

SCOTLAND'S CHARITY AIR AMBULANCE



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**A very warm welcome to our first newsletter of 2021!
I hope you enjoy reading all our latest news.**

This past year has been a challenge for all of us. There have been moments of sadness, tears and loss - and now the promise of the vaccine and the anticipation of a return to normal as the year progresses. I do hope that you and your family have remained safe and well throughout.

Thanks to the continued support from the community, I am pleased to report that SCAA has remained fully operational throughout, with the priority being to keep our charity team, paramedics, and pilots safe and standing ready to provide our pre-hospital life-saving services to all in Scotland.

We launched our newest air ambulance, Helimed 79, in Aberdeen in April last year and have just marked its first anniversary. Working alongside Helimed 76, our two air ambulances have continued to face challenges well beyond their usual calling this year. Our pilots and paramedics have continued to deliver their dedicated services in time-critical situations and engineers have ensured the helicopters are expertly maintained and always mission ready.

With our calendar of fundraising events and community events cancelled this year, our ability to raise funds was greatly impacted. However, the unwavering support of the people of Scotland through this most difficult of times, remains strong. I would like to extend my thanks to every one of our extended SCAA family for helping us to meet the unprecedented challenges that we have faced together throughout the pandemic.

Thanks to you and all the people who support us, we will be celebrating our 8th birthday in May. To mark this event, we will be launching Scotland's Charity Air Ambulance Week, a week filled with ways to celebrate and support SCAA. Read more about SCAA Week on Page 11 and I hope that you can join us in marking this great milestone.

Please keep supporting us and together we can keep flying and saving lives in Scotland.

Thank you,
David Craig | CEO



SCAA's Helimed 79 has completed its first year on the frontline.

In April 2021, SCAA's second air ambulance - Aberdeen-based Helimed 79 - marked its first anniversary in service. In a year like no other, the crew responded to 187 emergencies all across Scotland, flying 97 patients to critical life-saving hospital care.

"It's been challenging," explained Lead Paramedic Ewan Littlejohn, "but we're really proud of what SCAA has achieved here. We're now a recognised and well respected part of the country's emergency response network."

During its first year, Helimed 79 flew nearly 25,000 miles and has responded to a wide variety of emergencies at locations from Orkney to the Borders. 105 call outs involved serious trauma, with 48 of these to road traffic collisions and a further 25 to serious falls.

The country's newest air ambulance service has also proved a lifeline for those living in remote and island communities, providing rapid transfer to patients for advanced

hospital care. In the first year, Helimed 79 airlifted 35 such patients from outlying areas or airlifted them home to the islands following hospital treatment. A further 31 of the crew's call outs were to cardiac related emergencies - another situation where time is of vital importance.

Throughout the year, around 65% of Helimed 79's call outs have been to emergencies in the Grampian region, with 17% to the Highlands and a further 14% to the Orkney Islands. More than 80 patients were flown to Aberdeen Royal Infirmary, with other major care centres such as the Royal Infirmary Edinburgh and Raigmore Hospital also visited to deliver those seriously ill or injured.

SCAA Chief Executive David Craig reflected on the first year for Helimed 79 - which mirrors the charity's Helimed 76 service based at Perth Airport.

"The demand for our Helimed 79 service has been there since day one when it was deployed to a 999 call within hours of launching," he said. "Since then it has benefitted a huge number of patients and their families."



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THE DAY I DIED SEVEN TIMES

Duncan Stevenson suffered a heart attack while walking in remote Highland Perthshire. A land ambulance reached the patient and stabilised him before setting out on the nearly two hour drive to hospital in Dundee in worsening winter road conditions.

With time against them, the ambulance crew requested air support and SCAA was deployed and arranged to rendezvous with them at an approved landing site at Lochearnhead and airlift the patient the rest of the way.

Land and air ambulance crews worked together to transfer the patient to the helicopter but no sooner was he comfortably settled in than he suffered his first cardiac arrest.

Paramedics used the aircraft defibrillator to shock his heart back to a steady rhythm and happy that the patient was stabilised but also knowing that time was crucial - the helicopter lifted and started through the harsh winter weather toward the critical cardiac hospital centre at Ninewells.

"Although he was sitting up and talking to us, the patient's condition did give cause for concern and we set out all the appropriate cardiac life-saving and resuscitation kit we might need ready to act quickly," explained SCAA Lead Paramedic John Pritchard, who was on crew with Paramedic colleague Richard Garside.

