

Letter from the editor

'Tis the season to be jolly trala la la la la la la. The festive season is upon us and the year is at its end. What a journey it has been! We wish everyone a safe and happy festive season. May the new year hold great things in store for you.

In this issue we thank our sponsors who has come onboard and helped us in our mission to expand our services; we welcome our honorary member to the team and highlight some of our rescue missions and much.

Enjoy the last issue of this year and remember to be safe and responsible this season.

Season's Greetings!

Venessa

Funder News



Lotto funds injection to KZN operation

The National Lottery Distribution Trust Fund (NLDTF) has donated R8, 030,861 to the SA Red Cross Air Mercy Service (AMS) for the establishment of a new hangar and office facilities at King Shaka Airport. The opening of the New King Shaka Airport and the closure of Durban International threatened the AMS KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) operation. The AMS is most appreciative of the financial injection from the NLDTF. "This funding will enable us to continue to provide a life changing and life saving service to the community of KZN" said Philip Erasmus CEO of the AMS.

The NLDTF relies on funds from the proceeds of the National Lottery. The Lotteries Act identifies the manner in which NLDTF funding may be allocated. The Minister of Trade and Industry, on the recommendation of the industry experts in the relevant Distributing Agency, makes the policy that guides the allocation of funds to beneficiaries. It is the aim of the NLDTF that the grants made will make a difference to the lives of all South Africans, especially those more vulnerable. The NLDTF is dedicated to improving sustainability of the beneficiary organisations it funds.

The NLDTF currently has in the region of R2 billion a year to distribute to registered non-profit organisations in the fields of charities, arts, culture and national heritage and sport and recreation that meet the advertised qualifying criteria. The NLDTF places emphasis on areas of greatest need and greatest potential, so that all South Africans can gain from, and contribute to, South Africa's development. Visit the National Lotteries Board website to find out about other projects supported by the NLDTF.

<http://www.nlb.org.za/nldtf.asp>



A special thank you to **Anglo American Chairman's Fund** for the donation of R1.3 million towards the training.



Thank you to **Discovery Fund** for the donation of R200 000 towards equipment needs in the Free State and Limpopo Provinces.

We thank you for helping us to continue to provide efficient and effective healthcare to all those in need.

Volunteer Focus



New corporate dvd for AMS

Our new and updated corporate dvd is available for viewing. Contact your nearest base for a copy. A special thank you to the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Health for allowing us to visit the hospitals in order to showcase the work we do with the Department. Thank You to the producer, camera man, editor and everyone that has helped us produce a professional and concise dvd.

Honorary Chief Medical Officer for AMS

The AMS would like to welcome Dr. John Roos onboard as the Honorary Chief Medical Officer for AMS. His responsibilities and duties include:

- To advise the AMS Quality Manager on matters pertaining to aero-medical services in terms of evidence based best practice and professional standards.
- To provide input to the clinical oversight of the AMS Operational Clinical Quality Assurance program that is managed by the AMS Quality Manager.
- Provide clinical advice as when requested by independent practitioners within the AMS
- Advise the Quality Manager of procedures that could contribute to safer and more efficient clinical practice.
- Assist the Quality Manager with the setting and the maintenance of clinical standards.
- Assist the Quality Manager with monitoring the activities of the Regional Clinical.
- Advisors and Regional Clinical Quality Committees.
- Review and advise the AMS on medico-legal matters within the AMS.

We thank him for taking up this opportunity with us and wish him every success in his position.

Extended flying hours for rescue service

The Cape Town Metro Red Cross Air Mercy Service Rescue helicopter will be operating extended flying hours during the festive season. The aircraft will be highly visible at beaches, allowing residents and tourists to enjoy the holidays and have peace of mind that help is within reach should it be needed.

The SA Red Cross Air Mercy Service (AMS) works in partnership with the Western Cape METRO Emergency Medical Services in the Province to provide efficient and effective aero-medical and road ambulance assistance to the critically ill and injured. The Western Cape has two rescue helicopters based at Cape Town and Oudtshoorn respectively.

The AMS will be operating extended flying hours from 07:00am until 10:00pm from the 1st of December until the end of February 2011; this initiative is to support the provincial ambulance service to ensure rapid evacuation of critical ill patients. This is an extension of FIFA funding received by the Department of Health for service delivery in the Western Cape.



Dr Andries Esterhuizen started working with the Bloemfontein rotor-wing operation in 2009, after having met the crew on missions to Bethlehem Provincial Hospital, where he was stationed.

