

# MATA

MISSION AVIATION TRAINING ACADEMY

425-231-5855

[www.mata-usa.org](http://www.mata-usa.org)

MATAUSA



## ALASKA WINTER MINISTRY TRIP



When your car breaks down you're stuck. When your airplane breaks down in Alaska you're also stuck.

The airplane is the "car" in Alaska and for the ministry of FLAPS (Free Lutheran Association of Pilot Supporters) in Naknek, AK, a lifeline for many different forms of outreach to Alaskan villages.

During one week in February, the MATA maintenance team served alongside **Josh Fish**, FLAPS missionary and MATA alum, in performing many needed repairs, maintenance, and three annual inspections on FLAPS aircraft. With the aircraft back up and running, the FLAPS ministry can continue forward. *Thank you for supporting our Alaska ministry which also serves as a training ground for students!*



(from left) Malachi, Lacey and Jeremy Crowell; Alex Denton, Vitaliy Nikishin, Abigail McMillan.



## Around the Hangar

• Donated to MATA in early 2022, **N13255** has begun to see its first "action" flying students after significant maintenance work, waiting on parts, and having a new interior installed (pictured right). See page 2 for its first solo student!



• **MATA began 2024 with two significant audits:**

**JANUARY** - the FAA performed an inspection and approved five aircraft not previously approved under our Part 141 flight training program.

**FEBRUARY** - MATA was visited by Mission Safety International (MSI). MSI travels the world to educate and provide consulting in order to promote safety and effectiveness in mission aviation. After three days of a thorough audit with the MSI team, MATA came out with high marks overall along with recommendations for change that will improve our effectiveness and safety into the future.

## Please Pray: Upcoming Summer MATA Ministry Trips

- Executive Director **Dary Finck** is planning a trip with students to serve and get hands-on ministry training in Alaska.
- Director of Maintenance, **Doug Nunziato** is prepping for a trip this June/July to Papua New Guinea with his family and MATA staffer **Vitaliy Nikishin** for the purpose of assisting and encouraging Samaritan Aviation in their work.

## UPDATE: Flight Training in Alaska

N6056R departed MATA for Tanalian Leadership Center (TLC) in Port Alsworth, Alaska in September 2023. **Matt and Abi McWhorter**, on staff with TLC and seconded to MATA to fly and maintain the aircraft, are using "56R" as an extension of their TLC ministry. Since arriving in Alaska, Abi has flown close to 40 hours training three Native Alaskans and one missionary. As Abi stated, *"Having access to this MATA plane has greatly increased our aviation ministry in the areas of discipleship and outreach trips to villages."*



## Please Pray: Alumni in Transition

The **Justin Vaughan family** finished their internship with Pacific Mission Aviation (PMA) in Palau and have joined Missionary Flights International (MFI) in Ft. Pierce, Florida.

The **Drew Aungst family** transitioned from serving with MFI to Samaritan's Purse in Nairobi, Kenya.

The **Matthew Lynch family** landed on the field in their first assignment with Mission Aviation Fellowship (MAF) in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

The **Harlan Lloyd family** is moving from Child Evangelism Fellowship in Soldotna, Alaska to serve and minister in the Alaskan village of McGrath.

**Gregorio Ortiz** has passed the MAF technical evaluation and will serve in his home country through MAF USA with Alas de Socorro Mexico.

## Ministry Events

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



- April 26-27** Christian Heritage Family Discipleship & Homeschool Conference, Kirkland, WA  
MATA will be present with a booth to build awareness for mission aviation and to mobilize future workers for the field.
- June 1** MATA's SILVER ANNIVERSARY "Thank You" Luncheon, MATA Facility, Arlington, WA
- July 21-26** Mission Aviation Summer Camp, MATA Facility, Arlington, WA **Slots still available!**  
Visit [www.mata-usa.org](http://www.mata-usa.org) and click on "Activities" to find the camp page.
- August 17** Mission Aviation Awareness Day, MATA Facility, Arlington, WA  
Join us at the hangar for a day focused on mission aviation. Participating mission agencies include Mission Aviation Fellowship (MAF), JAARS, and Ethnos360 Aviation.

**ANNUAL**

**Thank You! LUNCHEON**

*Celebrating supporter faithfulness for over 25 years!*

**SAVE THE DATE**

Saturday June 1, 2024  
11:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.

*(More information to come)*



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## Student Report

*Please pray for our students!*



**ETHAN EDWARDS**

began training for his Private Pilot license in March. He was the first to solo in donated aircraft N13255, on April 5.



**DILLON WAKEFIELD**

completed MATA's Technical Evaluation Prep course in April. He will be serving as an intern with Pacific Mission Aviation (PMA) in Palau for 1-year.



**CASEY UNDERWOOD**

shifted in April from the MATA maintenance team to full-time instrument training in N3711F.



**ABIGAIL McMILLAN**

also shifted from the MATA maintenance team in April to full-time private pilot training in N13255.



**KEN HUNTSINGER**

began private pilot training in N5363K in April. Ken balances flight training and working full-time as an aircraft mechanic in Renton, WA.



**ZACH KUPSER**

is preparing for his private pilot check-ride and passed his written exam on April 13. He and wife Katie also celebrated the birth of their first baby, Patricia, born on March 21.

**"O' SOLO MIO!"**



The 3 Landings · The Celebration of Success · The Tradition · The Memento

The first solo stands out as one of the best-known steps of achievement in aviation training. Every budding pilot has to pass through the challenge of the "solo" to become a pilot. For **Ethan Edwards**, and all those who have experienced their initial solo, the memory and feeling of being airborne, all alone for the first time, will never leave you. Most students are rightfully nervous as they soon realize that their instructor is visibly absent in the seat next to them. Along with some jitters, as Ethan departed the runway on his solo day, he also realized, "Wow, this thing climbs so much better without instructor Don [Belfis] sitting next to me."