

MAF

Flying for Life

The Barrett-Lennard Family News

Jun 2008

MISSION AVIATION FELLOWSHIP
 PAPUA NEW GUINEA



“Because he is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken.” Ps 16:8

Greetings to all our Australian friends. We trust you are well as you receive this update on the work of MAF here in Rumginae PNG. We are encouraged to see the ongoing impact of MAF in two main areas: 1– Sustaining and Developing remote bush communities in the Name of Jesus, including health and education. This work would be greatly hindered without the transport of medicines, books and workers in these areas. 2– the support of Christian organisations and church workers as they reach out to the remote people with encouragement, bible teaching and evangelism. The following stories will give you an idea of MAF’s place in the mission community here. Be encouraged as you see a little of what is happening as a result of your support and prayers.

Okao Outreach by Air

Meet Mr Mase Wodia (right). He is a Pastor with the ECPNG (Evangelical Church of PNG—the predominant denomination in Western Province) amongst the Akeyom people of the Rumginae area. He recently lead an evangelistic team on a nine day trek through the foothills to the North of Rumginae. Matt flew the three of them to the remote village of Okao, the starting point for their ministry to the Ningerum tribe. It has now been a number of years since there has been a full time ex-pat missionary presence in the area, and it was sad to hear Pastor Mase describe the state of the church in general as backsliding and getting mixed up with worldly things. Around here that means reverting to sorcery and fear of spirits etc. He also talked about the lack of leadership in the church (the few with bible school training end up teaching in elementary schools, standing for councils and other titles). This lack is a bigger problem when the bible is not available in many tribal languages, and most can’t read for themselves. Despite this it is encouraging to see local Christians like Mase and his team taking responsibility for the condition of the church here in PNG—not waiting for white missionaries to return but actively sharing the good news with their own people as well as neighbouring tribes. Pray for these local missionaries as they leave their own comfort zones to encourage, strengthen and reach out to a struggling church, and for MAF as we take them to the places and people in need.



Pint-size peg-leg!

A tiny girl medivaced out of Mougulu has amazed us all with her courage. After she was bitten by a death adder, the little girl’s leg should have been bandaged firmly from below the bite to the top of the limb. Unfortunately, she was given the wrong treatment— a bush-rope tourniquet that was then left on for a *whole week*. Over what must have been an agony-filled 7 days, her leg turned black and gangrenous. Finally, the villagers got on the radio and contacted the Rumginae doctors, who ordered an immediate medivac. Sadly, the leg needed to be amputated in order to save her life. Matt had the privilege of returning her home after she had been treated and fitted with a

Missionary Mishaps

The Covingtons are an SIL Family(Wycliffe Bible translators) who work with the people at Suabi village. Much of their translating is now done at Aiyura, the main SIL base in the highlands, but they often return via MAF, for a stint in the bush. On one such trip they found themselves completely cut-off from the outside world and in the dark. Days on end without sun meant no solar power to run HF radio, HF email, computer for translation or basic lighting. To the relief of Tom and Vicki, Matt flew in a generator and fuel, getting the family powered up again.



Tom and Vicki Covington with 3 of their 5 kids - and a generator.

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Airborne

What started as a fairly routine day's flying for Matt suddenly took an interesting turn when the call came in for a medivac out of a village called Fuma, about 40 mins flight ESE of Rumginae (or five days for a fast walker). A lady was having difficulty delivering her baby, so after a discussion with the Fuma health worker via HF radio, Doctor Mike at Rumginae made the decision to ask MAF to fly the patient to Tabubil. Daniel Priest, our obstetrician, was away on a much needed break and the mining town of Tabubil (20mins North of Rumginae) was the only other place where a Caesarian could be done if required. A little while later MFJ was landing at Fuma with Nurse/Midwife James Robin (our neighbor at Rumginae) and CHW (community health worker) student Lenson-Jack on board. The medical men found the patient on the ground under some banana trees, with a crowd gathering around for the spectacle. She was taken to a house for some privacy while James and Lenson went to work. An hour or two later, a natural delivery was looking unlikely so it was into the plane and off to Tabubil Hospital—or so we thought. After about half an hour of flying Matt noticed a bit of a commotion down the back, and before long, James, with a big grin on his face, was holding up a screaming baby boy. A quick radio call to Moresby flight service and Matt changed course for Rumginae, (forgetting to update the number of Persons on Board—maybe next time). James had the privilege of naming the newborn and decided that since he was born in the air, the name had to be 'Airborne'. Praise God for allowing this little one a safe entry into the world (and for the mild turbulence that probably helped things along). We also thank God for the Rumginae Mission Hospital, the Pioneers missionary doctors and national staff who are willing and able to intervene when things don't go so smoothly.



Airvan at Fuma airstrip



Mum (right) and baby on the ground



Airborne about 25 mins old



James and Lenson clean up



Leah, Isaac and Annie at home

Community Health Workers Graduate

Part of the ministry of the Rumginae hospital is to train up health workers in preparation to run the medical aid posts in the bush throughout the western province. Students study for two years both in the classroom and the hospital gaining practical medical experience. They also receive bible and ministry training to prepare them for church leadership roles in remote villages (eg. to counter tribal practises and superstitions which have a negative effect on health). The most recent class graduated their Competency Based Training course on May 28th. One of the graduates was Lenson Jack – of Airborne delivery fame! MAF is now involved in moving these new graduates to their first village postings. Supporting these community health workers and keeping their aid posts well stocked with medical supplies is an ongoing and fruitful part of

Please Pray For:

- All our folks featured in this newsletter, and the missionaries hard at work in Rumginae.
- For Hospital staff to cope with extra medivacs and patients as the mine hospital (Tabubil) is now refusing patients they are not obligated to help.
- Matt's sister Rozi has a new baby girl- Phoebe ☺
- Our parents at home missing their grandies! They too are making sacrifices for us here.

Til next time, blessings and peace to you all, and thankyou for your support...

Matt, Natalie, Leah, Annie and Isaac xo