

Lately I said in Kiswahili that we would only be three persons, and I had to laugh because this clause means "Tutakuwa watu watatu tu." Nice, isn't it?

Tanzania is a really beautiful country, but unfortunately I mostly view it only from above with too much distance. To change this circumstance I bought myself a "Pikipiki" beginning of this year (you could also call it "baiskeli kwa ingini"). Now there is much to explore... You guessed already what I mean?

The answer to my last riddle ('aiskrimu') has been 'Ice Cream'! You just have to spell the letters as Germans would do it, and then you hear the right word already.

Regarding languages: For German children, to stay in Africa with their parents is a "giant" advantage for learning English and perhaps other languages almost automatically. Which four-year-old kid in Germany is able to speak English fluently? Certainly words from different languages sound very similar to each other and so it happened that during one German-lesson "draw a hedgehog" (the German word sounds like 'eagle') without further ado a big bird was put on the paper...

So I am at the end of my story. If you have the impression your life isn't as exciting as mine, I have to say I am longing intensely to hear about the things going on in your life!

However, if you have any questions, please ask them. I'd like to answer you in a personal mail. Perhaps it will also stimulate me to issue some more special information on my website [www.aerogero.de](http://www.aerogero.de) besides the newsletters.

On this very homepage you'll find even a new photo album of 2007. A visit is always worth it.

So then, **GOD be with you till we meet again,**

**Yours (Aero)Gero**

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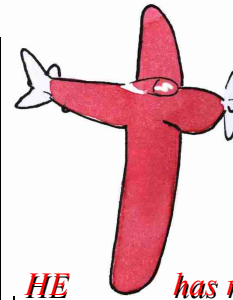
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>10,000 ft: use oxygen!



April 2007

# Aerogero in Africa

**HE** has made everything beautiful in its time. **HE** has also set eternity in the hearts of men;  
*Ecclesiastes 3, Vers 11*

**Dearest Friend,**



Today, some people are asking seriously "Where are you going to spend eternity?" That's a really good question. The bible says, eternity has been placed in everybody's heart – but are you really longing for heaven? Or do you only have the imagination of overweight babies flying around with their tiny wings? Maybe you see just bored saints playing the harp and thinking about what's going on down on earth, where the real life happens?

The bible says something different: "No eye has seen ..., no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him" (1. Corinthians 2, 9)! However, this actually means nothing different than the fact that you won't come even near to what is expecting you in heaven, not in your wildest dreams. So come on, dream a little bit! Believe me, if that won't be it, heaven will be something better. Therefore, when I am only holding myself to the things I am experiencing here on earth, then I am quite a poor soul.

*The best is yet to come!* For me, I have to admit that this view is quite disentangling from clinging to values which seem to be "so" important. Let's have a different view sometimes!



After my return from MAF South Africa where I worked in Nov./Dec. 2006, my superior confronted me with the fact that there would be a lot of flying out of Dodoma in beginning of 2007:

colleagues are going on home leave. and another pilot is taking care of one thus orphaned sub-base. So I may uphold the flag here in Dodoma.

Beyond that, I had finished my necessary hours and did the training for our most difficult strips (C-Strips); the A- and B-strips I could use already. But now I am even more 'useful' which is very good.

I achieved two more benchmarks before end of Feb. 2007; my 1000<sup>th</sup> flying hour is flown, moreover, I had more hours with the Cessna 206 in one year than with any other type in my whole thirteen year old career!

Beneath all the flying we actually face two problems:

First, there is no fuel available from time to time (fortunately we have our own supply which could cover these times until now). Secondly, the abundant rain (which we are very thankful for) sometimes effects the care for the landing strips. Three examples:

At one of our monthly "clinics" only 60% of the strip was cut. That was long enough to land and start without our medical team (and to give advice for cutting before the next month's clinic) but too short to get the whole team of four persons in. So I decided to reduce the team to two lightweight persons for being able to give some help. These two doctors then saw 30 adults and weighed 200 children (100 of which they also vaccinated)! All vaccinations were finished exactly at our last possible departure time.

Another airstrip had only 360 m left, which was just enough to land but not to takeoff again (at 4000 ft elevation). However, I thought the missing 300 m could be prepared the same day, so I decided to land. Then under my instructions, the hardwood bushes were removed as they're dangerous for tires and propeller; a green "paintwork" caused by the remainder soft stuff was accepted as it meant to evaluate 20 pregnant women and to vaccinate 200 children – or even not.

Third, at the so-called Mbeya-Safari in March I landed on a strip which seemed to be quite fine on my low pass. After landing I found six (!) termite hills on the runway which are hard like concrete. That could have cost easily a whole landing gear!

So it is always a difficult decision which we have to make from the air: Is the strip long and safe enough, or do we have to cancel the clinic, which happens only once a month, for so many people?

From time to time I attend our 14-seater "Caravan" as co-pilot, so I can help



with the big paperwork, baggage or refuelling especially on abroad flights.

Besides the actual flying there are a lot of other things to do which makes it difficult for me to learn more Kiswahili. But I realize how important good Kiswahili is, e.g. when I am talking to the villagers about servicing landing strips. Misunderstandings aren't very helpful in that point...

Since March, I also own the role of the safety officer in our TZ-program. This means having regular safety meetings, pointing out weak areas and risks in our daily life and supporting all workers to be aware of these things – which surely isn't as easy as in Germany...

Besides, my flat becomes more and



**Dear Kids,**

**The biggest problem with puddles is that the water has heavy breaking action. Then you won't become just enough and maybe you are unable to fly. It could even be worse, e.g. if only one wheel is slowed down by the puddle suddenly, the plane could 'ground loop', as we say, or perhaps it'll roll into a bush and will be damaged – Gero doesn't like all that.**

**My new question:**

**What do you think African children are playing? I'll help you a bit: They're playing some games you know, too – but also games which are not possible in your country. So please write a story or paint a picture of your ideas and send it to Gero (mail or letter – doesn't matter!).**

**Gero is looking forward to it!**

**Yours Flying-Tiger**

more pretty, lately I had again some nice ideas for my living-room. But how to implement when you don't have a DIY-superstore around the corner? Yet we

have clever workers who are always helpful and know where to buy things, and that's the important point in Dodoma.

When I am at home during the day, I often get visits from the children of other MAF-families. Maybe they know there is always some juice in my fridge, and perhaps you can play hide & seek better in my garden? Lately, a mother said to me that it's always a welcoming moment of relaxation when all the kids shout again: "Hey, let's go to Gero!" "Yeah!"

I enjoy playing with words, e.g. with our guards: in Kiswahili the plurals of things and living creatures are formed in different ways – so first they were very confused when I said: "We two are coming back." (I deliberately meant my bike and me). But now they're already asking: "You three are going shopping?" (=me with my bike and my shopping-basket). This fun lights up their sometimes a bit boring job.