

Incubator transport  
**High-tech transport  
for the very youngest  
of patients**

Report  
**Fish – heart – Rega**

A look back  
**A flight into the unknown**



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### High-tech transport for the very youngest of patients

Every year, Rega uses special infant incubators to transport a large number of babies by air, both in Switzerland and abroad. These new arrivals present a major challenge for the whole crew.

## 9 Operation partner

If an emergency occurs on board a SWISS aircraft, Rega is on hand to provide help and advice. This is a partnership that is proving its worth.

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From time to time, a situation arises where the crew of "Rega 3" is forced to interrupt the home matches of Breitenrain Football Club – for instance, when the fire service sends out a rescue specialist to deal with an emergency.

## 12 Report

### Fish – heart – Rega

It was meant to be a nice, peaceful fishing holiday, but, after landing an impressive catch, Peter Aebi suffers a heart attack. The patient is flown to Switzerland on a scheduled flight under the excellent care of the Rega crew.

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As a vital link between the emergency flight physician and the pilot, a paramedic requires a considerable range of skills. Marco Lei talks about his extremely varied job.

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When it is mobilised for deployment in Japan during the Fukushima disaster, the jet crew has little idea of what lies ahead. Possible radioactivity makes it particularly important to proceed with caution.

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**The service number for patrons**

How to contact Rega: see page 32

### Cover picture:

Transport to Switzerland in an incubator:  
Canadian paramedics and the Rega crew bring baby  
Gabriel on board the ambulance jet.



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# Dear patrons

*“To me, Rega is like my toothbrush.” When I first read this statement in an e-mail, I was rather taken aback – surely you can’t compare Rega with a toothbrush! Nevertheless, I continued reading: “Rega simply leaves me with a good feeling, again and again. Just like my toothbrush”.*

*Rega will celebrate its 60th anniversary in 2012. Switzerland would be hard to imagine now without its rescue helicopters and ambulance jets. And it is you, our valued patrons, who deserve the greatest thanks for this. Back in the 1960s, when money was tight on all fronts and the air rescue service was on the brink of collapse, our only option was to appeal to the public for help. The idea was that patrons would keep Rega airborne. In the first year, we issued a few thousand patronage cards, today there are 2.3 million.*

*Do you think that being a Rega patron is now something of a must? If so, this is your chance to help us: why not give Rega a new patron as a birthday present? It would be a welcome gift, if not for yourself, then certainly for others. And, if the worst were to happen, Rega waives the costs of a rescue operation for its patrons if they have no insurance cover. So, as you can see, there are good reasons to give Rega a new patron. The St. Bernard on the cover, which would love to fly, will show you how you can do this.*

*Being a Rega patron: as natural as using a toothbrush. It simply makes you feel good.*

*60 years. Thanks to you.*

*Yours sincerely*

*Ernst Kohler  
 CEO / Chairman of the Management Board*



Baby emergency: the neonatal team from the University Hospital (CHUV) in Lausanne takes charge of a young patient who has just arrived by ambulance jet.

Incubator transport – cooperation between paediatric specialists and Rega crew

## High-tech transport for the very youngest of patients

When Rega is called upon to transport premature babies and sick infants, time is often of the essence. The new arrivals are flown both within Switzerland and abroad in special incubators designed for transporting babies under controlled conditions.



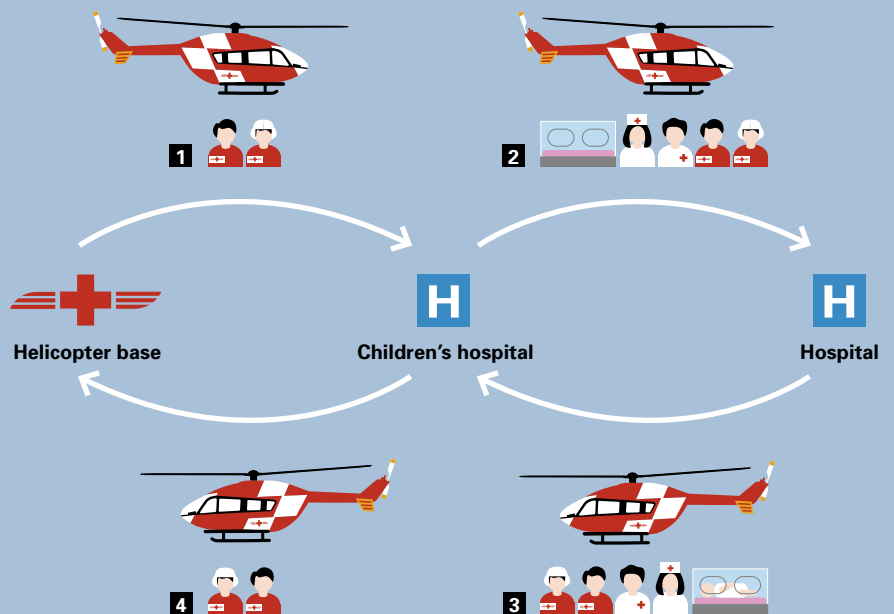
Aline is just seven days old. She has a heart defect and needs to be urgently transferred from Aarau Cantonal Hospital to the Children's Hospital in Zurich, where specialists are set to perform the heart surgery this newborn baby needs. The alarm call is received by the Rega Operations Centre. Operations involving transporting babies in incubators are usually complex and fraught, not just for the child's parents, but for the crew as well. On this occasion, it is the crew from the Dübendorf helicopter base that is called out. For this kind of transfer flights, the helicopter first has to be relieved of any superfluous weight. The stretcher and any unnecessary medical equipment are removed within minutes, with both the pilot and paramedic lending a hand.

### An intensive care unit on a miniature scale

The Rega emergency flight physician stays on the ground during these missions. When transporting newborn and premature babies in an incubator, the Rega crew comprises just the pilot and a paramedic. With this team on board, the helicopter takes off in the direction of the central hospital, where the baby is to be relocated. At the hospital, the reduced Rega crew picks up the responsible paediatrician and a nurse from the neonatal intensive care unit – as well as the transport incubator itself. This apparatus maintains the right ambient temperature, offers protection against noise and guarantees safe support – thus providing the optimum environment for the small patients. It also includes breathing apparatus, various monitoring devices, syringe pumps, and containers of oxygen and

### Incubator transport operation

- 1 Reduced Rega crew: pilot and paramedic fly from the helicopter base to the children's hospital.
- 2 Neonatal team: the transport incubator is installed in the helicopter at the children's hospital. The paediatrician and the nurse board the helicopter, which then flies to the departure hospital.
- 3 Baby transport: the premature baby is flown to the children's hospital in the incubator.
- 4 Return flight: the Rega crew returns to the helicopter base.