The paramedics' foresight was to prove prophetic as their patient was to "die" a further six times in mid-flight with the medics fighting for his life every step of the way. Luckily for everyone on board, pilot Shaun Rose had over 8,000 flying hours and 10,000 missions behind him as he called on his significant experience to safely conduct the flight in challenging winter weather conditions.

The crew continued to resuscitate their repeatedly arresting patient, carrying out CPR, airway management and ventilating. "We were so focussed on our patient that - although we were well aware of the challenges Shaun was facing - we had plenty going on ourselves," said John.

Their patient Duncan, however, remembers little of the drama unfolding around him.

"I don't remember much apart from coming to occasionally and experiencing the helicopter and team getting buffeted by the extreme weather," he said.

Thanks to the expert in-flight care from the paramedics, Duncan was not only alive when the helicopter landed safely at Ninewells, but was also well oxygenated and suffered



no brain function issues as a result of his repeated arrests.

He was rushed to the catheter lab for treatment and has since made a full recovery.

"I was in hospital for three days and had a stent inserted to the problematic artery," said Duncan. "Amazingly, I was sitting up in bed later that first evening piecing together what had happened and thanking my lucky stars that SCAA was there for me."

His life-saving team, however, admitted to being physically and mentally drained and required some well-earned "down time" before leaving the hospital.

"It was without a doubt the most difficult flight of my career," explained former SCAA pilot Captain Shaun Rose. "And I've faced many, many challenging situations in the air."

"Afterwards, we just slapped each other on the back, had a hug and then collapsed with a cup of tea. The conditions meant the paramedics were working on a constantly shifting and tilting platform. They were amazing - real pros."

SCAA's crew also paid credit to the work of

everyone else involved in the chain of survival that day including ambulance crew, police, air traffic control and hospital teams.

But Duncan is in no doubt who played the major part in his survival that day.

"One of the medical team at Ninewells Hospital told me how lucky I was to have been brought in by helicopter as I had arrested several times and needed to get to critical hospital care pretty quickly - a road ambulance in that weather with me constantly arresting would never have made it in time.

"I owe SCAA my life. I don't think I would have made it without them. When no one else can reach you - they hopefully can. I'm testament to that and their commitment to saving lives even in the most challenging circumstances."

In recognition of their outstanding skill and commitment, pilot Captain Shaun Rose and paramedics John Pritchard and Richard Garside have been nominated for a Pride of Scotland Unsung Heroes award in the Emergency Services category. The winners will be announced at a ceremony in the summer of 2021.

YOUR SUPPORT IN ACTION

Our life-saving work takes our air ambulance crews all over Scotland – including her many islands. Often working with other healthcare professionals, SCAA is a fully integrated part of Scotland’s 999 emergency response network, providing a vital lifeline to communities the length and breadth of the country. Here is a snapshot of just some of the emergency responses your support has helped to fund in recent months.

An injured motocross rider was airlifted to Ninewells Hospital in Dundee after an accident at a disused railway line near Glenrothes. SCAA landed next to the track and worked with colleagues from the Scottish Ambulance Service and their Special Operations Response Team before transferring the patient to hospital - a flight of under 15 minutes for a journey that would’ve taken over an hour by road.



SCAA was able to reach a seriously ill worker at a remote location near Lochgoilhead and ensure he was receiving critical cardiac care at the Queen Elizabeth University Hospital in Glasgow as quickly as possible after a short flight.



SCAA visited the same stretch of road near Peterhead two days in a row in response to two separate road traffic collisions. SCAA airlifted one injured man and then one injured woman to Aberdeen Royal Infirmary, about 15 minutes away by air.



SCAA flew to the island of Lismore to ensure a woman requiring urgent advanced medical care was transferred quickly to hospital on the mainland. The patient was airlifted to Lorne and Islands Hospital in under 10 minutes.



A young boy injured in a sledging accident at Banchory Golf Course was quickly airlifted by SCAA to the Royal Aberdeen Children’s Hospital for advanced care. Our air ambulance landed in the snow close to the incident and SCAA paramedics worked with colleagues from the Scottish Ambulance Service, Police Scotland, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service and a local doctor at the scene. The boy’s mother was able to accompany her son on the 15-minute flight to hospital.



