

The future can be dramatic. The Cessna 206 has proven beyond all measure that everyone needs aviation to do anything useful in the developing continent of Africa. 69F did not intend to solve all problems, only to point out the way, and it has. When the question of financing came up and it was discovered that the budget for the year was being run through in a few months (UMATT was fully subsidized and hours airborne for July, August, and September were 139, 161, & 131), response was instantaneous - "How much do we pay". The operation was then stretched to the very limit of combined resources. Bro. Mike has seen the marvelous transformation in the peoples' outlook when they could just ask and receive the aircraft for necessary jobs. He hates to see "the most wonderful thing that ever happened in the missions" become restricted only to the rich mission who can afford buying airtime. It may have to come, but the men who made possible 69 Foxtrot and its year of free operation have created a legend which will never be forgotten.



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In the five months that has elapsed since the triumphal flight of N2169F to its home in East Africa 845 hours have accumulated on the tachometer. The following report summarizes the use of these five months and the operation of UMATT.

Upon arrival in East Africa two grand receptions greeted Max Conrad, Brother Mike Stimac and 69 Foxtrot, one at Nairobi and another at Eldoret, Bishop Houlihan's residence. Friends from all associations, all faiths, many businesses, and government officials joined in one happy family, full of hope over this new facility that would make so much progress possible.

Leaving this phase of the inauguration, Max, Bro. Mike, and Bishop Houlihan raced onward to another. Touching down lightly in the heart of the Turkana Desert, Max stepped out onto the burning sand and shook hands with the nun pilot. Sister Michael Theresa Ryan, with her Boston accent and her hands stained with the melted plastic off of her Super Cub's control stick, greeted her visitors delightedly. She could not get over admiring the features of the great bird that had come to help in the desert.



Sister Michael, Bishop Houlihan, and Max Conrad meet at Lorogumo

The initial days of introduction passed and the Cessna 206 began to work. In and out of the desert, at least once each week and sometimes two or three times a day. The weekly flight became known as the LOROGRIMO EXPRESS. Cargo, often critical, included bread, milk, vegetables, meats, nails, fuel oil for refrigerators, blood plasma, polio vaccine, water, mattresses, book, and clothes.

Personnel transport was a most dramatic contribution. Sister Doctor would have 69F taking off into the dawn, carrying her through the cool of the morning on a medical safari to Lodwar and Kakuma. Sick mothers, children needing transportation to operations and an ancient with his leg in a hip-to-ankle cast have all been found riding in the plane. Just as significantly, a government party studying the needs of health and housing for allocating aid to the desert people was able to visit inaccessible people-to-people projects such as the Catholic Kakuma and the Protestant Lokitaung. There was Mr. Newbolt who flew 180 miles of dry river bed spotting water hole sites and irrigation scheme locations. The two hour flight could not have been replaced by a month of ground tracking. 69F performed wonderfully despite the turbulence that slammed and tore at the ship which roared past, 50 feet off the burning and swirling sand for the length of the river bed.

More pleasant yet, Dr. Cox is a desert worker at a Protestant mission. He, his wife and his four youngsters were to go to Uganda beginning their leave. 69F settled down gently on Amudat airstrip one morning and in went a mound of baggage, on top of which the whole family followed. Instead of a dismal ride over desert trails for a full day, the party touched down in 90 minutes on runways in Uganda's capitol city. There was no problem of returning the landrover or of weary children (one of whom was riding in a bassinet) or of ruined apparel from dust and moisture. This journey was paralleled by others when doctors visited each other's desert posts, when 69F delivered messages and finally a radio transmitter to Dr. Anderson at Likori, another Protestant mission.

One doctor expressed his opinion, echoed by others in these words precisely: "This is the greatest thing that has ever happened in the missions." This is a wonderful expression of thanks to all who made 69F and UMATT possible.

Meetings have been made possible in all corners of East Africa. The Christian Council in Nairobi wanted to supply an African speaker at a convention 3 days journey toward Mozambique. On short notice UMATT took Mrs. Margret Mugo, National Secretary of the YWCA of Kenya, to the convention in 5 1/2 hours. Five busy men climbed aboard in Nairobi for a Lutheran convention in Southern Tangayika. Four hours later they arrived at the convention location. Their task finished 69F lifted out and pointed back to the busy city the next morning. Enroute the ship let down to 50 feet and, 200 miles from Nairobi, a box of medicine was kicked out of the door for the Makiungu mission hospital. The hospital had radioed the Flying Doctors, who make use of UMATT schedules on every possible occasion, and the message was relay-

ed to 69F in Southern Tangayika. Dr. Shroeder, in charge of hospital development for missions, was lifted deep into Tanganyika for a visit of eight days, during which some 18 or 20 meetings were held. She had never made the tour before because of the immense amount of ground travel time (10 days); the volume of planning that resulted was beyond comparison with the past.



Bro. Mike, Hon. G. Godana, M.P., Ass't Minister of Works, Communications, & Power, and Max Conrad at Nairobi reception

Many times a call has come in from the Flying Doctors radio net. Once deep in Masai territory, with no landmarks in sight, the radio nurse got to 69F with a message that a priest had been shot and was at the Makiungu hospital. The hospital was desperate for help to get this man up to Nairobi for deep surgery. Without a moment lost 69F was put on an estimated course over territory restricted from single engine aircraft. An hour later a landmark appeared and in another 30 minutes the let down on the hospital airstrip. The injured man and a companion were gently moved into the aircraft and the journey to Nairobi was made. It was later learned that the bullet had just missed the man's spinal cord and had perforated the intestinal tract; the damage was successfully repaired. Accomplishments like this have earned the gratitude of all those doctors and nurses who sweat out these cases. UMATT asks only for the chance to help again.