St. Boniface Hospital in Winnipeg: neonatal nurses from Canada and Switzerland gently attend to baby Gabriel.



compressed air – a lot of high-tech equipment for such a tiny creature. Around 250 newborn babies are flown by Rega helicopter in this kind of mini intensive care unit each year. Last year, ten operations also took place involving incubator transport by ambulance jet to Switzerland from abroad.

### Paediatric specialists at work

It is the beginning of August. The Rega medical coordinator at the headquarters in Zurich-Kloten is in telephone contact with a neonatologist from St. Boniface Hospital in Winnipeg, Canada. A six week old baby needs to be flown to Switzerland by ambulance jet as quickly and carefully as possible. Once all the important medical information about the infant has been obtained, the medical coordinator contacts the in-house paediatrician or an appropriate specialist from the Children's Hospital in Zurich. Together they discuss the situation at hand and the medical problems involved – nothing must be left to chance when it comes to preparing for the imminent incubator transport operation. Gabriel was born just under three months premature and is suffering from respiratory distress syndrome, which means he has to rely on artificial respiration.

The indication is clear, and the jet team can be assembled. The medical team usually consists



A journey of hope: Aline is flown from Aarau Cantonal Hospital to the Children's Hospital in Zurich.

of a neonatologist or paediatric intensive care specialist from the relevant Swiss central hospital and a Rega flight nurse. Often, however, Rega's paediatric specialist, André Keisker, takes on the responsibilities of the paediatric intensive care specialist. Using the so-called "baby ambulance", the nurse from the Children's Hospital, together with the transport incubator, is driven straight to the aircraft hangar at the Rega Centre. Here the incubator, weighing approximately 100 kilograms, is expertly installed by the jet pilots.

If a neonatal team from Western Switzerland is called out, it is based either at the University

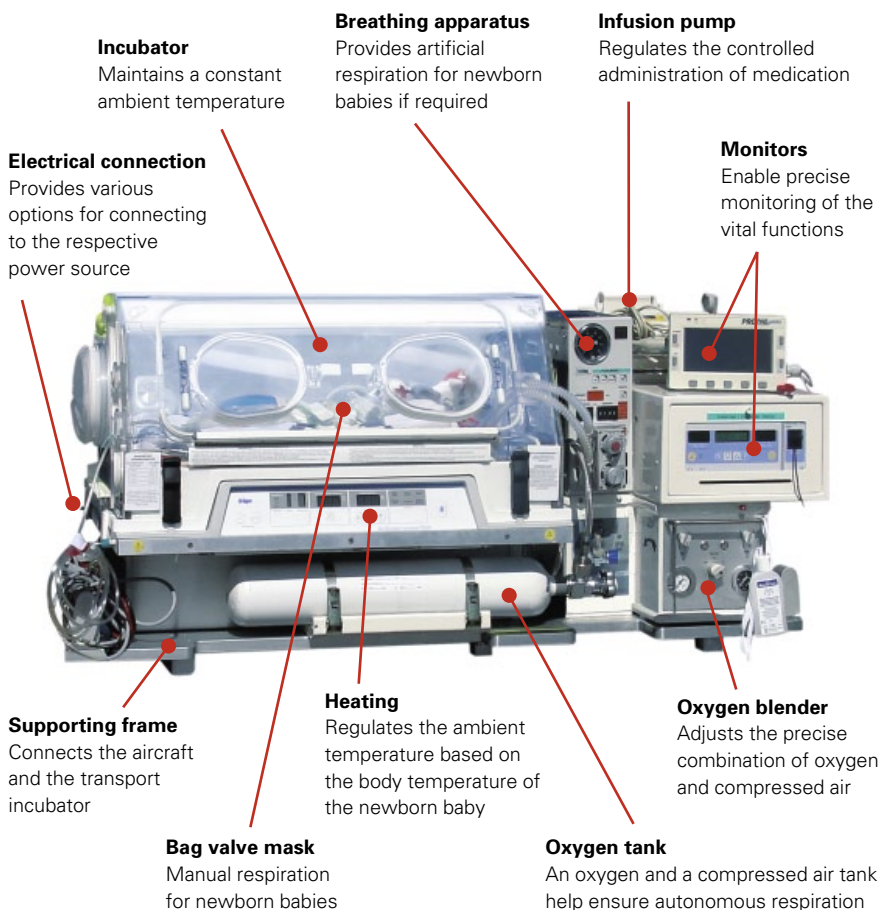
Hospital of the Canton of Vaud (CHUV) in Lausanne or the University Hospital of Geneva (HUG). In these cases, the specialists – along with their own incubator – are picked up in Geneva or from the military airfield in Payerne. Rega works in close cooperation with these two hospitals and their neonatal intensive care units.

### Winnipeg and Aarau – two babies in the air

Once all issues have been clarified and preparations made, the ambulance jet takes off for Canada with the paediatrician and the Rega flight nurse, as well as the nurse from the Children's Hospital in Zurich, on board. However, the medical team still has some further precautionary arrangements to make en route. A breathing aid is set up for the premature baby, and all the necessary medication has to be prepared. Unlike in a hospital, the medical team in the ambulance jet does not have a virtually unlimited pool of resources to fall back on in an emergency, so thinking ahead and being prepared are essential with operations of this kind.

A change of scene: the rescue helicopter from the Dübendorf helicopter base with the team from the Zurich Children's Hospital on board has arrived at Aarau Cantonal Hospital, where little Aline and her mother are waiting for help to arrive soon from the skies. Now everything has to proceed quickly. Premature babies are very vulnerable to external influences, so body temperature and the ambient temperature play a decisive role. The large body surface area of a premature baby in relation to its low body weight means that the child's body temperature is at risk of cooling very rapidly. This is prevented by maintaining the temperature in the transport incubator at between 37 and 38 degrees Celsius. When premature and newborn babies are born, they are still in the process of developing and growing. Many of their body functions therefore require artificial support or even have to be taken over completely by artificial means. The various types of respiratory assistance used are a good example of this.

