

## Mission 7.

### Airbridge to Angels Home, Ficksburg - November 2004



Rainbow Airbridge ended the year on a very high note. On Saturday the 20th November, we got 6 aircraft off to Ficksburg delivering 950 kg's of product for the Kganya consortium. This organisation includes Angels Home, Sunbeam Kids and a child feeding scheme about to get off the ground.

Thanks to our trusted pilots who took product as well as visitors from various potential corporate sponsors and SABC 2's Morning Live team. We are going public, so look out on SABC 2 in the not too distant future. For this trip we utilized funds from Air BP to purchase foodstuff at cost from Tiger Brands, which included; rice, maize meal, and Morvite.



The fleet of aircraft was divided into 2 groups, the heavies in the four Cessna 182's, piloted by Ernie, Wighard, Francesco and Lowrens, and the nimble in one Piper Cherokee and Cessna 172, piloted by Armand and Mike. The inward leg was great flying. We stayed low level, with very little turbulence while the big guns took up flight levels that would have required the entire distance for us to reach. We were pleased to arrive only about 15 minutes behind the 182's much to their surprise and hopefully featured in the SABC film crews edit.



We were all met at the airfield by the team from Kganya, who were a little pressed for resources, (we timed our trip to coincide with the main day of the local cherry festival) but as they say in the classics, 'n boer maak 'n plan. We were shepherded around in an official festival black taxi

and had an interesting if uneventful trip around Ficksburg.

A visit to the Angels Home ensued and the children and foster parents were again pleased to see us. After some filming in which the children featured with the AirBridge crew we headed off for a much needed meal. After brunch in town we headed for the airfield, we wanted to be airborne before 13h00 as there was going to be a buildup of CB around the TMA and PWV area in general. This ETO time was extended till about 14h00 as our trusted taxi driver recommended a cherry grower who we would find just outside of town.



Well this turned out to be good jolly of some 15 km past the airfield nogal ! To ensure we arrived home bearing gifts we all piled out and purchased boxes of cherries and jars of jams for wives and girlfriends (some of our spouses think that flying is all fun and no work).

Our return trip was not too eventful, all went for altitude and flight levels as there was a fair amount of turbulence at around midday, but no matter where you found your niche it was still a little bumpy. I personally battled to stay at my flight level in the C-172 with some updrafts lifting us at a staggering 1000 feet per minute, with power down and the nose pushed forward we surfed down the updrafts at speed only to plod up the downdraft on the other side at 90kts to hold altitude. Dodging a few small CB's in the Vaal area provided some excitement but once past the air settled and we headed for home with another successful AirBridge behind us.



Thank you to our sponsors, Air BP for their funding of fuel and product and Tiger Brands for organising the foodstuff at cost for us.

## Mike Ehrman



Photos by Armand Upton