

SCAA NEWS

WWW.SCAA.ORG.UK



INSIDE:

WINTER WEATHER CHALLENGES

Scotland is recognised as presenting some of the most challenging weather and terrain for helicopter air ambulance crews.

DEBBIE'S STORY

After suffering horrific injuries on her farm, Debbie recounts how a critical decision saved her life.



IN IAIN'S MEMORY

3

WINTER WEATHER CHALLENGES

4-5

CHRISTMAS CRACKERS

6-7

WITHOUT SCAA, I WOULDN'T BE HERE

8-9

THERE FOR ALL OF SCOTLAND

10

VOLUNTEER WITH US!

11

CONTACT US

12

PERTH BASE

Scotland's Charity Air Ambulance
The Control Tower, Perth Airport
Scone, Perthshire PH2 6PL

ABERDEEN BASE

Scotland's Charity Air Ambulance
Hangar 2B, Farburn Terrace
Dyce, Aberdeen AB21 7DT

GENERAL ENQUIRIES

0300 123 1111
enquiries@scaa.org.uk
scaa.org.uk

YOUR STORY

media@scaa.org.uk
07778 779 888

If SCAA was there for you when you needed help, we'd love to hear your story. Please contact us and we will treat your communication in confidence.

DONATE

scaa.org.uk/donate
0300 123 1111

By post (to the address above) please make cheques payable to "Scotland's Charity Air Ambulance" or "SCAA".

JOIN THE TEAM!

volunteer@scaa.org.uk
07751 921 980

See further details on page 11.

FOLLOW US AT

Facebook Scotland's Charity Air Ambulance - SCAA
Twitter @scotairamb
LinkedIn Scotland's Charity Air Ambulance (SCAA)
Instagram @scaa_charity



YOUR SUPPORT REALLY MATTERS.

TO HELP SCAA, SCAN THIS QR CODE OR DONATE AT THE DETAILS ABOVE. THANK YOU.

WELCOME TO SCAA NEWS

Hello everyone

Welcome to the latest edition of SCAA News as we look ahead to winter and the festive season.

This Christmas, many families will be able to be together thanks to the life-saving work of our crews and the support shown by you throughout the year.

This winter, thousands of you will be flying symbolically with our frontline crews on every life-saving mission after sponsoring a name on our aircraft through our Make Your Mark campaign.

Every time the rotors turn in response to an emergency anywhere in Scotland, the support of thousands will be at SCAA's side. So, if your name (or that of a loved one) is on our helicopters, we know you're with us – every step of the way.

Winter brings its own set of challenges for our crews at SCAA as you'll read in your newsletter.

You'll also hear from patients whose lives we have touched, share a bit of festive fun with some of our crew and browse some of our amazing SCAA merchandise – who doesn't love a pair of socks or a beanie hat at Christmas?!

Sadly, however, Christmas will be a time of sad reflection and loss for those who have an empty place at the table or a stocking that remains unfilled.

Our hearts and thoughts go out to Ashlyne and her family who have turned the focus of their grief on losing her two-year-old son Iain in a horrific car crash to a fundraising legacy to support SCAA after learning the charity was responsible for getting his mother speedily to hospital from the wreckage and saving her life.

Their selfless actions in sharing their story are both humbling and inspiring in the wake of their sorrow and we offer our deepest thanks to an amazing family.

To others, we offer our heartfelt thanks for your unstinting support and wish you a safe and happy Christmas.

Thank you

David Craig
Chief Executive



IN IAIN'S MEMORY

The heartbroken family of a two-year-old Caithness boy killed in a car accident two years ago has vowed to devote years raising funds for the air ambulance charity that helped save the youngster's mother.

Little Iain Mackay from Wick died three days after sustaining catastrophic injuries in the two-vehicle collision near Lybster in August 2021. His mother Ashlyne was left fighting for her life.

Iain was taken to Caithness General and on to the Children's Hospital in Glasgow where medics battled to save him.

Meanwhile, Scotland's Charity Air Ambulance (SCAA) airlifted Ashlyne to the Major Trauma Centre in Aberdeen in just 20 minutes – a speed that consultants believed saved her life.

Following major surgery, Ashlyne was taken by ambulance to Glasgow to see her son and join the rest of the family in heart-breaking goodbyes before his life-support was switched off and he was allowed to slip away, just weeks before his third birthday.

Having recently undergone a thirteenth operation, Ashlyne remains too distressed to talk about the trauma, but her sister Ellie Merchant explained that the family used their loss as a focus for a determined fundraising effort to ensure SCAA would be there to help other families in times of need.