SCAA was quickly on scene with an enhanced medical team on board to attend a road traffic accident near Wick on Christmas Eve. Working alongside the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, Police Scotland and the Scottish Ambulance Service, SCAA then airlifted a patient to the Major Trauma Centre in Aberdeen.



SCAA was flying over the Moray Firth on the return journey from a tasking to Orkney when we were diverted to a medical emergency in Banff. Our air ambulance landed in the local primary school playground, from where police ferried our paramedics to the patient. The man was then transported by ambulance to the waiting helicopter and airlifted in around 16 minutes to essential care at Aberdeen Royal Infirmary - saving a journey that would have taken over an hour by road.



SCAA battled winds of up to 50 knots to ensure patients requiring transfer between Aberdeen Royal Infirmary and Orkney were safely transported. One patient was airlifted from the mainland hospital and taken home to the northern islands while a second patient requiring advanced care was taken on board for the return journey to Aberdeen. Strong winds saw the northbound journey completed in just 45 minutes, while the return flight took an hour and a half.



SCAA played its part in getting patients home from hospital for Christmas to remote parts of the country. This saw the charity airlift people from mainland hospitals to both Islay and Orkney, while bringing patients requiring urgent hospital care back from those locations to advanced care at hospitals in Glasgow and Aberdeen.

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BACK WHERE SHE BELONGS

Julia Barnes is unique among SCAA's paramedics. For, having left the charity crew after two years for personal career development, she then opted to return, having "missed everything" about the air ambulance role.

"I was working 10 hour shifts at SCAA and driving over an hour at the beginning and end of the day," she explained. "As SCAA was expanding to cover 12 hours per day, it became unsustainable for me so I took on a new role at my old station and settled back into that post."

Leaving SCAA, however, left a helicopter-shaped hole in Julia's life and when an opening came up on the crew two years later, she decided to establish a second home near the Perth base and sign back on. "Being an aircrew paramedic kind of gets under your skin," she explained. "I really missed working with SCAA and the excitement and fulfilment that goes with the role. I decided if I determined to make the work/life balance work, then I could do it."

Julia rejoined the crew in 2019 and had to play catch up pretty quickly with a whole new team of workmates.

"Some procedures and technical issues had changed, but everything I knew and loved about working with SCAA was still there," said Julia. "The thrill of flying, the expectation of what each day would bring, the knowledge that you are making a positive impact on the lives of people in their darkest hour and the fact that your operational area is the whole of Scotland rather than just a district -



it was all still there and I love it. I really can't think of anything else I would want to do."

Julia recalls a mission which sums up why she came back to the aircrew role. "A man was suffering a serious heart attack on a remote farm in the Argyll countryside and SCAA was tasked to get him to critical cardiac care before it was too late," she said. "We landed the helicopter close to him and flew him to hospital in under half an hour but it was clear his heart was failing and we were fearful of the outcome. "When we heard the next day that he was sitting up in bed chatting, I was overwhelmed that he was going to be OK. It really hit home then that what I was doing with SCAA was making a real difference - something I never take for granted as we're so privileged to be there when people need us most."

Julia explained that 2020 brought a whole new set of challenges as the Coronavirus pandemic affected what the crew could do and how they would do it. "Initially there was new guidance and protocols on an almost daily basis and rules were constantly changing on the use of PPE," she said.

"It's been hugely stressful and challenging because you had to keep this at the forefront of your mind while focussing on the needs of your patient. "Hidden behind masks, we have to let our eyes be our communicators to reassure and comfort - when anyone in pain or distress just wants a hand to hold."

And Julia has her own target in sight for when Covid restrictions are eased. "I just want to hug my Mum," she said. "She's in Yorkshire and I haven't seen her since last year. I can't wait to throw my arms around her again."

Julia, who has a BEd in Primary and Outdoor Education and a BSc in Professional Practice, has recently completed a "Teaching Health Care Professionals" module at Glasgow University - the latest advancement in her professional development. And she has a raft of other skills which she puts to good use as a SCAA volunteer.



"When I first left SCAA, I joined the charity's army of volunteers in order to give something back for all the training and experiences I had enjoyed there," she said. "As a keen photographer, I was happy to supply a steady stream of images of the work that SCAA does and I was also willing to give talks and presentations to groups and organisations."

"I've also taken my turn at driving buggies at major events and doing bucket collections - not to mention a sponsored abseil off the Forth Road Bridge."