## Functions of the transport incubator







A particularly tricky issue regarding the transport of premature babies – some of whom are born up to 15 weeks before they are due – is the vulnerability of the brain, which is still developing and therefore extremely susceptible to even the slightest changes in acceleration. Such changes are virtually impossible to avoid during long ambulance trips, which is one of the reasons why the Rega rescue helicopters are often called upon to perform incubator transport operations. By using the smoothest possible means of transport, the risk of the infant suffering a cerebral haemorrhage is significantly reduced.

### A journey of hope

At Aarau Cantonal Hospital, everything is ready for transferring little Aline. The baby has been thoroughly examined beforehand and the first therapeutic steps have already been taken. For instance, intravenous access has been set up and a breathing aid installed. The infant can now be moved, with the greatest of care, into the helicopter incubator. This is often a crucial moment, as it is the point at which it becomes clear whether the child's condition really is stable enough for transport. Aline's condition remains unchanged, so her flight can go ahead. She is monitored constantly by the neonatal team from the Children's Hospital throughout the flight. If an unexpected incident were to occur during this time, no major medical interventions would be possible. In such a case, the pilot would have to initiate an unscheduled landing straight away. Fortunately, however, Aline's condition is stable.

Just a week after her birth, the little girl has to make her very first journey without her mother – a journey of hope for all those concerned. The limited space in the rescue helicopter prevents Aline's mother from accompanying them. However, mothers who have very recently given birth have the option of being transferred to the relevant central clinic by ambulance, so that the family can soon be reunited. Ambulance jets, on the other hand, are rather more spacious. It is therefore normally possible for ambulance

jets to fly the child's parents back to Switzerland too, and Rega expressly advocates parents accompanying their child in this way. It is important not to disrupt the parent-child relationship wherever possible.

Shortly before noon on this balmy October day, the Rega helicopter gently touches down on the roof of the Children's Hospital in Zurich. Aline is doing well under the circumstances. The neonatal team and the Rega paramedic hand over the little girl to their colleagues from the paediatric intensive care unit, where she will undergo further specialist treatment.

### Oxygen and clamping sets

Meanwhile, in Canada, the situation calls for some improvisation. As is so often the case, it is proving difficult to load the transport incubator into the foreign ambulance. With the help of clamping sets and a transport trolley specially designed by Rega, the team succeeds in installing the incubator. After a half-hour trip, the Swiss medical team arrives at the departure hospital, where the tiny patient is collected. Since Gabriel has to be respirated with a mixture of oxygen and compressed air, the ambulance needs to carry enough spare gas cylinders for the journey. Care also has to be taken on the trip to the airport to minimise the virtually unavoidable jolts and vibrations as much as possible. Having arrived at the airport safe and sound, and still in a stable medical condition, the baby in the transport incubator is finally pushed carefully up the ramp into the Rega jet. The respiratory gas and power supplies are connected to the incubator and the journey gets under way – back to Switzerland!

### Twins: a special case

Rega is also equipped to deal with special cases, such as transporting twins in an incubator. If the medical condition of the two newborn babies so allows, they can be flown side by side in a single incubator. However, separate incubators are required if the twins need artificial respiration.

*Christian Trottmann*

You will be able to find out more about Aline's touching story in a new Rega film due out in 2012.

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Good cooperation between the airport, Rega and SWISS:

a Rega helicopter lands right next to a SWISS jet in response to a serious problem with one of the passengers on board.

## A mid-air emergency

Flight LX16. The SWISS Airbus A330 has just flown over Ireland. The passenger cabin briefly becomes a scene of great agitation, as one of the passengers is complaining of a shortness of breath. The trained flight attendants respond immediately and make use of the so-called “cockpit consultation” system. Using a satellite phone, one of the pilots makes direct contact with Rega’s Operations Centre for operations abroad. The medical coordinator in Zurich-Kloten knows what to do in this situation. Although all SWISS flight attendants are trained to deal with medical emergencies in flight, when it comes to these kinds of incidents they ask Rega for expert assistance. Depending on the severity of the situation, the pilots have to decide whether to continue flying, return to the departure airport or, if need be, make an intermediate landing. The last scenario, however, only occurs extremely rarely. Roughly once a week, Rega gives advice on medical issues of varying complexity to flight staff from SWISS or other airlines, usually on long-haul flights.

### Patients and passengers

Another important aspect of the successful and long-established partnership between Rega and SWISS is the repatriation of patients on scheduled flights. Rega always endeavours to find the best and most reasonable solution for seriously ill or injured patients, but this does not necessarily mean deploying its own ambulance jets; scheduled aircraft are often used instead. While more than 700 repatriation missions have been carried out by ambulance jet, some 300 repatriations have involved scheduled flights operated by

various airlines. Based on medical and operational criteria, Rega, as well as the airline itself, decides whether a patient can be transported by scheduled aircraft or whether its own ambulance jet should be used. As a rule, the relevant medical service or a medical consultant from the airline must agree to the use of a scheduled aircraft as the chosen means of transport. In the case of SWISS, this process is facilitated by the fact the Rega’s Medical Director has medical consultant status. This is one of the reasons why SWISS is Rega’s preferred partner.

In straightforward cases, Rega organises the return flight for a patient who is able to be transported in a sitting position, often in business class. A patient with more complicated injury patterns is accompanied by Rega medical staff and extra oxygen may be administered as required. A special stretcher – a kind of mobile hospital bed with a stabilising vacuum mattress – is used for patients who are transported lying down. This usually requires the removal of nine passenger seats, which can be done by an engineer in all SWISS aircraft apart from the Jumbolino. People being flown home on a stretcher are always attended by at least one uniformed nurse and/or a Rega flight physician and must be in a stable medical condition. If patients require artificial respiration, for example, they have to be transported by ambulance jet.

Occasionally a situation arises in which ordinary passengers, rather than the actual patients, require attention from the Rega medical team on board a scheduled flight due to some kind of medical problem.

Rega is very grateful to SWISS for its long-standing and rewarding cooperation.

*Christian Trottmann*





A good team: the crew from the Berne base.



Stunning backdrop: a bird's-eye view of the Federal Palace.