Asked about why he decided to get involved with AMS, he stated that he had always had an interest in flying, and when the opportunity to fly on the helicopter as well as be involved with patient care simultaneously, he grabbed the opportunity with both hands and hung on for dear life. Dr Esterhuizen was a very dedicated crewmember, and always full of energy and smiles. He saw this as an opportunity for him to develop himself, and at the same time doing so in a field that he found exhilarating.

A standing joke around the "office" is the comment that he had made on his first flight: Being a person with dedication to do a job the right way, he boarded the helicopter for his first mission with the goal to do everything perfectly – including calling out possible obstructions during the flight to the pilot, which is a. Also being slightly excitable nature, he wanted to call out to the pilot the first "candy-stick" (red-and-white striped radio-mast / cell-phone mast) that he saw. In his eagerness to do this, he forgot the general terminology and casted around his mind for the correct word, but as the helicopter drew nearer and time to call out shorter, he said to the pilot: "Do you have the lollipop on the 12 o'clock?"

This was met with a silence of about 10 seconds in which the pilot and the primary crew sat rocking in their seats with suppressed laughter. The pilot acknowledged that he had the candy-stick visual, and laughter ensued, much to the embarrassment of our good doctor. The doctor himself has made this into a standing joke. On many of the flights he did with us later on, he would remind us all that another acceptable term is lollipop, as this is also a sweet.

Recently, Dr Esterhuizen and his wife emigrated to Canada, where, they say, they are very happy – although he is not so happy about the fact that he can't yet join the HEMS operations there. On holiday in South Africa for the first time since moving there, Dr Esterhuizen communicated his wish to work with us again while they were here well in advance of their arrival. Always happy to oblige, we placed him on our roster without qualms.

Curious as to why he was so eager to sacrifice his holiday to come and work with us, I asked him about his reasons. He replied simply that it had always been a pleasure to work on the AMS helicopter and with the Bloemfontein crew, specifically, as he enjoys working in an environment where problems are met with efficiency and passion, and people do serious work with an attitude that makes it almost a pleasure to face the challenges of the pre-hospital environment in our country. He added, with a smile, that it also got him onboard the helicopter again, of course!

The Bloemfontein team wishes to thank Dr Esterhuizen for his commitment in our endeavour to deliver an efficient service and to provide optimal patient care, and doing so with such obvious pleasure, good spirit, and well-rounded sense of humour. We sincerely hope that he and his wife will be happy and prosper in their new life, and look forward to having him work with us again on his next visit.

Africa Aerospace & Defence Expo 2010 (AAD)

The AAD is a premier event on the international aviation and defence calendar. As a showcase for civil and military aviation, maritime and land-based defence technologies, AAD is the largest exhibition of its kind in Africa. [AAD website](#)

AMS partnered with AgustaWestland to exhibit the latest addition to its fleet: AW 119Ke & AW 109 helicopters and its custom designed medical interiors.



- Based on many years of aero-medical experience, the medical interior was designed by AMS in partnership with Robin Coss Aviation. The medical interior is developed to allow for operations with two pilots, a single stretcher and a minimum of two medical crew members. The medical configuration comprises a flexible yet purpose built combination of:
 - A stretcher system that facilitates ease of loading, variable configuration locations and multiple patient positions.
 - A medical console, that consists of the control switches & their respective outlets for the oxygen, vacuum & electrical systems.
 - Medical equipment is mounted off the two principle rail tracks on the back wall and the ceiling. This enables the accommodation of a multi-function monitor, external pacer and defibrillator, the ventilators and the Infusion pumps as well as a set of storage draws for operational equipment.
 - Two red lenses allow for night time use of cabin light so as to not interfere with the pilots night vision.

On peak festive days there will be two Metro Red Cross AMS helicopters in Cape Town and one covering the Garden Route area staffed by AMS and Metro Advanced Life Support (ALS) paramedics with a pilot that will respond within five minutes to calls received via the Metro Control Room.

In Cape Town, the helicopter will conduct daily beach patrols to ensure that beachgoers are safe, particularly at the high incident drowning beaches like Monwabisi and Mnandi beach. The AMS' 24-hour medical intensive care fixed wing aircraft will also be available for immediate take-off from the AMS base, situated at Cape Town International Airport for inter-hospital transfers in the Province.

Anyone requiring the rescue service can contact the Metro Control room on 10177. The AMS together with the Western Cape METRO Emergency Medical Services wishes everyone a safe and happy festive season.

