Dear friends,

In 2018 we said, ‘Let’s fly and deliver in 2019.’ And we took off, thanks to your support and dedication. We have listed some of the highlights of the journey in this booklet for you.

Let’s deliver aid in 2020!

The Wings For Aid team
Now that the specially designed R&D Aircraft has been presented at the beneficiary concert, we focus on the development of the cargo bays. With assistance of the Royal Netherlands Air Force dropping experts, we discuss the next generation of the cargo delivery box. It has to withstand airspeeds of 90km/hr and land safely on the calculated delivery point.

In parallel to the product development, it is time to spread the word internationally. We join Action on Disaster Relief 2019 in Costa Rica, where we discuss and finetune the service proposition with key stakeholders in the humanitarian supply chain. Panel discussions teach us that there is still a lot of waste, since there is not always enough information to program logistics. Can modern technology give more voice to local communities? From a UK expert, we learn about water purification filters.

Alexis, Lead Engineer, is on the box and crumple zone 24/7 while also liaising all parties involved in the technology development. Various configurations of the crumple zone are designed and tested at our manufacturing partner Smurfit Kappa. Equally important: volunteers are asked to assemble the designs. Because in the end, everything needs to be put together seamlessly in the field.

With the continued assistance of the Royal Netherlands Army and Air Force, we perform various road tests with prototypes of the cargo bays.

At the same time we continue our journey to Nairobi, where we discuss opportunities with Astral Aviation, the Red Cross organisations and logistics officers of the the World Food Program.

One of the destinations of the aircraft is Ypenburg, the second home of VanBerlo and our R&D home base. CTO Eric van Dorst and his team present the progress to members of parliament Bosman and Van Haga. Gerco Goote (Finance) and Wings For Aid board members Jan-Hendrik Schretlen and Gert van Dijk are present as well.

With director Frank Roderkerk of Rhenus Air & Ocean, we sign a formal cooperation agreement. Company cultures of both Rhenus and Wings For Aid dictate that the work has already started before. Our R&D aircraft (tailsign I-D224) is transported where it is needed continuously.
We cherish the productive relation with USAID representatives. Come what may, their actions have a very significant and positive impact on humanitarian action. We meet in Brussels, where Lev Turner has also invited her ECHO colleagues. There we are: an action-based transatlantic discussion on the use of innovative technology. Various scenarios for action are discussed. Let’s move this forward together!

What was an idea not too long ago, is now rapidly turned into a real remotely piloted aircraft. We sign a cooperation contract with Pipistrel. Timelines are short and action is required. Project leaders Peter Stegovec and Alexis jump on it and set the course for the teams. Their target: an 8-box aircraft in Q1 2020. According to standards and remotely piloted, of course.

At WRG, humanitarian supplies specialists, our Operations Lead Eelko Brouwer discusses various ‘kits’ to fit the Wings For Aid boxes. With smart selections and even smarter packing, we get to great kits indeed: Shelter, Food, Water, Medicine, Communication, Hygiene, Kitchen and Sanitation. All sets fit the designed 40x40x60cm box, including the crumple zone when needed.

WOW! Our box wins the first Sustainability Award from The International Air Cargo Association. After a delegate vote at the member conference in Budapest, we are awarded for our commitment to bio-based materials and social inclusion. What an honour to feel our ‘reaching people anywhere’ slogan resonate in the industry. The $15,000 will be invested in further development.

While the tests in July were still strictly internal, we invite our most important stakeholders for a demonstration session in November. Co-hosted by the the Dutch Helicopter Command, we fly three runs with six boxes. We also take the opportunity to re-validate our loading and communication procedures. And we pack eggs in the last two boxes. They land from 100m, perfectly intact.

Rhenus Logistics puts up a booth at the Amsterdam Drone Week and poses the question: “Are cargo drones a game changer for the industry?” With the Wings For Aid aircraft and box right in front, this leads to lively dialogues.

Barry represents the Platform for Unmanned Cargo Aircraft at the EASA conference. The topic is hot: end of June 2020, the first EASA regulations on remotely piloted aircraft will come into play. We are ready for it!
Let’s deliver aid in 2020!