"SCAA saved Ashlyne's life and allowed her time to be with her son at the end," she said. "That's something you can never repay."

"When the family gathered at the hospital to say our goodbyes to Iain we said we couldn't let his death be meaningless. We had to do something in his name – we had to help other children in his memory. We had to help fund the amazing charity that did so much for us that awful day."



This autumn – when Iain would have been turning five – Ellie handed over a cheque for £5,040 to SCAA following a family skydive and pledged future charity efforts at least twice a year going forward.

"It's just the start," vowed Ellie. "Our family's debt to SCAA is immeasurable and we'll do all we can to support the service as it reaches out to save the lives of other adults and other children. I could have lost a sister as well as a nephew that day had it not been for SCAA. They saved her life and our family will be forever grateful."

"Iain was a darling little boy who loved to dance – full of mischief and merriment. He was an absolute joy and we are all bereft without him."

"Our world was blown apart by that road accident but SCAA helped us hold it together – something no one else could – and help us fight to keep Iain's memory alive through the people SCAA will go on to save in the future."

WINTER WEATHER CHALLENGES

Scotland is recognised as presenting some of the most challenging weather and terrain for helicopter air ambulance crews. Factor in winter, and a whole new set of challenges face our pilots and paramedics.

Severe weather, difficult terrain, deep snow, driving rain, high winds, blizzards, icy conditions, low cloud and plummeting temperatures all conspire in a bid to thwart our dedicated crews as they battle to reach the most seriously ill and injured throughout the winter months.

“We’ve got to be prepared for anything Scotland’s winter can throw at us,” said SCAA pilot Captain Pete Winn, “and that means constant vigilance and preparation.”

Based at SCAA’s Aberdeen Helimed 79 base, Pete is no stranger to tackling difficult missions to emergencies among Scotland’s mountain masses and remote communities.



Winter, he says, just makes the job a little more challenging.

“We start by ensuring the crew, our kit and the aircraft are all ready for the shift ahead,” he explained. “This includes the crew briefing first thing in the morning where we look at everything that might affect our ability to respond or present challenges once airborne.”

Pete highlighted weather conditions and forecast as a priority.

“In Scotland, the weather can turn in an instant from mild open skies to grounding conditions and we have to stay abreast of changing weather systems at all times.”

Cloud levels and freezing levels can prove particularly troublesome and dodging heavy snow showers often sees the helicopter forced to take a circuitous route to reach or airlift a patient.

And even when on final approach at an emergency scene, danger can lurk in Scotland’s winter mantle.

“Soft deep snow could result in the helicopter sinking so we have to ensure any snowy surface is even, stable and secure,” said Pete. “Soft snow will also blow up around us as we approach, obscuring our view, so we have to be quite measured on our approach.”

“We also have to be fairly sure what we’re landing on – a snow covering could be hiding untold dangers such as forest debris, deep ditches or rough boulders.”

Sinking into deep snow could damage the aircraft so pilots are always confident the snow covering is compact and secure before landing. And avalanche warnings are detailed in the morning briefing in

case they have to attend accidents on the ski slopes or mountain areas.

“Icy surfaces are just as challenging,” said Pete. “If we attend a road traffic collision, for example, and the road surface appears icy and untreated, we will elect to land in a nearby field rather than the carriageway to avoid the risk of the aircraft sliding.”

Keeping warm in the air and at scene necessitates a few thermal layers for the crew beneath their uniforms and heavy jackets and warm hats on top.

“Long Johns are a must,” shared Pete. “The helicopter heating system is highly efficient when the engine is running but it soon cools down when we shut down at scene.”

The helicopter also carries a survival pack containing such essentials as a satellite phone, extra blankets, emergency high energy rations and water.

While Pete and his fellow SCAA pilots are ensuring craft and crew can fly to and land safely at any incident, paramedics are preparing to face their own set of challenges that winter weather presents.

Helimed 79 paramedic Grace Aspden said that cold hands posed a problem for them as they work with patients in freezing conditions.

“Cold makes motor skills more difficult so every intervention we do becomes more challenging if our hands are freezing,” she said. “Snow means we get cold and wet which makes our job extra challenging.”

And the weather conditions affecting the paramedics are also affecting the patients.

“It’s vital to stop heat loss in your patient and we have to work fast to combat hypothermia which complicates any other condition,” said Grace.



Extra blankets and additional layers designed specifically to prevent heat loss are deployed.

“Once we get the patient into the aircraft and the engines start, we soon heat up,” explained Grace.