EBBE: the Rega base in Berne, which uses the radio paging code "Rega 3", runs its operations from "Mösli" airport

## Rega helicopter interrupts a football match

**It is not just Federal Councillors who fly out of Berne-Belp Airport in the Swiss capital; Rega's Berne operations base is located there too. The Rega rescue crew provides medical support by air, often in response to road accidents and during the night. And when the helicopter has to pick up a specialist from the City of Berne's fire service, a football match may well have to be suspended.**



Play suspended: a rescue specialist hurries to the helicopter – the football match will have to wait.

Rega started flying helicopter operations from "Mösli", the airport in Belpmoos, in 1976. Part of the former airport building was used as barracks for the rescue team. There was no room inside the building for the helicopter, a Bell 206 Jet Ranger, so it had to stay outside, exposed to the elements. It was soon replaced by a twin-engine Bölkow BO 105 CBS, with the new helicopter offering improved safety thanks to its extra engine, as well as a more spacious interior. From 1983, a reserve helicopter – an Alouette III

– was also stationed at the Berne base. This aircraft had a rescue winch and was therefore used to perform hoisting operations.

### **New operations base, new rescue helicopter**

In 1991, the Berne team moved its base to a new building in the south-eastern corner of the airport site. The hangar, offices, recreational area and rest room facilities were now under one roof. A heat pump was installed and the



building covered with a living roof, earning it an environmental award from the Belp airport authorities. In 1995, the existing helicopters were replaced by an Agusta A 109 K2 model, followed by a Eurocopter EC 145 in the summer of 2003. After 20 years of use, the building started to show signs of wear, so the base was renovated over a four-month period at the beginning of this year. These few months proved challenging, as the 24-hour stand-by service had to remain fully operational while the renovation work was carried out. Since April, however, the team has been able to enjoy the renewed lease of life given to “its” revamped base. It also benefits from the advantages of the base’s location, which allows the crew to work at night even when the airport itself is closed and to switch on the landing lights if required. The Rega base forms part of Berne-Belp Airport and the base manager, Bruno Wiederkehr, appreciates the friendly feel of the place and the mix of different companies based at “Mösli”.

### The rescue crew and rescue operations

The three-strong team is on permanent stand-by, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, to provide assistance to people who are ill or injured. The paramedic, pilot and emergency flight physician share living quarters at the base while they are on call. The emergency flight physicians are seconded from the Inselspital, Berne’s university hospital, and usually work for the air rescue service for six months. Aside from the helicopter hangar, the medical and technical facilities and the offices, the base includes sleeping quarters, a kitchen and a recreation room. In approximately two thirds of all cases, “Rega 3” flies directly to the scene of the incident (primary rescue missions), around half of which involve road accidents. A Rega crew carried out the first “road rescues” in the canton of Berne in 1980, which was something of a novelty at the time. The Berne team performs almost one in three of its operations at night – a demanding task.

### Rega interrupts a football match

The headquarters of the City of Berne’s fire service is located right next to the Spitalacker football ground in the city’s Breitenrain district. This fire service employs helicopter rescue specialists (RSH), who are picked up by the Rega helicopter when, in addition to medical treatment, an operation requires extra support for the patient at the scene of the incident. The specialists are collected from the football ground due to its close proximity to the fire service base. As a result, the Rega rescue helicopter may well have to land on the pitch during one of FC Breitenrain’s home matches – an interruption of an unusual kind for players and spectators alike.

*Ariane Güngerich*



A tip for a trip: take the Gurtenbahn funicular railway to a world of pleasure.

## A leisure park and a hikers’ paradise

By Swiss standards, the Gurten, Berne’s very own mountain – which rises to just 858 metres – would be classed as little more than a hill. And yet it feels like a proper mountain, with a funicular railway transporting visitors up to the wide, traffic-free plateau on the summit. At the top there is an elegant mountain restaurant, offering excellent facilities for seminars and fantastic views of the city and the mountains – and there is a wide variety of leisure activities on offer for visitors.

### A great bike trail and fantastic hiking paths

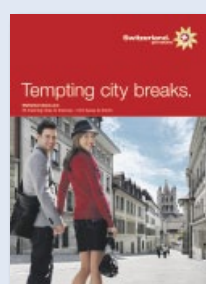
For children, there is a large free playground, featuring climbing walls, a circus caravan and a leisure pool with a raft, waterfall and slide. Another popular attraction is the gigantic rolling ball sculpture created by the artist, Stefan Grünenfelder. There is also a miniature railway offering visitors both young and old a train ride round the park.

Those who are looking for speed and adventure will not be disappointed with what they find on the Gurten either. The Gurten trail is sure to have downhill mountain bikers’ pulses racing. The two kilometre course was designed to allow bikers to experience the thrill of turns and jumps of up to ten metres, without endangering other visitors.

However, the Gurten also offers extensive areas for those looking for peace and quiet. A surprisingly varied network of paths attracts walkers and hikers. On the way to Kehrsatz through the idyllic Köniz valley, for example, you can marvel at the breathtaking views of the Bernese Alps – and forget all about the hustle and bustle of the nearby city.

### Practical tips and further information can be found at:

- [www.gurtenpark.ch](http://www.gurtenpark.ch) and [www.gurtenbahn.ch](http://www.gurtenbahn.ch): hiking and biking activities, leisure park, restaurant, railway
- [www.berninfo.com](http://www.berninfo.com): sights and events in Berne and the surrounding area



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A scheduled flight from Trondheim to Zurich via Amsterdam – but with a patient on board

# Fish – heart – Rega

**Peter Aebi has been taking annual fishing holidays for almost 40 years, and this year is no exception. He and his angling companion are set for a long four-week break, and they have already caught some real beauties. But then his heart, of all things, throws his plans into disarray.**



Well looked after: intensive care nurse Pia Hunkeler helps her patient board the plane.

More than 20 years ago, Peter Aebi had a serious accident at work. Rega flew him to hospital, where he lay in a coma for eight days. Yet his sense of humour has never failed him, and now, as a pensioner, he is full of energy and drive. The 76 year old has been going on fishing holidays for years, and this summer he decided to take a four-week break in Sunndalsøra, a little Norwegian town with a population of 15,000. The fishing conditions promise a plentiful catch. Right at the start of his holiday, Peter and his friend land a magnificent 12 kilogram salmon. This is soon followed by another splendid catch – only half the weight of the first one, but just as impressive. On 5 July, Peter feels a slight pressure in the region of his heart, but takes no notice; he is far more interested in enjoying his fishing success.