Inflight Story - Bloemfontein

Shortly after reporting for duty, Mercy Wing 9 (ZS-RWY), based in Bloemfontein, received a call out to the N1 in Springfontein area to a vehicle accident with multiple casualties.

The crew on duty immediately followed up with the Free State Provincial EMS Control Centre, which had only moments before logged the call on their system. Authorisation to respond to this incident was obtained.

Reportedly, the family were on their way from Johannesburg for a holiday-weekend when a wheel on their VW Microbus burst, whereupon the driver lost control of the vehicle and it rolled. Three people unfortunately died on the scene of the accident.

Two Priority 1 (P1) patients were transported from the scene; the more serious patient was transported via the AMS emergency helicopter. This patient was transferred to Pelonomi Regional Hospital's Trauma Centre in a stable, but serious condition with severe traumatic brain injuries suffered when he was apparently flung from the vehicle at high speed. The second P1 patient was brought by road ambulance from the scene to Pelonomi Hospital. The crew of Mercy Wing 9 wishes to convey their condolences to the family, and wish them and the injured patients a speedy recovery from this traumatic event.

Training Highlights

We will be running an AHCP Advanced Life Support course in November in Cape Town.

With special thanks to Denel AMS was able to present a two week Agusta maintenance course for our engineers in Cape Town. Denel equipped our engineers with the skills needed to maintain our fleet of AgustaWestland helicopters.



Peet Deysel Snr Training Practitioner Advanced and Type Training from Denel Technical Academy and the AMS engineers Neil Bothman, Mark Allan, Karl Bulow, Eugene Mazimpaka and Ismail Kabley.

Our heartfelt thanks to our volunteers and staff members we manned our stand for the duration of the expo. A special word of thanks to AgustaWestland for the opportunity and assistance to be part of the Agusta stand.

DBN Vehicle handover



The AMS in partnership with the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Health provides an emergency air ambulance and flying doctor & rural outreach programme taking critically needed healthcare to impoverished communities by flying specialist many of whom are volunteers and support personnel to outlying hospitals of KwaZulu – Natal (KZN). With the re-location of the AMS KZN base to the new King Shaka Airport specialists who

board the AMS aircraft at seven in the morning now needs to be transported from the landside to the airside in order to board the AMS aircraft. This posed some difficulty as transport was an issue since there was not a big enough vehicle available to be used for transport. AVIS has generously come onboard and donated a VW kombi to be used as a means of transport. This sponsorship will compliment the services delivered by AMS to the community of KwaZulu – Natal. The vehicle will be used to transport medical teams from the landside to the airside. "We at Avis are pleased to be part of an organisation that does such sterling work as the AMS and wanted to contribute in the delivery of services to the community" said Ricky Chellan Avis Branch Manager at King Shaka International Airport. We are proud to be associated with AVIS and thank them for their sponsorship. We look forward to a long working relationship.

Ricky Chellan (Branch Manager KSIA), Kogie Naidoo (AMS Durban Base Manager) and Melanie Carelse (Avis Regional Manager) with the newly donated VW Combi in the background and the AMS fixed wing Pilatus PC 12.

Cross Border flight

Two women and two children aged four and six, living in Cape Town were travelling to Windhoek, Namibia for a week's holiday. Approximately 20 kilometres outside Swakopmund in the early hours of the morning they were involved in a very serious accident. The exact circumstances are not clear but the vehicle rolled head first and the occupants sustained serious injuries. The two children were flung out through the back window and both women were trapped inside the vehicle. A truck driver saw the accident happen and stopped to assist them. He managed to pull the two women out from the vehicle and picked up the two children from the scene. He put them in his truck and drove them to the local hospital in Swakopmund. They were flown to Windhoek Medi-Clinic later that day.

The mother of the two children sustained a blow-out fracture of her right orbit, lacerated lips, shoulder fracture, fourribs fractured with pneumothorax, fractured pelvis, ruptured spleen, pulmonary contusion, renal contusion and multiple contusions. The other passenger sustained bilateral radius/ulna fractures and extensive fractures of her facial bones. The four year old sustained a base of skull fracture with multiple abrasions and contusions. The six year old sustained a closed head injury, blunt abdominal trauma and multiple abrasions and contusions.

One of the service coordinators from AMS received news of this incident late and arrangements were then being put in place to repatriate the patients back to Cape Town. On Monday following the weekend of the incident the crew and pilots were ready and on standby to proceed with the transfer but was held back due to the treating doctor's hesitance to release the patients.

