

Mission Aviation Training Academy

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July 2010

North to Alaska!

On May 25th MATA student April Erhardt, who earned her Commercial Pilot certificate last summer, departed Arlington in MATA's Cessna 182 and flew 2,400 miles through British Columbia, Yukon Territory, and the Alaska Range, arriving at Kako Retreat Center in western Alaska on May 27th.

Over the next two weeks April logged 23 hours flying to remote villages, carrying people to and from Kako to

attend Bible camps. [See following article] On June 12th, MATA alumnus Dary Finck relieved April and continued flying for the next three weeks at Kako, logging over 60 hours. Dary was very seriously wounded in Iraq in 2007, and faced a long struggle to regain use of his legs, function without pain medications, and pass an FAA pilot medical



Dary Finck flying again!



April's first Kako passengers



Operating on unimproved airstrips

exam. On May 28th, the FAA granted Dary his medical certificate, praise the Lord, and the next week he volunteered to fly at Kako! What a blessing Dary has been serving at Kako, and he is so blessed by all you who prayed for his recovery.

Praise the Lord! I will give thanks to the Lord with all my heart. Psalm 111:1

Kako Summer Camps

So what is this Alaska flying all about? For over 30 years, Kako Retreat Center has been a light in the dark environment of this remote area of the U.S., where factors such as alcoholism and animism contribute to broken families, depression, and high suicide rates. At Kako, Yupik Eskimos and Athabasca Indians learn about the God of the Bible, hear

the Gospel, receive spiritual nourishment, and are taught Christian parenting and relationship skills. Lives changed by the power of the Holy Spirit are impacting entire villages. In the scattered villages of the vast, roadless tundra, only aircraft can bring the opportunity to attend Kako summer camps.

Transporting these precious people gives MATA pilots actual ministry experience while operating high-performance aircraft in real field conditions. Additionally, this is Christine McDonald's third year as a camp counselor, building relationships and sharing Jesus.



Christine with camper



Family Camp May 2010



April's first flight at Kako

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Training Pilots on a Mission



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Another Aircraft Donated!

In June, MATA received another donated aircraft from friends of MATA. It is a 1977 Cessna 172 in beautiful condition, but needed substantial engine work. Jeremy Crowell, MATA alumnus and son of founder Mike Crowell, was in Minnesota for his graduation from the Association Free Lutheran Theological Seminary, and knew the Free Lutheran Association of Pilot Supporters (FLAPS) had an engine of that exact type. FLAPS traded the engine to MATA for a special, expensive propeller that had been donated to MATA several years ago, and FLAPS will sell it to help pay for the engine they need. Wait, it

gets better. Dary Finck was driving to Minneapolis in his pickup truck for Jeremy's graduation and brought the engine back. The last week of June, MATA's Executive Director Gordon Bakke, Chief of Maintenance Myron Davis, and newly-minted pastor Jeremy, back in Arlington to visit his in-laws, removed the C-172's old engine and installed the traded one. On June 29th Gordon flew the generous gift, powered by the FLAPS engine, to its new home at MATA.



Gordon after landing MATA's new Cessna 172 - N75844

Director's Corner

This issue I want to highlight MATA Board of Directors member Rob Marvin. Rob learned to fly in the Civilian Pilot Training Program during WWII while attending Wheaton College, where he graduated in 1943 with a B.S. in chemistry. He joined the Navy, earned his wings, and then trained in the PBY and B-24. After the war Rob went to graduate school, took a year of seminary, and then earned a B.Ed. from Whitworth College in Spokane. The Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions posted him and his new bride to Chiang Mai, Thailand, where they served as teachers for five years. Afterwards, Rob completed his seminary work at Princeton Seminary, and then pastored a church in Duluth for three

years. He then began serving with International Students, Inc. (ISI), a ministry reaching out to foreign students studying in U.S. universities, and held both field and leadership positions in the U.S. and in Canada.

In his ISI leadership roles, Rob flew all over the U.S., Canada, and Mexico (over 3,500 hours!) in his 1962 Mooney. Rob's association with MATA began when a mutual colleague connected him with MATA founder Mike Crowell, and Mike gave Rob a bi-annual flight review. Rob agreed to serve on the MATA Board, and we are thankful for the maturity, aviation experience, and spiritual insight he has brought to the table.



Rob and international students

Rob is 89 years old, and much of his time now is occupied caring

for his wife due to her failing eyesight. I just wanted to acknowledge his many years of service to God, family, country, and international students, and his faithful ministry both at home and abroad. Thanks Rob!

Gordon Bakke