The next day, Peter wakes up at five o'clock in the morning with severe chest pains. Realising that this is serious, he and his friend rush to the health centre in Sunndalsøra, where a heart attack is diagnosed. Peter is immediately taken

by ambulance to the regional hospital in Molde. Later the same day, he is flown to St. Olav's Hospital in Trondheim. Peter then undergoes surgery on 7 July to insert a stent, a fine mesh tube designed to stabilise the blood vessels in the heart, thus facilitating blood flow. Heart attacks are caused by an insufficient supply of blood to the cardiac muscle, and Peter Aebi had already suffered one heart attack back in 2004.

### Clarification:

#### Rega – insurance – hospital

One day after his operation, Peter's insurance company contacts Rega's Operations Centre by phone to discuss the best course of action for the patient. When would he be well enough to fly? Would a Rega ambulance jet be required, or could he be flown to Switzerland on a scheduled aircraft, accompanied by medical staff? Wherever possible, patients are repatriated on scheduled flights. The airline SWISS, which works closely with Rega, is often considered for these operations.

In Norway, Peter Aebi is in good hands – the Rega medical coordinators stay in constant contact with the staff at St. Olav's Hospital in Trondheim. It soon becomes apparent that the patient would be able to leave the hospital four days after his operation, and he would also be fit to fly. The decision is made: Peter can be flown back to Switzerland on a scheduled aircraft – thanks to competent medical care.

### Preparation:

#### KLM flights – Rega team – medical equipment

On this occasion, the airline KLM takes on the task. The Rega flight coordinator organises the plane tickets, ambulance transport and wheelchair, as well as arranging for flight physician Sylvia Marek and intensive care nurse Pia Hunkeler to be deployed on the eve of the flight. Their work begins early on the following day, Monday 11 July, before five o'clock. Aside from the basic medical equipment, the team also carries heart medication, blood laboratory equipment and a machine known as a Propaq MD – a large heart monitoring device with an integrated defibrillator. The preparations also



Satisfied: Peter Aebi has taken his seat in the plane and is being constantly monitored by the Rega crew.

involve thinking about where in the aircraft resuscitation could be carried out if required. Although a patient has to be in a stable medical condition to be transported in this way, one of the tasks of the Rega team is to plan for this kind of potential scenarios. Unlike working in a Rega ambulance jet, on scheduled flights the medical team's activities are exposed. It has to perform its work in full view of the other passengers and the options for medical intervention are limited.

#### **A long-winded journey home: four planes – two taxis – one ambulance**

Monday morning, Zurich Airport: the members of the Rega team check in just like any other passengers. The KLM plane takes off from Zurich-Kloten at 06.55 local time. After transferring flights in Amsterdam, the medical team continues on to Trondheim and eventually arrives at St. Olav's Hospital by taxi. As Sylvia Marek and Pia Hunkeler reach the hospital in the early afternoon, Peter Aebi is strolling down the corridor to meet them. He has been expecting them and is suitably delighted. The time has now come for the lengthy handover process: doctors' and surgical reports and examination results have to be discussed and confirmation obtained from the doctor treating Peter that the patient is well enough to be transported. Everything is in order and, after almost three hours, Peter and the Rega team are driven to the airport. Peter is pushed through the airport in a wheelchair, hooked up to the monitor which allows regular readings to be taken to keep everything under control.

Intensive care nurse Pia Hunkeler is also responsible for organisational matters – time, gate number and departure. The medical team and patient board the plane before the other passengers and Hunkeler informs the flight crew. On arrival in Amsterdam, the team disembarks last and before long is boarding the next flight ahead of everybody else again. Everything goes smoothly during both flights, the patient feels well and the monitor readings are fine. At around 10.30pm, the KLM plane lands in Zurich. The ambulance is standing by, waiting to take Peter Aebi, accompanied by Dr Marek, to the Beau-Site Clinic in Berne. He is thankful to be well and in good hands. Yet he is sorry to have missed the drive back home via Oslo, the ferry crossing to Kiel and the journey by motorail train from Hamburg to Basel – an adventure he would have relished.

*Ariane Güngerich*

You can read more about repatriation on scheduled flights in the "Operation partner" section on page 9.







× Blue Kazoo W II von The North Face

**HOCH FLIEGEN – TIEF SCHLAFEN. MIT PRODUKTEN VON BÄCHLI BERGSPORT. BEI UNS FINDEN SIE, WAS SIE FÜR EIN PURES BERGVERGNÜGEN BRAUCHEN. WIR FÜHREN DIE AKTUELLSTEN UND LEISTUNGSFÄHIGSTEN PRODUKTE DER TOP-MARKEN. DAMIT IHNEN IHR BERGERLEBNIS IN BESTER ERINNERUNG BLEIBT.**

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[www.baechli-bergsport.ch](http://www.baechli-bergsport.ch)



**BÄCHLI**  
BERGSPORT



**Geld macht glücklich (Nr. 15).** Geld macht glücklich, wenn man für jemanden da sein kann. Deshalb hat Swisscanto zusammen mit dem Schweizerischen Roten Kreuz (SRK) den Swisscanto Swiss Red Cross Charity Fund lanciert. Dabei spenden Sie die Hälfte Ihrer Erträge für mehr Menschlichkeit. Und profitieren gleich noch von einer sicherheitsorientierten Anlage in Obligationen. Detaillierte Informationen erhalten Sie bei Ihrem Kundenberater der Kantonalbank sowie unter [www.redcross.ch](http://www.redcross.ch) oder [www.swisscanto.ch/15](http://www.swisscanto.ch/15).

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In Zusammenarbeit mit

Croix-Rouge suisse  
Schweizerisches Rotes Kreuz  
Croce Rossa Svizzera



Anlage und Vorsorge.



**Swisscanto**



The paramedic – a vital link between the flight physician and the pilot

# A roundabout way to a dream job

**Forty Rega paramedics, four of whom are women, help the emergency flight physicians to ensure that patients receive primary medical care. In addition to their emergency medical training, these qualified paramedics are also well-versed in various procedures for flight operations.**

Marco Lei has been working as a paramedic at the Rega base in Wilderswil since 2009. No two days are the same; each operation is different. There is an element of uncertainty in every flight to the scene of an incident. Sometimes the crew arrives to find that the situation is more dramatic than had been indicated. Occasionally, the helicopter is unable to land at the scene because the terrain is too steep or debris at the site presents a danger. During the flight to their mission destination, the pilot and paramedic use various systems to ascertain what kind of terrain or what possible hazards they can expect. Together they determine the best approach route.

