

Hi Everyone,

This is Paul writing. I want to share with you a really cool opportunity I had to rescue a broken airplane!

A couple weeks ago we had a team of language surveyors get stranded due to weather at a village called Agali. There are no SIL missionaries working in this village but as it turned out, there was a nice house owned by missionaries from another mission, and a church there. The missionaries had been gone for a few years, but the local pastor had the keys to the house, and let the pilot, Bob, and the survey team stay there. The survey team took advantage of the situation, and spent the evening making word lists of the local language, and spending time with the people.

The next morning when the weather had cleared, Bob attempted to start the engine, But the propeller would not turn. He could hear the starter spinning, but not the engine. It was my weekend to be on the radio, so I was one of the first to hear of the trouble.



Our maintenance team quickly swung into gear, and after a little begging, I was appointed the person who would get to go out and fix the airplane. I quickly threw all the tools I thought I'd need in a bag, and ran home to get a sleeping bag and some food. Meanwhile another pilot, Christopher, got a second airplane ready to go.

At noon we took off for the two hour flight to the Agali air strip. We arrived at 2:00, and I was able to determine that the starter adapter needed to be changed.

Christopher then loaded the survey team onto the second airplane, and continued another 15 minutes to drop them off at their intended destination. Christopher then returned to Agali for the night because it was too late in the day to make it back to Ukarumpa.

I worked from 2:00 until 6:30, and with some help from the other two pilots, got the new adapter installed, and all the pieces back together. As the sun was setting we quickly threw all the tools back in the bags, and made it to the house, just as it got too dark to see.

That evening Christopher spent a long time talking with the local pastor and was even invited to stay and preach in the local church!

The next morning we looked over the engine, and ran it just to double check things. The weather cleared by 10:00 and we could fly out. I went with Bob in the airplane that was now fixed to finish delivering some cargo, while Christopher stuck around to preach.

We both arrived back in Ukarumpa within 5 minutes of each other at 2:10 on Sunday afternoon. It was a great experience to get out into a village, see some more of PNG, and put my maintenance license to good use! This is a wonderful example of the work God has called us to do in PNG!

Paul Stewart

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