

NEWS FROM ROG AND BARB CLARK, IN LESOTHO, AFRICA

July 2009

She had given birth about an hour ago. The baby was early, though ok, but the mother's bleeding would not stop. The doctor had managed to stem the flow, but without surgery she would be dead soon.

I squeezed into the small jump-seat behind the pilot's and found my seat belt and shoulder harness. As I snapped the chin strap and slid the sun visor down on my helmet, I spoke into my microphone, "Hey, Danny, I'm ready to go when you are." My pal and MAF pilot Danny Hulls fired up the engine, ran thru his preflight checks and taxied out to the runway while making his calls to the controller in the tower, "MAF aircraft 7P-CMH we are two crew; 3 hours fuel; departing Maseru birds' nest for Manamaneng health clinic."

As we rolled down the runway and broke free of the ground, I looked around at all the stuff crammed in and tied down to the cabin floor. Bits and pieces, small and some quite large of a VSAT satellite internet system bound for the health clinic at Manamaneng. I shake my head in amazement that I can be headed for one of the most remote places on earth, to help deliver internet access. The VSATs allow the doctors at the isolated clinics access to medical diagnostic and even lab analysis information.

In reality, Danny didn't need my help, but pitching in to help load and unload the gangly segments of satellite dish and bulky steel tower allowed me to get out of the shop for a few hours and see beyond the hangar doors, my tools and the daily maintenance. A reminding glimpse into the world of remote villages, desolate mountain clinics, and people dying for lack of simple medical care and for the simple Gospel.

By the time the equipment was unloaded and I was able to fit back into the copilots seat, the 2-way radio was crackling about a 'code one' at Methelaneng clinic. Code one calls are requests for a medical emergency flight. Everthing gets dropped to respond to them. I realized I had suddenly become extra baggage, and could, within the 12 minutes it took to divert to Methelaneng, become either a volunteer nurse for the patient on the flight back to Maseru, or get left behind to gain the the extra 165 lbs for a real doctor to join the flight. As we landed on the bumpy gravel airstrip and taxied up to the waiting group huddled in the brown grass by the edge of the strip, it was evident that the doctor had his hands full with other patients and would not be returning to Maseru with this code one. Dr. Mopeli had managed to stop her bleeding for the time being, but she need to get to the hospital in the capital city, Maseru, for surgery as quickly as possible.

Keeping an eye on mom with baby bundled on my lap



He could put her on a mini bus taxi for the bone-jarring 10-hour dirt road ride, or he could call MAF for a 25 minute flight. I moved back to the seat behind Danny and buckled in. They handed me the baby all wrapped in a giant blanket. She was fast asleep, very small, and had the benefit of being the only one on board who had no idea what was going on. The doctor pointed out the need to keep the mothers IV open and dripping, as she lay secured to the stretcher on my right. Dannels flying was smooth and everybody was holding fast as we taxied up to the MAF hanger back at "birds nest" in Maseru.

Danny quicky went looking for a nurse and an ambulance at the Lesotho Flying Doctor building, but came back bewildered. No vehicle was available, despite the heads-up he had given over the radio. I realized my old Land Rover was parked nearby, so quickly backed it over to the plane. We gently moved

the mother on her stretcher and the baby in the arms of a waiting nurse inside and headed out for the 5-minute drive to the hospital. Danny went back to his schedule of flying, and I headed back to the hangar and picked up my wrenches where I had left off that morning.

Days passed, and one morning a week or so later, I saw a young mother with a precious bundle being helped into a plane. I searched for the picture. Finding the snapshot, I ran out to the departing plane and handed it thru the window to the girl. A simple snap of a baby and her young mother, now healthy and smiling.



The last leg of the trip the Land Rover

Several weeks later, a group of Americans visiting Lesotho were touring our hangar. One ambled over to me, asking about my job at MAF. We talked, and as she got ready to go she looked at me and said, "You must be so blessed to work here." In her few minutes there, she had seen it. She was so right; I am so blessed. Barb, Carol, Tom, Robby, and I are blessed beyond measure to be a part of God's work in Lesotho. You all have walked the road with us in this blessing for 7 years now. We thank you, and we love you. We could not walk this road or be this blessed without you.

Baby and mom in the hospital



In His Service,

Roger and Barbara



Heading Home

PS: By the way the kids are all fine and enjoying Africa!