## Safety first

The respective responsibilities of the three-strong operation crew are coordinated and interlink with each other seamlessly. The pilot manages the flight operation, the emergency flight physician is responsible for medical matters, and the paramedic takes on a dual role: during the flight he acts as navigator and assists the pilot, while at the scene of the incident he focuses on taking care of the patient. The day-to-day activities of a paramedic require an exciting mix of technical, medical and social skills. After landing, the paramedic and emergency flight physician go straight to the patient if possible. While the emergency flight physician examines the patient, the paramedic sets up an intravenous drip (infusion), for example, prepares medication or tends to a wound. Sometimes, however, the paramedic stays with the helicopter until it is secure and no longer presents a potential danger to anyone. In that case, he makes his way to the actual scene of the incident later on.

## Homesick for the Bernese Oberland

“Even as a teenager, I was fascinated by the idea of a career as a paramedic”, says 38 year old Marco Lei. In 1994, he completed his apprenticeship as a construction plumber in Interlaken. Shortly afterwards, he started training as a fireman in Basel, a career he pursued until 2004.

At the age of 31, Marco decided to make a fresh start. He wanted to go back to the Bernese Oberland, so he moved from Basel to Interlaken with his wife and two children – the two boys are now 10 and 12 years old – and trained for three years in Thun to qualify as a paramedic.

“I like having a variety of tasks to do. On the one hand, I assist the pilot and handle the navigation. During a hoist operation, there are additional technical aspects to consider. When I am helping the emergency flight physician to take care of a patient, my emergency medical knowledge comes into play. On the other hand, I also have to think about organisational issues. Avalanche operations, hoist rescues and search flights are particularly challenging, especially in bad weather or at night.”

## Ensuring quality and continuity

In between operations, Marco Lei maintains equipment, checks instruments, carries out repairs and orders materials. He is also responsible for the medical equipment and for training ski marshals, SAC (Swiss Alpine Club) rescuers and avalanche search dog handlers, all of whom are members of Rega’s partner organisations.

When Marco has some free time and the children are at school, he regularly goes jogging or explores the mountainous area around Interlaken on his bike or on foot. He often enjoys the great outdoors with his family too. He takes a great deal of pleasure in spending time with his wife and two boys. Sometimes the four of them go away together to a remote alp, situated 1,400 metres above sea level, where Marco’s parents-in-law keep cattle. “Life up here is very basic. There’s no electricity, no running water in the house – and lots to do”.

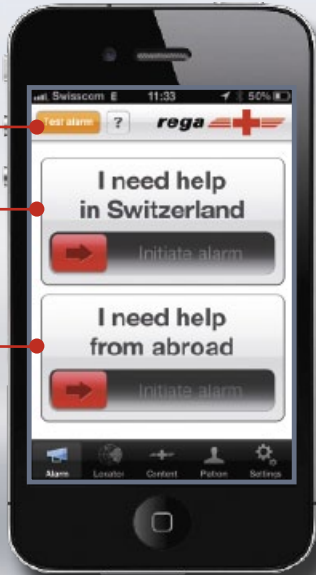
Marco Lei is focused on his work as a paramedic and assists patients in a professional manner, but he doesn’t take his work home with him. “My job has a lot to do with suffering. It’s not for everyone, but I can handle it.” Marco Lei just keeps going – with professional pride, experience and motivation.

*Maria Betschart*



**Marco Lei**  
Qualified paramedic

# iRega – the efficient way of raising the alarm with the iPhone



## Test alarm

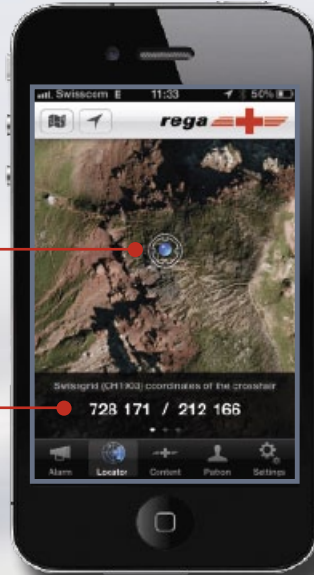
- Here you can test the system to see if it is functioning properly!
- No connection is established with the Operations Centre
  - One-way connection check
  - You receive a voice message
  - You receive confirmation by SMS that the system is working

## Alarm for help in Switzerland

- The system initiates an alarm call at the Rega Operations Centre
- Connection automatically established with the Rega Helicopter Operations Centre
- Voice connection established with the Rega Helicopter Operations Centre
- Data transmitted via mobile phone network to the Rega Helicopter Operations Centre
- Position displayed on map at the Rega Helicopter Operations Centre

## Alarm for help abroad

- The system initiates an alarm call at the Rega Operations Centre
- Connection automatically established with the Rega Jet Operations Centre
- Data transmitted via mobile phone network to the Rega Jet Operations Centre
- Position displayed on Google Maps at the Rega Jet Operations Centre



## Your current position is displayed on the map

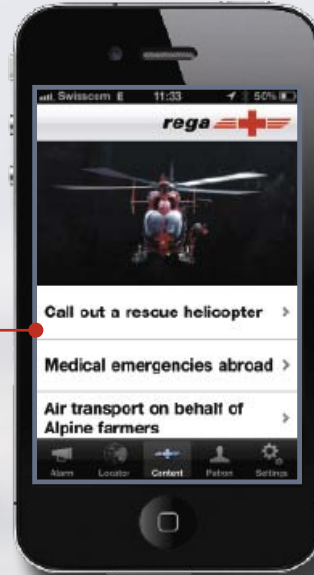
- Map image from Google Maps
- Satellite image from Google Maps

## Coordinates of your current position

If you initiate an alarm call, your coordinates are automatically transmitted to the Rega Operations Centre

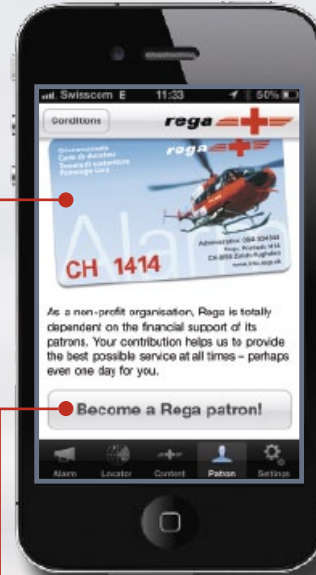
To display them on your phone, you can choose between

