seaweed.

'We have more than 50 species of marine life in the conservation area, including pelagic fish, demersal fish, octopuses, seahorses, turtles and sharks.'

Blue Ventures' programme assists

coastal communities in protecting these marine species, while securing the revenue they need to improve their lives.

'We fly frequently with MAF from Dili to Atauro,' says Armindo. 'Its planes really help us, as well as the island's communities in general.'

MAF Pilot Joe Farren had the rare opportunity to see this work first hand.

'It was amazing to go out on a small fishing boat with Blue Ventures to explore the incredible reef they care for,' says Joe. 'It's awesome how we get to partner with NGOs here and, as a result, enable them to increase their impact.'

PLEASE
PRAY FOR 

- the fishing communities of Timor-Leste
- the work of Blue Ventures in protecting God's precious creation
- the staff of MAF Timor-Leste.



Scan me for our
podcast on MAF's
80-year history

'God is with you'

STORY MANDY GLASS
PHOTOS LUANNE CADD + MANDY GLASS

MAIN Siobhain and Ryan Cole
BELOW Miom Slinger

What had begun as a quiet walk home after attending the local Baptist Women's Fellowship turned into a profoundly moving encounter for Siobhain Cole, Operations Projects Officer at MAF Papua New Guinea (PNG)

'W'e were enemies,' the old man said, his voice low in memory of the darkest part of his tribe's history.

'Telefomin against Oksapmin, against Feramin, against Tifalmin.' He pointed in the different directions of these places from where the enemy tribes are located.

'There was fighting. But, when God's Word came, it stopped! Now we work together.'

The old man had approached Siobhain with a warmth that only many years of life and faith can cultivate. He told her his name was Miom Slinger.

'God is with you,' Miom said. 'I'm an old man. I often pray. Once I wanted to visit you [MAF] and talk to you, but I didn't want to disturb you and time slipped away. But now — here on the road — this is the perfect time to chat.'

Siobhain asked what MAF had brought in those early days and if he had ever been on an MAF plane.

Miom's eyes lit up. 'Yes, I travelled with the MAF plane to Eliptamin, and other places. The MAF base was in Wewak and from there it served Oksapmin, Mianmin — all the way around.'

Miom nodded, pointing down the road. 'See that canteen? That's MAF. That's a memory!'

'They brought store goods — but also God's Word. God's Word came down to Oksapmin, Feramin, Duranmin, Mianmin — all the way around.'

'MAF brought the mission work. They changed things.'

MAF began flying into Telefomin in the 1950s, supporting both the PNG government and mission efforts by the Australian Baptist Missionary Society (now Baptist Mission Australia).

As the conversation drew to a close, Siobhain blessed Miom and thanked him for his prayers and his memories.

Parting ways, she continued her walk on the familiar dirt road she and her husband MAF Pilot Ryan



Cole have walked countless times over the past 7½ years since making Telefomin their home.

Siobhain felt the weight and wonder of what Miom had just shared — a living testimony of transformation.

Her walk home had become a window into MAF history. A reminder that, sometimes, the road brings us exactly who we're meant to meet.

Eighty years young!

STORY SEAN ATKINS

PHOTOS HILLIM GITONGA, MANDY GLASS, SVEND LØBNER + IMC



How does an 80-year-old organisation become more active, relevant and innovative in a changing world? MAF International's Chief Transformation and Operating Officer Norman Baker believes the only way is to aim high



Looking deep into the future inevitably invites a comparison with the distant past.

MAF was founded in the aftermath of World War II by Christians determined to use aviation to bring help, hope and healing to isolated people in remote communities.

Norman Baker says the bold journeys of those early pioneers — Betty Greene's survey flights in South America or Stuart King's and Jack Hemmings' trips across Africa — still set a shining example for MAF to follow as it looks ahead.

