Oldest pilot in a Spitfire

On Monday 5 February, 102-year-old MAF co-founder and RAF veteran Jack Hemmings became the oldest British pilot to fly a Spitfire. It was a poignant moment to celebrate Jack's passion for aviation and dedication to MAF — the organisation he helped establish — on the 80th anniversary year of D-Day.

Flying multi-engine bomber aircraft including the Lockheed Hudson during World War II, it was Jack's first time inside a Spitfire — an experience he described as 'absolutely delightful'.

Preparing for take-off at London Biggin Hill's Heritage Hangar with an audience of major news outlets, RAF dignitaries and MAF friends, Jack said he 'felt very pleased indeed' to be going up in Britain's best-loved World War II aircraft.

Jack used the history-making flight to honour his best man, RAF Engineer Stuart King, who was involved in the D-Day landings with 247 Fighter Squadron. Although Stuart passed away in 2020, Jack said, 'Stuart — you would have loved it!'

Jack and Stuart helped found MAF UK back in 1948, using a Miles Gemini aircraft, to perform the first British humanitarian survey of central Africa, which lasted ten months.

Now the oldest Spitfire pilot is hoping to continue raising awareness and funds for MAF, having set up a JustGiving page (see below) to celebrate his later-life achievement. Back on the ground after enjoying three victory rolls, Jack admitted it was faster than he used to fly in the RAF, but was nonetheless 'thoroughly enjoyable'.

Pause for prayer

Give thanks for all those who, like Jack, have dedicated their skills and services to helping others using aviation. We pray for the many MAF pilots, engineers and ground crew across the world who are working together to make a difference in the lives of vulnerable and isolated communities.

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 protect indigenous women from domestic violence by visiting **www.maf-uk.org/podcast**

Show your support

You can read more about Jack's historic Spitfire flight, and donate towards Jack's incredible achievement by visiting his JustGiving fundraising page: **www.justgiving.com/page/oldest-spitfire-pilot**

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