- Swiss Grid (Swiss coordinate system)
- WGS84 longitude/latitude, decimal degrees
- WGS84 longitude/latitude, degrees/min/sec



## Information about emergency assistance

- Here you can find useful tips on how to proceed in the event of an emergency in Switzerland or abroad



## Information about Rega patronage

- Here you can find out about patronage and its benefits
- Here you can register as a Rega patron online

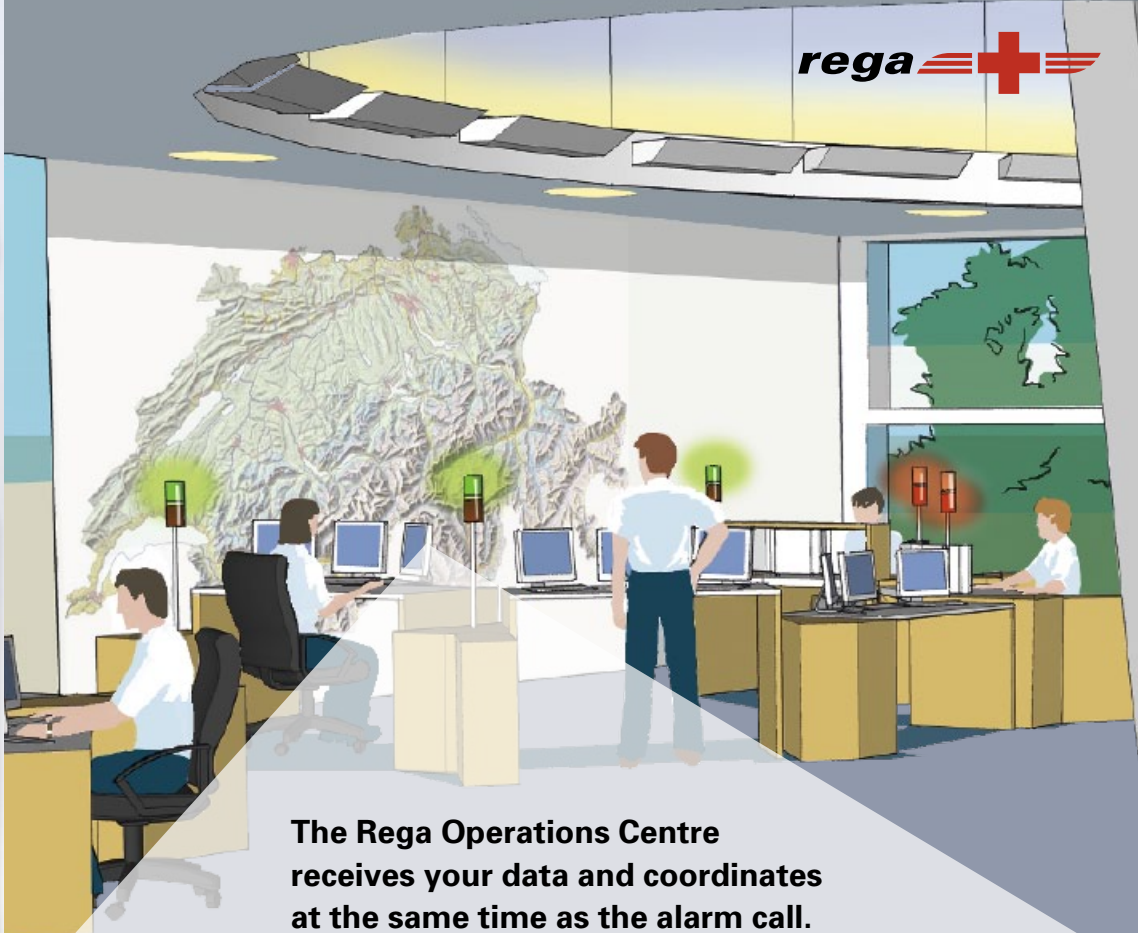
Modern telecommunications open up new ways of raising the alarm. At the touch of a button, your iPhone transmits vital data to the Rega Operations Centre. What in the past would have had to be painstakingly communicated over the telephone is now done automatically and in a matter of seconds.

The application required to do this is free of charge and can be downloaded from the Swiss App Store.