Helimed 76 at Perth also flies with an extreme weather kit on board, which includes a pop-up “bothy” to shelter both patient and paramedics from the elements and a special blizzard blanket for warmth.

Protecting the patient from the harsh environment is critical until they can be prepared for flight.

“We’ve faced some testing times together,” said Pete, “and often we are working alongside colleagues such as Search and Rescue or Mountain Rescue Teams in the harshest of conditions to ensure the best outcome of the patient.”

“It can prove demanding but there’s a great sense of satisfaction and relief when you deliver the patient to hospital and get the crew safely back to base,” he said. “Then it’s time for a cup of tea before we have to do it all again.”

CHRISTMAS CRACKERS

Christmas is different for each of us – individual favourites, memories and family traditions. So we asked some of our crew to share a few thoughts on their specific festive fun.



Pilot Pete

Favourite song: Anything by Michael Bublé. It's the album of choice at Christmas in the Winn household.

Best present: A Lego castle when I was eight or nine. I remember it as being really big with little Lego soldiers. The thrill of opening your presents and finding exactly what you wanted was wonderful.

Dream Christmas location: I would love a picture postcard Christmas setting so it would have to have guaranteed snow and big log fires. Maybe Scandinavia somewhere.

What I buy my pet: This is Barnaby's first Christmas. He's our year-old Chinchilla cat and he's spoiled rotten, so every day is Christmas for him!

Paramedic Greg

Favourite song: Has to be 'Santa Is A Scotsman' by Scottish Quest Allstars (although he did initially plump for Kelly Clarkson's 'Underneath The Tree'). It's a bit of fun at Christmas and makes you proud to be Scottish!

Best present: A Nintendo Wii games console when it first came out. I was seven-years-old and my favourite game was Mario Kart. My little nephew still plays with it and I take him on for a tennis match or a game of bowling.

Dream Christmas location: The German Christmas markets. I love browsing the stalls and buying gifts for loved ones. And I'm partial to a mulled cider at the same time.

What I buy my pet: Parker our Cockapoo will get whatever character squeaky toy is the bestseller this Christmas – squeaks it all day and drives everyone mad! His favourite was a duck when he was a puppy.

Paramedic John

Favourite song: 'White Christmas' – can't go wrong. Makes you feel all Christmassy.

Best present: My first Action Man – with real hair, eagle eyes and gripping hands. Sounds a bit spooky now but at eight-years-old it was the business.

Dream Christmas location: I think I'm hankering after something totally tropical – a bit of beach life. Soft white sand, warm sun, turquoise seas and a Christmas cocktail.

What I buy my pet: Our Border Collie, Zac, usually enjoys a new toy and some treats on Christmas Day. We wrap them up and he totally destroys the packaging until he reaches the goodies.



Paramedic Suzi

Favourite song: Mariah Carey – 'All I want For Christmas'. Absolute classic!

Best present: Roller blades when I was about eight-years-old. All the other kids had them and I was thrilled to get them for Christmas. Fell off them lots but luckily no broken bones.

Dream Christmas location: Lapland where Santa lives. I suppose we'd have to take the kids!

What I buy my pet: Usually a treat such as a stocking, new collar or toy. He's a six-year-old Cockapoo called Charlie and he's never forgotten. He also gets a big chew so that he doesn't bother us at the Christmas table.

Paramedic Ali

Favourite song: 'Fairytale of New York'. It's a cracking song and always makes me think of Christmas.

Best present: My first ever motorbike. When I was 12, my younger brother and I got a joint present of an offroad bike. The keys were wrapped up as our Christmas present and then we had to go to the garage. Wow!

Dream Christmas location: It would be so cool to go skiing in perfect conditions on Christmas morning, so I'd go to Canada. Lots of snow, log cabins, real Christmas trees and open fires.

What I buy my pet: Maisie, our cat, can expect the usual tasty treats and a new feathered toy to play with. We always wrap them up but she's no good at getting the paper off, so we always have to help her.

Pilot Russ

Favourite song: 'Hej Mitt Vinterland' – it's a Swedish feel-good Christmas song that they usually play on the first day of snow and means Hello My Winter Wonderland – it's great!

Best present: When I was four, I got a huge train set and I remember "flying" the locomotive around in the air as the battery powered engine sounded more like a helicopter. I then dropped it and broke it that same day – but it did instil a love of helicopters!

Dream Christmas location: In the air. It's become a Christmas tradition for my son Rory and I to go flying in my Piper Cub on Christmas morning and I love that. Then it's home for dinner and all the festive fun.