'The world is changing around us at a pace that we've never seen before. We serve roughly 2,500 remote communities and one of the things we want to do, as we approach our 100-year anniversary, is ask **How do we become more effective?**

'Our ambition is to double that impact by reaching double the number of isolated people. With an estimated one billion people across the world suffering because they live far from healthcare or education, the challenge for MAF is to understand the needs of the next generation better.

'You go back 80 years and the motivation to want to improve people's lives is admirable. That's still at the core of who we are, but our understanding of what communities actually need has to keep changing.'



PLEASE PRAY FOR

- the MAF vision for 2045
- the MAF family to grow and increase prayer and financial support
- the staff of MAF worldwide as each plays their part in this unique mission.

MAIN An MAF Cessna 207 in Kenya, piloted by Les Brown (MAF News, June 1971)

TOP LEFT Susan Kigen-Kolum (centre right) with East Africa Resourcing Hub missionaries Terry and Micheni Ruriani, who have moved from Kenya to serve with MAF in Uganda

BOTTOM LEFT MAF Pilot Mathias Glass with Norman Baker



Your generosity is supporting opportunities for pilots, engineers, managers and other key staff to make a transformational difference in the nations where MAF operates.

In addition to staff from the UK, MAF is increasingly recruiting people from Africa and Asia with new perspectives on what the people in the countries we serve really need. Susan Kigen-Kolum was an engineer in MAF's Kenya programme but now, as its Country Director, she is leading our efforts to attract new people from the East Africa region.

'There is a growing excitement and a shared sentiment that the time has come for Africa to rise,' says Susan. 'For too long, many Africans have been recipients of missions and missionaries, but now it is time for Africa to give back.'

'Africa has the youngest population in the world — 70% of sub-Saharan Africans are under the age of 30. As the most rapidly growing continent, Africa's demographic, economic and cultural growth will undoubtedly influence the world.'

'We believe that God is calling the African Church to rise up in this generation, not only to reach its own communities but also to send missionaries, engineers, pilots and leaders to places that are still waiting for the hope of Christ.'

So, 80 years on from the establishment of MAF, it's

encouraging to see how our family is growing. For MAF leaders like Norman and Susan, people are the key, but technology also has a part to play.

Although aviation is a lifeline for isolated people, MAF is looking to embrace technologies that are better for our planet. This means that MAF's next generation could involve drones (unmanned aerial vehicles), fuel-efficient systems and a sophisticated simulator that significantly reduces the hours spent in the air during training.

'We're evaluating new technology that's emerging,' Norman explains. 'We are looking at when they start to become viable products that we think we could put to good use.'

What was true in 1945 is still true 80 years later — MAF flies where others don't. In the years ahead, it's your unique role as a member of the MAF family that will enable MAF to change more lives than was first thought possible.

'If an airline could start up in one of the difficult, isolated environments in which we operate, we would celebrate it,' Norman concludes. 'But they don't because their commercial models make it unaffordable.'

Therefore — at 80 years young — MAF remains utterly vital to the future of the next generation.

MAF – the world's first responder

STORY ELEANOR RIVERS

PHOTOS DR MAHER ANOUS, JOEL CONTE + GINO ANSATIANA RANDRIANASOLO

Around the world, young lives hang in the balance every day due to a variety of medical emergencies. Thanks to you, MAF aircraft are there to fly patients, doctors and supplies — often at a moment's notice — that save the day

Three-year-old Neema from rural Tanzania suffered one of the most horrific injuries imaginable

Savaged by a hyena while sheltering in a hut from rain, she lost an eye and much of her face. The attack shocked her small village and devastated her young mother Juliana, who'd left Neema in the care of her grandmother.

'When my mother returned from fetching flour, she was met with shouts of terror, and the hyena was chewing off Neema's eye region,' Juliana recalls vividly.

With injuries too complex for local treatment, reconstructive surgeon Dr Maher Anous was urgently needed. MAF Pilot Mark Liprini flew Dr Maher from Arusha to Dodoma in just over an hour — saving half a day of arduous travel and enabling immediate, urgent care.