Five days later the treating doctors from Windhoek Medi-Clinic felt confident to release their patients to be transported to Cape Town and arrangements for the flight to Windhoek was finalised.

ZS-AMS took off to Windhoek Medi-Clinic. Pilots on board were Rocky Romanov and Andre van Helsdingen. Medical crew on board was Steven Ontong and Marilise Boshoff.

The two ladies were stable and very relieved to be on their way back home to familiar grounds. The two girls were very traumatised by their ordeal and scared to fly but with having a close family friend with them on board the aircraft (their auntie Marilise) and the wonderful care and support from Rocky, they soon settled and felt at home during their three hour flight back home.

All four patients were admitted to Cape Town Medi-Clinic for approximately one week. The two girls have completely recovered and the two ladies are on a long road to recovery, doing well.

Random pics

Celebrating National Heritage Day / Braai4Heritage

Heritage day is a public holiday on which South Africans across the spectrum are encouraged to celebrate their cultural heritage and the diversity of their beliefs and traditions, in the wider context of a nation that belongs to all its people. Braai4heritage encourages South Africans to gather around a fire to celebrate our nation.



Meat sizzling on the fire

At AMS the rostered National Operations Centre (NOC) staff and Metro Staff were determined that working on a public holiday would not deter their enthusiasm and patriotism for a good old fashioned braai and the celebration of our National Heritage Day. The braai was fired up and the menu included boerewors, chicken kebabs and rolls and of course tomato and onion smoor.

Although the braai was a huge success and everyone was thoroughly satisfied it did unfortunately mean that there were a few unfortunate cases of 'magies vol, ogies toe', not an ideal situation if you are at work.

School Visit to ODN base

Oudtshoorn Junior Primary visited the AMS Oudtshoorn opeation. A total of 95 very excited grade 1 learners arrived eagerly in anticipation to hear all about a day in the life of a pilot and paramedic. The various roles and support that we provide to the Klein Karoo community was explained to the group. Rotor Wing Pilot, Stephan Rossouw, also shared some technical detail and interesting flying experiences with the learners. The paramedic, Andre Kittas, gave the group a basic medical briefing and explained how we care for our patients in our confined trauma unit onboard the helicopter. A scenario was then demonstrated where a boy, after breaking his leg, was immobilised and packaged for air transportation. Medical monitoring equipment was used to display his vital signs and the boy was then secured to the stretcher and loaded into the helicopter.



Hanging onto every word! Learners could not contain their excitement.

Renovated NOC



Check out the latest pics of the AgustaWestland 119 & 109 in action. Pictures courtesy: Irene McCullagh Photography. Go to our website www.ams.org.za to view more. Feel free to submit your pictures to be added to our gallery. Please ensure that pictures are high resolution (1MB & above). Pictures can be e-mailed to venessa@ams.org.za with your details as a reference.

Hiker rescued in Victoria Bay



The hiker fell into a ravine around noon the previous day whilst hiking close to Victoria Bay. He broke his ankle and spend most of the afternoon and evening trapped at the bottom of the ravine. He eventually made his way to the top of a pinnacle rock, surrounded by sea during high tide, and drew the attention of a fisherman. The hiker and fisherman was airlifted by the Oudtshoorn Metro Red Cross Rescue helicopter and were taken

to safety. The hiker was taken to George Provincial Hospital where he was treated for a broken ankle and dehydration.

Chris Broomhead (AMS Flight Paramedic), Paulus Veldkornet (Metro Mountain Rescuer), Vernon Mostert (AMS Secondary Medic/Metro) with the injured hiker.

KZN helps out at strike

The latest public health strike did not deter the AMS KZN operation to continue providing a service to the community. Have a look at the article <http://www.ams.org.za/newsroom/news/uk-med-students-iron-while-strike-hot> to read all about how volunteerism, passion, dedication and perseverance to making a difference makes a real difference. Article written by one of the volunteer doctors participating in the KZN Flying Doctor & Rural Health Outreach Programme.

Staff Focus

A look into the life of one of our flight paramedics/ base supervisors.



I matriculated in 1993. In 1994 I started an engineering degree but I dedicated my weekends to voluntary work at R.K.Khans hospital and the NPA - Ambulance Services (now the KZN-EMRS). Soon I realized that my passion was in the medical field, and I discontinued my studies in engineering and applied for the Ambulance and Emergency Care course offered at Technikon Natal. In 1995 I started full time studies

and completed in 1997.

