

GROUND CREW



A 45-Year Partnership to Help Spread the Gospel

The association of MFI (Missionary Flights International) and MMS Aviation goes back more than 45 years. To prepare people and planes for worldwide missionary service, MMS needed aircraft to maintain. As he founded MMS, Jim Miller visited aviation ministries and missions to offer MMS' services. MFI's young operation at the West Palm Beach, FL, airport was among them, and a mutually beneficial relationship began.

Last month, MMS staff member Jack Harper led an MMS Global Response Team to MFI in Ft. Pierce, FL. Jack, along with team

members Kyle Wagner and Matt Woods, traveled there to accomplish a required inspection of the wing attach points of an MFI DC-3 airplane.

"Things are going well here at MFI," Jack reported in an email on March 12. "We were able to get both wings off without much trouble in the first two days of work. Fortunately, we did not find any significant issues with either wing! . . . The left wing went back on yesterday, and we expect to install the right wing tomorrow."

Over the years, many teams of MMS mechanics have traveled to MFI to work on their aircraft. By assisting MFI's capable mechanics, major maintenance events such as engine changes and wing pull inspections were done in a timely way. Before MFI's move in 2006 to Ft. Pierce with their spacious hangars, all work was done out on the ramp at the West Palm Beach airport in the heat, sun, and rain.

Since 1983, two DC-3s and two light twin airplanes have been at MMS for major alteration and repair. MFI aids Christian ministries in the West Indies, primarily Haiti, Dominican Republic, and Bahamas with purchasing and transportation services.



An apprentice working on an MFI Beech 18 in 1978.

Terry McClary, Kyle Wagner, Matthew Woods, and Jack Harper stand in front of a DC-3 operated by MFI.

Preparing people and planes for worldwide missionary service.

Global Response to Palau

A nine-week Global Response Trip to Palau (an island country in the western Pacific) is under way! Pacific Mission Aviation (PMA) operates several aircraft, and MMS is serving them by upgrading electronic components in those airplanes. Rebekah Martel and Ben and Kati Winsley make up the MMS crew. Though Kati is not an apprentice, she has been a big help to the team and PMA by employing her organizational skills. Samaritan's Purse Mission Aviation also sent a couple of their mechanics to equip the airplanes with better medical transport capability. Rebekah reported that collaborating with the other two organizations has rapidly moved all the work forward!



Kati is organizing parts for the PMA hangar in Palau.

Ben is updating the wiring in a Cessna 206.

Plitts Arrive

Benjamin and Mercedes Plitt first learned of MMS at the EAA AirVenture in Oshkosh, WI. Ben visited the Missionary Aviation tent and spoke with some of our crew who were representing MMS that week. It was while previously working as an elevator technician that Ben learned of the apprenticeship training. The Holy Spirit compelled Ben to pursue this calling, and we were excited to welcome the Plitt family to our team in December 2023!



Cleators Join Staff

Austin and Sharon Cleator came to MMS in 2021 to gain aircraft maintenance experience. Austin already had his A&P (Airframe and Powerplant) Certificate but was lacking experience on small general aviation aircraft. After his work with MMS for two years, we have found that his technical abilities and humble servant's heart would be a great fit for

our staff. Austin keeps the hangar laughing with his good humor and encouragement through his leadership. The MMS team is excited to have Austin and Sharon with us.

Welcome to Kati Winsley and Rachael Johnson!

On the same day in January, Ben and Kati Winsley were married and so were Joshua and Rachael Johnson!

We have enjoyed welcoming these two young women to our team and are encouraged to watch these young couples serve the Lord and grow in Him together.



HANGAR HIGHLIGHTS

A bit of what's happened recently

Dale Coates has been overseeing the refurbishment of a Cessna 182 for service in the Philippines. Much of the work has been treating corrosion and repairing or replacing heavily corroded structural components. The airplane has spent most of its life operating in Papua New Guinea. Dale has been assisted by **Jay Shearer**, **Jenny Haver**, and **Austin Cleator** and apprentices **Phil Sperling**, **Andrew Johnson**, and **Joshua Johnson**.