'Her case is one of the worst I've seen — it's indiscriminate destruction,' says Dr Maher. 'The danger is that she becomes a burden for her family. She has lost one eye and half her face.'

The first stage of surgery was successful, and Dr Maher is planning a second major operation that will last 12 to 15 hours, involving skin grafts and microsurgery. Though the road ahead is long, Neema has survived and can now begin to heal.



STOP PRESS: SAMUEL IS FREE FROM CANCER!

In January, we wrote to MAF family members about a young man in Kenya called Samuel. We supported him with regular flights to Nairobi so he could complete a full programme of chemotherapy. Recently, it was confirmed that Samuel is free from cancer — praise the Lord!



If you haven't yet read his inspiring story, scan the QR code to see how your prayers and gifts helped save Samuel's life.



Thousands of miles away in Guinea, 15-year-old Yelikha endured a different kind of long-term suffering

A traffic accident at five years old left her jaw locked shut. She was unable to open her mouth or eat normally. For ten years, Yelikha's mother Aissatou searched for answers.

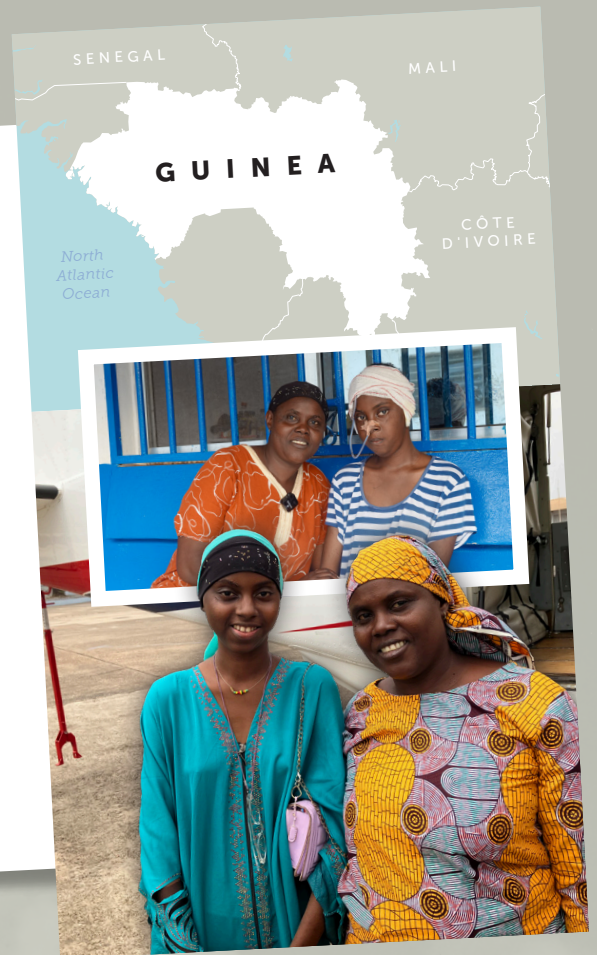
'We have really visited many hospitals,' Aissatou explains. 'The previous doctors told us that we had to evacuate my daughter to Morocco or Tunisia... but where will we find the money for this operation?'

When a specialist surgeon became available at a remote clinic, MAF made the journey possible, flying the family there in just two hours.

'I thank MAF for their presence in Guinea, otherwise we would have had to go by road, and it would have exhausted us,' Aissatou says.

The operation was a success!

'Today, here is my daughter who manages to open her mouth, something she had stopped doing for a good ten years.'



And in Madagascar, 35-year-old Angeline — already a mother of 2 — nearly lost her life to severe pregnancy complications

Her remote village airstrip was unusable, but local people came together to clear it in time for MAF to land. A three-day road journey was reduced to under an hour.

'She has already had complications with her first two children,' says Angeline's grateful mum Vaha. 'She's the last of my three daughters. I knew she was not doing well, but I could not help her. So thank you for bringing us here (a hospital in the capital Antananarivo that performed a life-saving operation).'



The stories of Neema, Yelikha and Angeline are united by something very special — the undying love of thousands upon thousands of MAF family members like you.