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MISSION STATS

Total Missions Since Launch (May 2013 to April 2021)

2,892 CALL OUTS



Rapid Response Vehicle
503 CALL OUTS

40.7% of all RRV call outs were to cardiac related emergencies



Helicopter
2,389 CALL OUTS



2,300
Flying hours

NAUTICAL MILES FLOWN

262,198



TRAUMA
51%

MEDICAL
14%

CARDIAC INCIDENT
17%

RETRIEVAL & TRANSFER
13%

STROKE
5%

CELEBRATE SCAA WEEK WITH US!



As we continue to come to terms with how the Covid 19 pandemic has impacted our lives, we're now taking the first tentative steps to get out more and enjoy the spring and summer period. Here at SCAA, as we continue to provide our life-saving services all over Scotland, our own thoughts are turning to restarting our community events, talks and tours of our bases.

To properly celebrate SCAA's upcoming 8th Birthday, we will be launching 'Scotland's Charity Air Ambulance Week' this year starting on the 17th May. During SCAA Week, we will be sharing stories from our patients and supporters and providing an insight into our work through the eyes of our life-saving air ambulance crews. There will be opportunities to ask questions, send us messages of support, get involved in fundraising and to watch some fantastic videos. Keep an eye out for more information on how to get involved on our Facebook page and other social media channels.

Community support for SCAA has been absolutely fantastic throughout the pandemic and we are truly grateful to everyone who has supported us. As a charity we rely 100% on donations received from the community in Scotland. Although most fundraising events had to be postponed or cancelled this year, we still had amazing support from the community through virtual events,

fundraisers, our Life-Saving Lottery and corporate partners. Every year it costs over £4 million to maintain our aircraft, crews and the provision of our critical life-saving pre-hospital care.

During this difficult time, we understand that many families face their own challenges. Right now, money is limited, and the priority will always be taking care of your loved ones first. We simply ask that if you do value our work, and you have the means to support us, please consider donating to Scotland's Charity Air Ambulance.

It is your support that will keep us flying and saving lives in Scotland.

The easiest way to donate is online by clicking the [CLICK HERE TO CELEBRATE SCAA WEEK WITH US!](#) button below or on the next page. Alternatively, you can donate online at www.scaa.org.uk, click 'DONATE' on our Facebook page, text 'SCAA' and your donation amount to 70085 or call us on 0300 123 1111.

Thank you,
Nick Harvey
Director of Fundraising & Communications

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Happy 8TH BIRTHDAY SCAA!

SCAA Week | 17-23 May



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ONLY WITH YOUR SUPPORT CAN WE KEEP FLYING AND SAVING LIVES ACROSS SCOTLAND

Scotland's Charity Air Ambulance responds, on average, to one time-critical emergency call-out every single day. We receive no statutory government funding and rely 100% on donations from the public to fuel our life-saving flights.

Since our launch in 2013, we've responded to almost 3,000 call-outs all over Scotland, providing a vital lifeline to communities all over the country. It's only with your support that we've been able to be there for so many people in their time of need.

We want to celebrate 8 years of service and the launch of SCAA Week with you and everyone else that has supported us. To do this, we have set up an 8th Birthday Appeal and are calling on our supporters to help us raise funds for 25 life-saving call-outs.

If you value the work we do, and have the means to support us, please consider donating and sending a birthday message by clicking on the button below. Our paramedics, pilots and charity staff sincerely appreciate the messages we receive from our supporters.

Your donation will ensure that the people of Scotland will continue to have access to our life-saving service today and long into the future.

[CLICK HERE TO CELEBRATE SCAA WEEK WITH US!](#)

Thank you!



THANK YOU!

Thank you for continuing to support Scotland's Charity Air Ambulance. Whether you donate, volunteer or play our lottery – we couldn't keep flying and saving lives without you.

If you would like to help support SCAA, you could:

- Enter a fundraising event or organise your own
- Become a SCAA Volunteer
- Make a one-off or regular donation
- Play our weekly lottery
- Leave a gift to SCAA in your will



If SCAA was there for you when you needed help, we'd love to hear your story. Email media@scaa.org.uk or call 07778-779-888 in confidence.

At Scotland's Charity Air Ambulance, we are committed to protecting your personal data and to being transparent about how we handle it and who we share it with. In the spirit of transparency, we are letting you know we have now updated our privacy notice. You can access this on our website at www.scaa.org.uk/privacy-policy. If you would prefer a hard copy, please let us know and we will post it to you.

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