Chris Jutte is leading a team to complete structural repairs on a Cessna P206. **Chuck Egbert** and **Jim Newman**, and apprentices **Ben Plitt**, **Tyler Sensenig**, and **Matt Carter** have been installing new seat rails and cabin components, as well as replacing structure and wing skins. The instrument panel was fabricated and will be installed soon. **Matt Woods** and **Jack Harper** are also working on the P206.

The Engine Shop is full this year! **Josh Adelsberger** has been assembling a Lycoming O-235 engine for a ministry in Alaska while overseeing two apprentices. **Dale Liff** has completed testing of a Continental TSIO-520 that was overhauled. The engine is being crated and will be shipped to the mission organization. **Sharee Sensenig** is assembling a Continental IO-520. There are several more engines waiting in line for a slot in the engine shop.

Mike Dunkley is completing an avionics upgrade in a Cessna 172 used to train the next generation of missionary pilots.

Before long, the Mercy Air helicopter will be ready for flight! One of the last things on the checklist is installing the rotor blades so that the Mercy Air crew can conduct test flights. After any final adjustments, the helicopter will be disassembled and packed into a shipping container for the journey to its base in Eswatini.

Rebekah Martel and apprentice **Ben Winsley** and his wife, **Kati**, are in Palau on a Global Response Trip to assist with avionics upgrades to a fleet of missionary aircraft. **Jack Harper**, with apprentices **Matthew Woods**, and **Kyle Wagner**, have recently returned from a Global Response Trip to perform a wing-pull inspection on a DC-3 that serves missionaries in Haiti and the Dominican Republic.

Dave Shelly, our IT Director and Safety Officer has been upgrading our accounting computer and continues to develop and implement safety policies in the hangar.



Josh disassembles an engine that has arrived for overhaul.



Dale L. installs the oil cooler, one of the final pieces before the overhauled engine is tested.



Chuck makes repairs to a Cessna 206 wing.



Dale C. and Phil S. discuss repairs in the fuel tank area of a Cessna 182 wing.



The Douglas DC3 is a big airplane. It was developed for airline use in the 1930s and can comfortably carry 32 people in the passenger cabin. With the seats removed, the plane can carry cargo. During World War II, many of these airliners were transformed for a wartime mission, and an additional 10,000 were built specifically for military use. About a thousand of them are still flying today, a testament both to the solid design and the meticulous maintenance performed by operators like Missionary Flights International.

MMS participated in the most recent wing-pull inspection at MFI. This involved removing 310 bolts per wing, inspecting the attaching wing structure, making repairs, treating corrosion, and installing and torquing new hardware. The bolts are relatively small, just one-quarter inch in diameter and about an inch long. The wing is strong when each of

these tiny bolts is properly installed and tightened. On this huge airplane, it is the little things that get the job done.

Evangelist D.L. Moody once said, "There are many of us that are willing to do great things for the Lord, but few of us are willing to do little things." I do not believe Mr. Moody was opposed to grand visions and monumental efforts, but he is absolutely right to remind us that faithful and quiet service, often unnoticed, is the stuff of the Kingdom.

Matthew records the final words Jesus spoke to his disciples before he ascended to his Father in heaven. We call it "The Great Commission," and it is full of big language.

"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I will be with you always, to the very end of the age." (Matthew 28:19-20).

That commission is being accomplished by saints who are willing to do small things for a big God. They are often "plodders," who are diligent in the mundane details of daily life. May the Lord bless you as you fulfill your part in the Kingdom!

Phil

Phil Maddux,
President & CEO

With the outboard section
of the large wing removed,
Matthew makes a repair
in the flap well.

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-D. L. Moody



Enhancing Trust