What I buy my pet: We don't have a pet – apart from our spider, Jeff, in the garage. We'll make sure he's warm and has plenty of flies over Christmas. But no presents.

WITHOUT SCAA, I WOULDN'T BE HERE

When medics examined Debbie's battered and broken body at her family farm near Tomintoul, they knew that speed would be a determining factor in saving her life – and Scotland's Charity Air Ambulance (SCAA) was there to fulfil that critical race against time.

Debbie (54) was tossed and trampled by a cow when she went to help one of its twin calves. Horrifically injured, she managed to crawl free of the animals and reach the farmhouse, 150 yards away, where she slumped exhausted onto her knees on the kitchen floor.

"I didn't feel any pain at that stage," said the mother of three. "I went into survival mode and adrenaline spurred me on to seek help."

That help came in the form of Debbie's husband Andy who, spotting the farmhouse door lying open, stopped his Jeep and went to investigate.

"I shouted to him to call an ambulance and them slumped onto the dog's soft mattress on the floor," she said. "He's a firefighter and knew first aid so he recognised I was in serious trouble."

"He explained what had happened to the emergency services and they immediately opted to send a helicopter. In hindsight, it was a decision that saved my life."

Debbie knew she was seriously injured. The cow had not only tossed her but had also trampled on her – forcing its 700 kgs down on her legs and body.

"I'd started getting very sweaty which is a sign of internal



bleeding," she said. But all we could do was wait for help to arrive."

SCAA, a land ambulance and two doctors from Inverness all arrived at the scene within minutes of each other.

"I remember the red suits," said Debbie. "The pain was starting to build, and I remember screaming when one tried to move my leg."

"I don't remember exactly what was happening to me but I did hear someone saying, 'we need to get her out of here now'."

Debbie is in no doubt the speed SCAA got her to critical care at Aberdeen Royal Infirmary saved her life. The flight took 20 minutes – a journey that would take around 90 minutes by road.

"If it wasn't for the air ambulance, I doubt I would have survived," she said. "Their fast actions allowed me to be whisked into emergency surgery which proved life-saving – and just in the nick of time. I remember being urged to sign the surgery agreement form as quickly as I could by the doctors and them shouting 'someone call her husband NOW'."

"I had a punctured lung, my spleen had to be removed and three quarters of my liver was damaged," said Debbie. "I had crushed ribs, a broken leg and was told that I lost seven litres of blood in the accident."

Debbie spent nine days in hospital – four in intensive care, four in the high dependency unit and one on the ward – and doctors were astounded at how quickly she recovered from her injuries.

Just weeks after surgery, she made an emotional visit to SCAA's Aberdeen base where she met one of the crew who had helped save her life.

"That was very emotional, to say the least," she said. "A young paramedic who had been involved was the same

age as my youngest son and he was delighted to see me looking so well after what I'd been through."

