

MATA

MISSION AVIATION TRAINING ACADEMY

425-231-5855

www.mata-usa.org

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MATA serving alongside Alumni in Alaska...

The FLAPS (Free Lutheran Association of Pilot Supporters) ministry operates three small airplanes out of the village of Naknek, Alaska flying to about ten villages within 125 miles of Naknek in southwest Alaska. None of these villages are accessible by roads, but all have airports. So, for missionaries and MATA Alumni **Jeremy Crowell** and **Josh Fish**, who serve with FLAPS, the airplane is an invaluable "tool" for ministry.

In February, a MATA maintenance team of five guys led by **Director Dary Finck** took the opportunity to serve alongside Jeremy and Josh in accomplishing what amounted to *one month's worth of needed maintenance work in only one week!* Two annual inspections were signed off on a Cherokee 6 and Cherokee 140, and a number of discrepancies were addressed on the aircraft to include the installation of a new windshield on a Cessna 150. Other projects were accomplished as well, including maintenance on the hangar and a parsonage. The team also visited churches in North and South Naknek, fellowshipping with and ministering to local believers. The Lord's provision was evident in not only a safe and effective week of work and ministry, but much-needed fellowship and encouragement for Jeremy and Josh from the MATA team.

Thank you for supporting the "Mission Alaska" training program at MATA!



(from left) Chad, Don, Vitaliy, Jeremy, Josh, and Casey with Dary behind the camera



Don making repairs



Casey cleaning plugs



Dary and Jeremy assessing damage

"The combination of good skills plus a team mentality allowed for a smooth and successful week!" -
Jeremy Crowell



Josh and Vitaliy reinstalling a wheel

... and serving alongside Alumni in Palau!



Amos and Brock

In 2019, Pacific Mission Aviation (PMA) Chief Pilot and MATA alumnus **Amos Collins** visited MATA recruiting for their ministry work in the South Pacific. His timing was right on cue. With the visit, the Lord stirred the hearts of MATA student **Brock** and wife **Rachel Welge** to join PMA on a six-month internship. This, in turn, led to full-time missionary service with PMA, where Brock serves as Base Manager and Director of Maintenance in Palau.



The PMA Palau Team with Melody (on left), Brock and Justin (in the middle)



Following suit, MATA alumna **Melody Coleman** also participated in a one-year internship which led to a full-time role as pilot/mechanic with PMA. Then, MATA staffer **Justin Vaughan**, with wife **Addison**, saw the opportunity with the one-year internship and went on "loan" to PMA to build mission field experience for one year. Brock commented regarding the Vaughans, *"In Palau, Justin grew extremely proficient as an operational pilot and he also led numerous maintenance inspections to keep the flying fleet serving in ministry. Addison regularly taught the children on the island of Angaur about our Savior, Jesus Christ. PMA and the people of Palau have been extremely blessed by their ministry."* Please pray for next steps for the Vaughan family as they return home in March.



The Vaughan family at MATA before leaving for Palau in 2021

PMA operates from the Micronesian islands of Palau and Yap. They fly Cessna 206s, a Britten Norman Islander, two King Airs, and two Queen Airs. **The PMA internship program has been invaluable for MATA alums to acquire mission-field experience while building needed flight time and sharpening their maintenance skills.**

Ministry Events

Check FB and our website for the latest updates and schedules.



- April 28-29** Christian Heritage Homeschool Conference, Kent WA
MATA will participate to mobilize future workers for the Kingdom.
- June 3** Annual **"Thank you!" Luncheon**, MATA Facility, Arlington, WA
Mark your calendar. More details to come!
- July 23-28** Aviation Summer Camp, Arlington, WA
There are still slots available! Learn more at: www.mata-usa.org

Did You Know?

- Over the past year, MATA has hosted tours totaling **well over 200 kids and teens** (plus their chaperones, of course)! MATA tours include learning about mission aviation and performing "hands-on" activities.
- MATA staff also share about missions and the Gospel at local Christian school chapels.



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FLIGHT DEPARTMENT NEWS

A New MATA Flight Instructor!

We are excited to welcome **Don and Lisa Belfils** to our flight department.

Don retired in 2022 after 34 years of service in the Washington State Air National Guard. During his career he served in a variety of areas, including aviation support roles. Don's wife Lisa has been a self-employed hairdresser for over 30 years.

Don and Lisa bring to MATA a huge heart for reaching the nations for Christ, coupled with their short-term missions experience. Lisa participated in a YWAM six-month missions trip after college, and Don, Lisa, and their two children went on a family missions trip to El Salvador with their local church. Don trained in the Cessna 185 and Cessna 206 at MATA in 2019 and just finished his second ministry trip to Alaska.

Now, as empty nesters, please pray for them as they transition from their home in eastern Washington and settle into life and ministry on the west side of the Cascade Mountains.

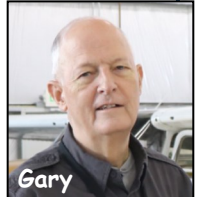


MATA has achieved PART 141 status!

After four years of dedicated work and effort by instructor **Gary Elliott** and a successful FAA checkride and evaluation for instructor **Vic Santie**, MATA received its air agency certificate as an FAA Part 141 provisional flight school on January 10th!

Under Part 141, MATA may apply with a State Approving Agency for authorization to offer flight training to veterans, so they can use their GI Bill educational benefits to help pay for the training. Additionally, after two years on "provisional" status, MATA may apply for certification through U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement to accept international students. In short, Part 141 status gives exciting opportunities for MATA to expand its base of students.

Please pray for our first two enrolled flight students under the 141 program, Casey Underwood and Jed Wilson, who will train using the newly approved Private Pilot syllabus. Please pray, too, that God would raise up more students called to be missionary pilots!



ADDITIONAL PRAYER REQUESTS

- Continue in prayer for the **Bryan Eygabroad family** (pictured), serving with MAF in Lesotho (Africa). Bryan has been cleared to join the MATA team as a flight instructor but the family is held up in Africa due to the paperwork process required by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services for their adopted daughter Isabella's visa.



- Please pray for flight instructors **Gary Elliott** and **Vic Santie**. These men have walked through medical challenges the past few years which have delayed getting their FAA medical certificate approved. With all their tests and paperwork submitted, please pray the FAA would respond soon and grant them their certificates.



MATA MAINTENANCE

Out with the old and in with the new ...

The MATA maintenance team of **Doug Nunziato**, **Vitaliy Nikishin**, and **Casey Underwood** have been working hard on N2261T (Cessna 182RG). Along with an annual inspection, they have been ordering many parts, repairing squawks, and prepping the engine bay area to install the recently overhauled O-540 Lycoming engine. This aircraft is used for training flight students for their Commercial Pilot certificate.

