Flight Log

January 2024

Triple medevac in Tanzania

PHOTO: PETER GRIFFIN

Several weeks ago, a medevac call came to MAF's Tanzania programme for a baby born with a rare birth defect known as gastroschisis. The condition, which affects roughly 1 in 3,000 babies, causes a hole in the abdominal wall, and means that the baby's intestines extend outside of the body.

In British hospitals, gastroschisis is detected during pregnancy using a simple ultrasound and is treated at birth. Yet in rural Tanzania, where people have limited access to basic healthcare, the condition is life-threatening.

Shortly after MAF prepared for the medevac, not one, but two more babies came forward with the same unusual condition. This is the first time MAF Tanzania has performed a triple medevac, let alone transported three patients with such a rare condition in the same aircraft.

The 1½-hour flight from Haydom to Kilimanjaro saved the babies and their mothers almost a day on dangerous muddy roads — a journey which would have been fatal.

After undergoing surgery at Kilimanjaro Christian Medical Centre, sadly all three babies passed away — one, the daughter of a woman called Victoria, after fighting to survive for three weeks.

Despite the stigma attached to returning home as a single woman without a surviving baby, Victoria decided to carry the body of her girl home on MAF's return flight, which took place on 11 December.

Pilot Peter Griffin said, 'Medevacs are a thing we hold most dear — we will go around any mountain to get it done. It is our responsibility as Christians to do all we can, and we *should*. We are providing the help and hope — but the doctors must do the healing part. There is only so much we can do in that area.'

Pause for prayer

Despite the tragic outcome of this medevac, we wanted to share it so you can pray for Victoria and the other two mothers who lost their babies. MAF will continue providing medevacs throughout 2024 to give every patient the best chance of survival, so please pray for these critical and sometimes heartbreaking flights.

Flying For Life Podcast

A brand-new episode of MAF's Flying For Life podcast has been released for the New Year, unpacking 50 years of flying in Arnhem Land, northern Australia. Find out more about how MAF flights are helping to protect indigenous women from domestic violence by visiting **www.maf-uk.org/podcast**

Show your support

You can read more about Victoria's story and support more medical emergency flights in Tanzania and across the world by visiting **www.maf-uk.org/triple-medevac**. Whether you have been reading *Flight Log* for months or years, we want to thank you for your support and wish you every blessing for 2024.

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