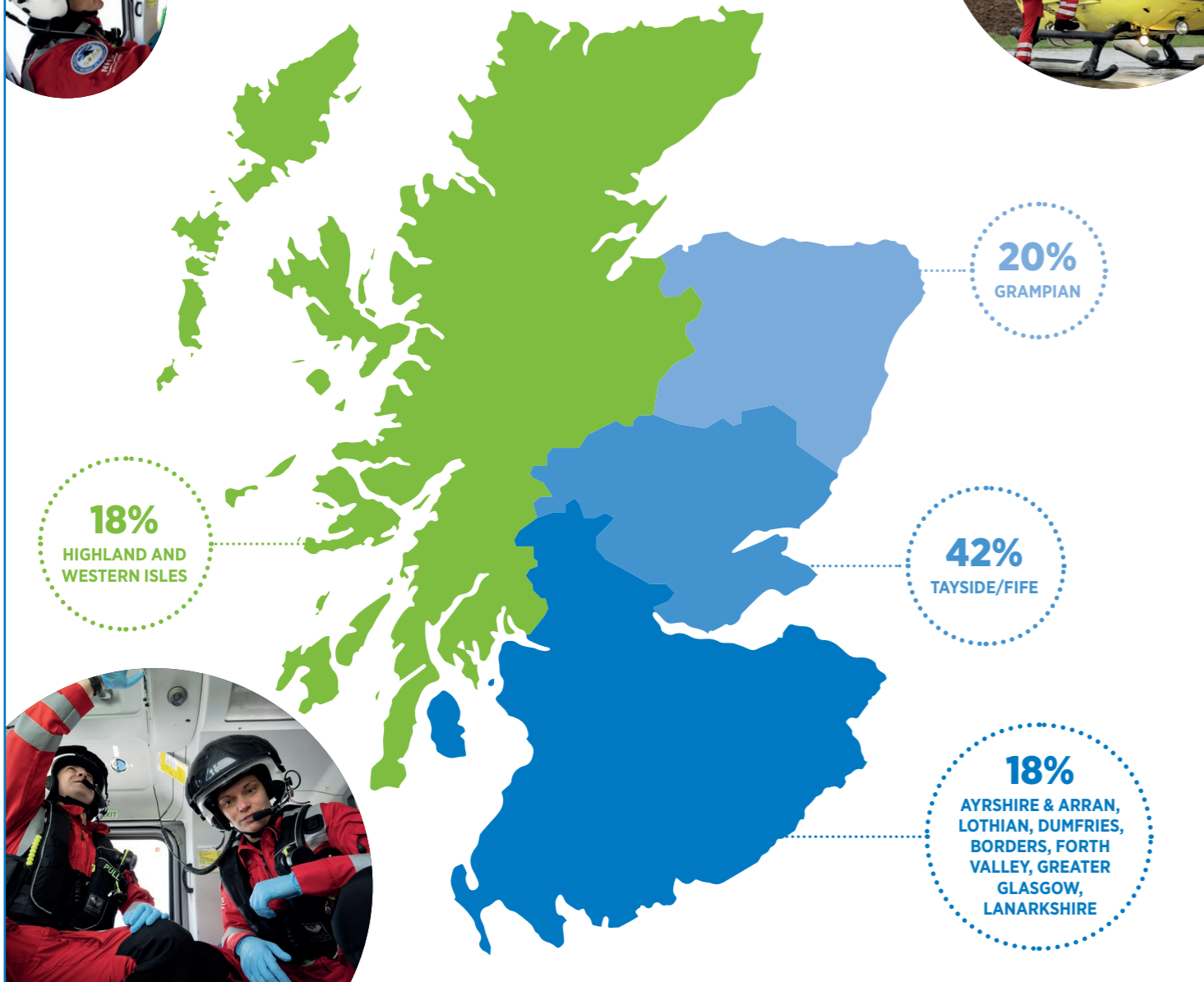
"It was so nice to meet people who care passionately about helping others and to be able to thank them for saving my life."

"SCAA is a national treasure and we should all support it if we can," said Debbie. "You never know when you might need it – I certainly never thought I would."

"All I know is that without SCAA I wouldn't be here and so many other lives would be lost as well. For my part, I've vowed that those two little calves – when old enough – will be sold to raise funds for SCAA so that they can be there for the next person whose life depends on them."



THERE FOR ALL OF SCOTLAND
TASKING MAP



SINCE LAUNCH (MAY 2013 TO OCTOBER 2023)

CALL OUTS: 5,304
HELICOPTER: 4,169
RAPID RESPONSE VEHICLE: 1,135
FLYING HOURS: 4,180
NAUTICAL MILES FLOWN: 476,590
(ABOUT 22 TIMES AROUND THE EARTH!)

TRAUMA-RELATED CALL OUTS: 41%
CARDIAC-RELATED CALL OUTS: 19%
RETRIEVALS AND TRANSFERS: 16%
MEDICAL: 19%
STROKE: 5%

VOLUNTEER WITH US!

VOLUNTEER ROLES NOW AVAILABLE ACROSS SCOTLAND

- Collection coordinators
- Volunteer speakers
- Events and SCAA mascot
- One-off or regular volunteering
- Flexible opportunities to get involved!

INTERESTED IN JOINING OUR TEAM? GET IN TOUCH NOW!

CONTACT REBECCA AT:
volunteer@scaa.org.uk
07751 921 980

OR JUST SCAN THIS QR CODE



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 SCAA was there for you when you needed help, we'd love to hear your story.

Email: media@scaa.org.uk Call: 07778 779 888 in confidence.

YOU CAN HELP SAVE LIVES BY DONATING TO SCAA HERE:

- Online at www.scaa.org.uk
- By phone on **0300 123 1111**
- By post to:
Scotland's Charity Air Ambulance, The Control Tower, Perth Airport, Scone, Perthshire PH2 6PL

(Please make cheques payable to "Scotland's Charity Air Ambulance" or "SCAA".)

SCAN THE QR CODE BELOW TO GO ONLINE AND DONATE.







IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO SUPPORT SCAA, YOU COULD:

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



FOLLOW US AT:

-  **Scotland's Charity Air Ambulance - SCAA**
-  **@scotairamb**
-  **Scotland's Charity Air Ambulance (SCAA)**
-  **@scaa_charity**

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.