It was a natural progression back then to join the Department of Health EMS system and I quickly found myself in an environment that spurred my enthusiasm for emergency care. I worked in the DOH till my resignation in 2003. I often did adhoc work abroad during this period after gaining permission from senior management.

In 2003 I started work in Botswana as a Flight Paramedic on a fixed wing aircraft. My contract ended in 2004 and I immediately gained employment in Sudan where I worked as support medical staff for the Joint Military Commission till 2005. I was also asked to make trips to the Middle East during this time. It was a very interesting contract as I had left my pregnant wife Nishi back home in SA. I returned home almost 6 months later to find her in waiting for me at the Durban International and very much in labour. We got home, I showered and then took her to hospital and she delivered our beautiful daughter on New Years Day.

The rest of 2005 went by with work on Oil rig off Angola and Congo for Pride International. In 2006 I worked in SA for Pride International as a Training Consultant till December. During this time I used the AMS Durban base for theoretical training. My long time friend Afzal Khan used to assist me with the teaching during his off time. I finally thought that my work abroad had ended but at the beginning of 2007 I was contracted for a short stint in Europe. After this short job I found myself at home with my family and enjoying my 'off' time. I enjoyed it very much ... and my second gorgeous daughter was born in 2008.

But once again work called and I found myself in Angola last year on a mining/diamond exploration contract. I arrived back in SA this year and decided on hanging up my passport, much to the overwhelming agreement of my family.

I am married now for almost 11 years and I haven't seen my wife for 3 years collectively during this time. My kids did not know me when I returned

As AMS has grown and demands have increased, the need for a National Operations Centre (NOC) upgrade has been urgently required. The small office which housed three computers and had to cater for seven NOC staff members, relocated into the old Cape Town base crew room. It has now flourished into a conventional control room set up with four large desks each fitted with two computer screens. Wall mounted TV screens displaying aircraft tracking for all our aircraft fitted with the tracking system and CCTV footage is a great help as we get to view our operations nationally. Desk partitions allow for important information to be visible at all times while performing important tasks of co-ordination. Maps of South Africa and Southern Africa are located prominently on the walls to ensure that all staff members are familiar with our country. Dedicated crew members for the day as well as incident status boards are displayed to allow information to be readily available and to ensure that an efficient service is provided to our clients. The NOC staff feels proud to have a place to call home, with room to grow



The NOC provides a single access point to national aero-medical services, support for aero-medical crews, co-ordinators and keeping clients and management informed of operational issues. The NOC is a support structure to all the bases nationally; it assists with mission coordination, in-flight and after hours communication support.

Staff Movement

New Appointments



Vinny Pillay
Flight Paramedic
Polokwane



Beauty Ndzamela
General Assistant
Head Office



Daniel Erasmus
Rotor Wing Pilot
Polokwane



Siyabonga Zuma
Flight Paramedic
Polokwane

Promotions



Garth Moys
from NOC Supervisor to
NOC Manager

from my work abroad and I had to start from the very beginning. My wife is the strongest person I know because she has held us together throughout this journey. With the help of my ever caring parents (and babysitters), we have made it work.

I can without a doubt say that my 'adventures' have left me with a sense of wonder at the world. When I completed my first contract in 2001, I swore that I will never do contract work again, but this only fuelled my curiosity about foreign lands and different cultures. I have eaten many strange things, lived and worked with even stranger people in some of the harshest environments. The 10 minute per week only phone call to home to tops it off (if you are lucky enough to get reception).

I have gained countless amount of friends from many cultures and all walks of life. The one thing that I wanted to do was to work in every industry that a paramedic could work in, and I think that I have completed most of it. Respect, patience and decision making has become an integral part of my persona over the years. I love challenging positions and firmly believe that a team sharing a common goal of success is indeed formidable.

Calendar

Mountain Training

18 December – Cape Town

With thanks to some special organisations and individuals for their contribution to our organisation whether in kind or financial.

National

AgustaWestland

Irene McCullagh Photography

National Lottery Distribution Trust Fund

Anglo American Chairman's Fund

Discovery Fund

KwaZulu-Natal

Avis

Peter Upfold

Thoughts...

It has been said that democracy is the worst form of government except all the others that have been tried."

Sir Winston Churchill

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We bid farewell to the following staff member. Thank you for your contribution to organisation, we wish you well in your future endeavours.

**Greg Potter, Rotor Wing Pilot,
Polokwane**

AMS Merchandise For Sale

Have a look at the latest AMS merchandise for sale at our bases nationally. Follow the link to view and find the contact details to place your order: <http://www.ams.org.za/fundraising>