MAF's ability to reach the unreachable is a direct result of your devoted commitment and compassionate selflessness. By bringing medical help to where it's needed most, MAF is investing in the health of the next generation.

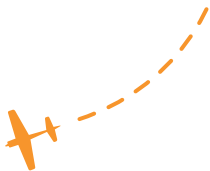
MAF Tanzania's Country Director Stewart Ayling sums it up beautifully,

'It's part of our role at MAF to provide connections between people. When we all work together, the outcomes are better for everyone.'





Worth a thousand words



After decades of dedication and perseverance, a dream has come true in Dekai, Papua — the Bible has finally arrived in the Ngalik language!

In 1960, two pioneering missionaries — Ed and Shirley Maxey — arrived in the village of Silimo. Committed to learning and writing down the Ngalik language they also built a house and an airstrip. With the support of two local young men, Enos and Amos, they devoted themselves passionately to translating the Bible into Ngalik.

Remarkably, in 1989, their son Buzz and his wife Myrna took on the continuation of the work Ed and Shirley had begun. Two generations — one mission! MAF accompanied this unique enterprise every step of the way through countless flights so that the project did not falter.

Consequently, the joy of the MAF team was overflowing when it was able to participate in the festive Bible dedication ceremonies in Dekai seven months ago, where Debbie Klynstra took these beautiful photos.

But the work is not yet finished... there are still numerous Papuan communities eagerly awaiting the translation of the Bible into their mother tongue.



Hidden treasures

In the summer issue of *Flying for Life*, we asked you to hunt your house for unwanted foreign coins — loose change that can change the world. The response has been tremendous

Thanks to the loving kindness of MAF family members, we can now turn francs into fuel, rubles into runways, and pesos into planes!

Whether supporters had collections of coins they couldn't get rid of, found some change left over from a fantastic holiday or had absolutely no idea where the money came from, they showed typical generosity in donating their hidden treasures to MAF.

As the end of our 80th anniversary year looms on the horizon, these 'international' gifts continue to flood in through the post.

Thank you for making all the difference!

(When we've converted all the money to sterling, we'll let you know the grand total!)



If you've yet to find any foreign currency, please take a quick look in the cupboards and drawers where things often lie untouched for years, and send any unwanted change to:

Joshua Oliver, MAF UK,
Castle House, Castle Hill
Avenue, Folkestone
CT20 2TQ

Soaring Together: Spotlight on Papua New Guinea

Join us for an inspiring online event celebrating 80 years of MAF and the incredible work we are doing in Papua New Guinea!

Discover how your support is making an amazing difference while exploring how you can leave a lasting legacy through a gift to MAF in your Will.

WHEN? Tuesday 25 November

WHERE? Online, from the comfort of your home

Let's celebrate, reflect, and soar into the future — together!

Register now at www.maf-uk.org/ffl-soaring or scan the QR code



Where there's a Will
there's a plane

Welcome to Co-Pilot!

Co-Pilot is a dynamic community of young adults who share MAF's vision — that every community, however remote, should have the essentials for life.

We want to do something NOW to make an impact.

YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE A PILOT TO HELP END ISOLATION* — you can make a real impact on the lives of those living in poverty and isolation all over the world:



volunteer

Events, Speakers, Co-Pilot panel



fundraise

Download our pack, Give £5 a month and get a free hoodie



careers

Future Pilot Programme, Engineer Training Scheme, Vision Trips

Book a FREE Co-Pilot speaker for your group.

SCAN THE QR CODE

OR...

tell a young person about Co-Pilot!



***but if you are, let's talk!**





Your faith is their future!

Even after 80 years of MAF spreading the Good News far and wide, many people living in remote communities don't have a Bible.

For 65 years, MAF Papua supported a project to create a written version of the Ngalik tongue, into which the Bible was then translated (page 12). What a testament to commitment!

Your faith brings His love to all the nations — this is what flying for life looks like for the people we serve.

God bless you



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