Africa is rugged. Volcanic peaks rise out of the floor of the 70 mile wide, 1,000 mile long Great Rift Valley. Landing strips are rough, but whether at 7,000 feet in the cool air or at 3,000 feet in the sweltering desert or down along the coast with loads so heavy that the landing struts are flared out straight, the big engine gets up momentum and leaves the ground with a positive surge. A pilot with 1500 hours visited and was invited to fly. He



EAST AFRICA

- 1 - Nairobi
- 2 - Mt. Kenya
- 3 - Eldoret
- 4 - Kitale
- 5 - Lorogumio
- 6 - Lokitaung
- 7 - Entebbe
- 8 - Mwanza
- 9 - Tabora
- 10 - Karonga
- 11 - Mzuzu
- 12 - Dar Es Salaam
- 13 - Mumbasa
- 14 - Mt. Kilimanjaro

had the opportunity to do a few hundred miles of orientation and then was given access to the aircraft. His opinion was that such a move was utterly foolish, because a man could get lost without half trying. So be it. This is where UMATT was born and where it has lived. N2169F is at home here and only with a magnificent ship like this and professional care could it possibly survive.

Great care has been given to 69F. The maintenance facility at Safari Air Services has been used copiously. They have become so accustomed to quickly looking after the ship, that one morning on rolling it out early, a thorn punctured nose wheel was replaced and Bro. Mike took off without ever finding out about it! On another occasion, right after take-off, the amp-meter jumped erratically. This meant the alternator was burning out. This was Saturday noon and the engineers were getting ready to head for home. A fast 180 degree turn, a call on the Safari Air Company frequency and 69F was headed for the hangar. Within an hour, a new alternator had been located, installed and tested, and 69F was airborne again.

The UMATT operating procedures have taken on permanent form. Communication, fueling, flying and organization have all crystalized into patterns. Distant places like Ethiopia and Malawi drop us notes asking when the airplane is coming or describing times when a visit would be very useful. Nearer to Nairobi, the telephone serves for direct discussion, as does a stop at the airstrip. Quite often this direct communication is a result of the published schedule that UMATT builds up ahead of time. Visitors bringing materials or passengers to a given airstrip will fit plans into the schedule and the UMATT pilot updates the lists. But very often it is by radio from distant hospitals and by the Flying Doctors Radio service that the requests come in.



69F at Karonga International Airport

Hospitals are scattered every few hundred miles and through the magnificent vision and efforts of Dr. Michael Wood, about 75 of them have radio communication units. A control station is lo-

cated in Nairobi and attended 24 hours a day. Thus Dr. Margaret O'Malley, out on the Congo border at Kabanga, was able to organize 69F to take her party down to Dar Es Salaam in a matter of five hours instead of three days going by train. Typical of economy minded missionary personnel, she exchanged some passengers and had a full ship load back to Tabora in the middle of Tanzania. Then out at the border again, she had Lutheran missionaries plus a Catholic bishop standing by to use the return trip. These medical people have a great sense of organization to be able to hammer out arrangements like this with their radio links.

An important detail of operation is fuel supply. Every three or four hundred miles a fuel location can be found in East Africa. Given the "all-day gas tanks" on 69F, one can easily keep going without inconvenience. In addition, for jumping off into the desert, UMATT built a fuel shack at the last stop, Kitale, where 500 gallons are kept on hand. Far down south, in the other direction, a dozen five-gallon tins are kept on hand at the mission to ensure the ship can return to Dar Es Salaam. Beside this, people who like to see us coming keep a drum on hand so that there will never be any reason to over-fly!

Maps are a headache. They are incomplete in many ways and one often goes 150 miles between possible landmarks. You do a lot of intense staring at the horizon and must religiously watch the compass. One of the most used instruments is the clock. When you run out of ETA (estimated time of arrival), you just don't keep flying five more than five more minutes out here. Find the strip or head for known ground. Many times the radio comes in handy again. The pilot calls out the landmarks to the mission station and the mission station directs the plane home.

Night flying goes on regularly if a flight can be terminated at one of the airline terminals. On the other hand sometimes it is necessary to get to a mission location in the desert areas and then advantage is taken of familiarity with terrain and training of the missionaries. All kinds of assistance takes place. The usual method is to drive two vehicles beside the airstrip. The lights pointed toward the arriving aircraft, down wind. One car is at the threshold and the other 100 yards up the strip. By lining up the lights a pilot knows how his glide angle is and just where the runway is. On one occasion the school children lit small fires completely along the runway. It was the loveliest runway lighting that ever greeted a pilot!

The personnel organization of UMATT is progressing. On October 3rd, Mr. George Raymond and his wife, Helen, arrived in Nairobi. The next day George was on his first trip to see what the route to the desert looked like. Since then Helen has often been an aviation widow for days. She says George never worked so hard in his life before. In the meantime she has gotten the books in order and has taken the correspondence in hand. Eventually, if the Flying Doctors have their wish, we will join them in joint communications room and hanger facilities.