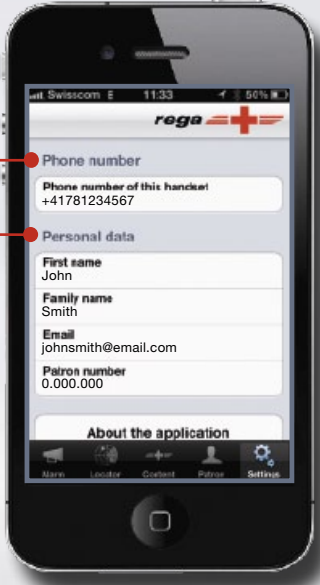




**Android version should be available from late 2011**



**The Rega Operations Centre receives your data and coordinates at the same time as the alarm call.**

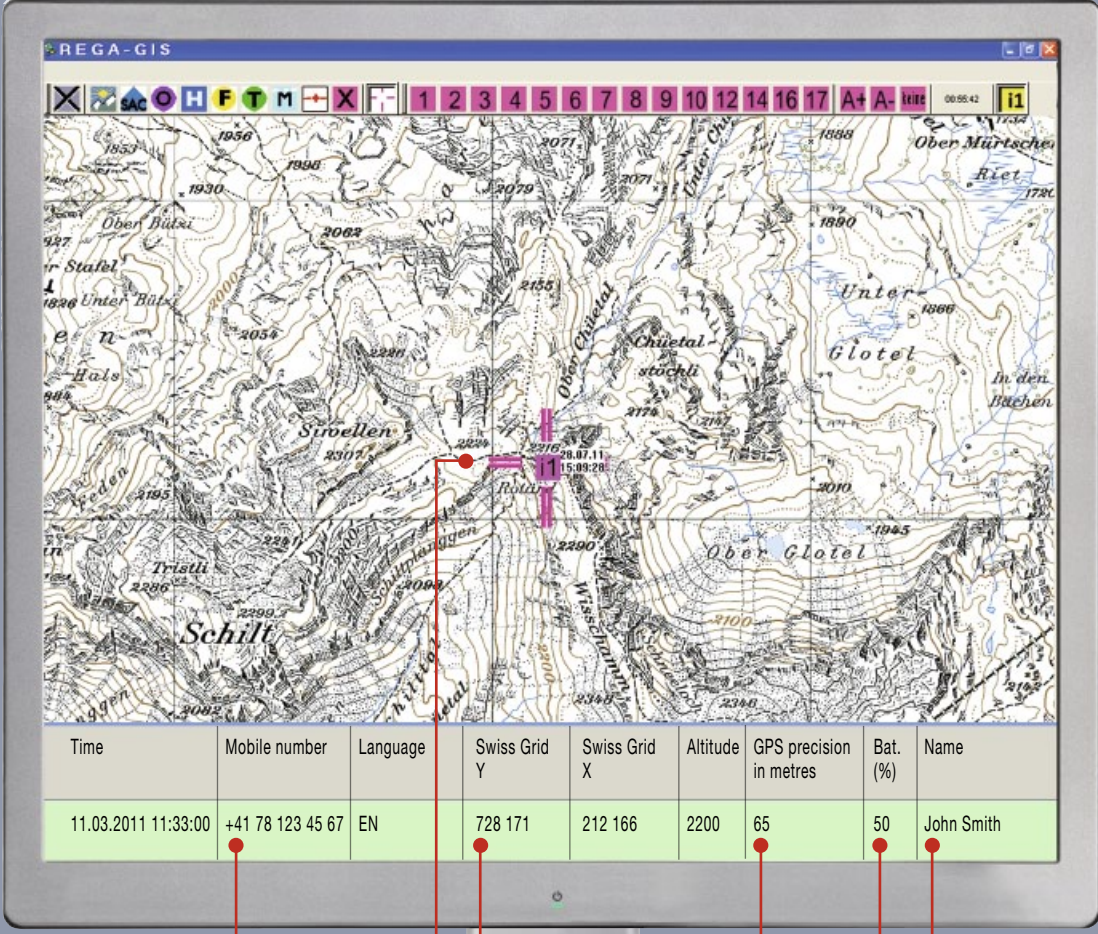


**Information about you**

- Your mobile number is required so Rega can call you back

**Your personal data**

- This is required for Rega to process your alarm call
- The patron number helps with organising the rescue operation. It is not, however, a condition for receiving assistance from Rega



Time	Mobile number	Language	Swiss Grid Y	Swiss Grid X	Altitude	GPS precision in metres	Bat. (%)	Name
11.03.2011 11:33:00	+41 78 123 45 67	EN	728 171	212 166	2200	65	50	John Smith

Caller's mobile phone number (for return call)

Location displayed on the map

Exact coordinates of the location in Switzerland or abroad

The accuracy of the GPS measurement is displayed (in metres)

Identity of the caller

Battery level on the caller's phone



## In brief

### Hendrik fliegt Hubschrauber

(Hendrik has a helicopter ride)

Hendrik is in a bad mood. His parents have dragged him off on a hike in the mountains of all places. After resting for a while on a rock, his father takes a tumble and is unable to continue. The rescue helicopter is immediately summoned and impresses Hendrik with its spectacular landing. A little adventure story with detailed graphics (age 4+). NordSüd Verlag, published in German. CHF 21.90 ISBN: 978-3-314-01773-5



### New base for Ticino

On 1 June 2011, the foundation stone was laid for the new Rega helicopter base in Ticino. The building on Locarno airfield, which has seen better days, is making way for a new building that will better meet today's needs and will be optimally protected against flooding thanks to the structural engineering measures put in place. The Ticino crew is set to move into its new "home" in autumn 2012. In the meantime, temporary facilities have been set up to provide air rescue operations in Italian-speaking Switzerland.



### Multimedial Rega

Rega's website is constantly being enhanced: in the new "Multimedia" section, you can now find not only photos and 360° views of our fleet, but also a comprehensive video gallery showing Rega in action. In addition, schoolchildren can find material for presentations on a wide variety of topics.



Take a look for yourself and discover the world of Rega online.

[www.multimedia.rega.ch](http://www.multimedia.rega.ch)



Rega has developed a device for identifying wire ropes

## Cable marker: recognising danger, banishing danger

**A simple metal sheet is designed to save lives. The cable marker developed by Rega identifies dangerous wire ropes in the dark and thus makes them easier to see. This new device is currently being trialled in the canton of Ticino.**

Cable cars are indispensable forms of transport, particularly in remote mountainous regions. However, their cables pose a serious danger to low-flying helicopters and their crews. Colliding with a cable can have fatal consequences. Switzerland is littered with cable cars used for transporting goods and material, many of which are not even shown on maps. During night operations, the ropes are often barely visible to the Rega helicopter pilots.

The safety of its crews and patients is of prime concern to Rega and it is keen to lessen this danger. As a result, ten years ago it set up the "Remove" project, which calls on owners to notify Rega of any cables and ropes that are no longer needed. These are then dismantled in collaboration with the Swiss army.

But what about all the cable cars that are in active use? Stefan von Boletzky, a pilot from the Ticino base, is responsible for developing the cable marker for Rega: 50cm in length, this stainless steel sheet with its two short side arms has a reflective film coating. The device is attached to each end of the cable at the top and bottom stations without affecting the operation of the cable car. If the Rega helicopter's searchlight catches the

marker in the dark, it reflects the light, thereby alerting the pilot to the danger.

In an initial trial, the cable marker is being used in the canton of Ticino. Over the last few years, the cantonal forestry office has put considerable time and effort into recording the locations of cable car systems, including small-sized ones. This paves the way for fitting these hazardous obstacles with the reflective metal sheets.

One thousand of these cable markers were produced for the pilot project. Consequently, up to 500 cable car systems can be fitted with them in the first stage. Rega is bearing the cost of this. The cable markers are fitted by the Ticino cantonal forestry office. There is no financial cost to the cable car operators. They just have to ensure that the reflectors are not obscured by trees or other obstacles that would render them ineffective. "By late 2012, we want all the cable markers that have been produced to be in operation, allowing us to make an initial assessment", says helicopter pilot von Boletzky. If the markers prove successful, Rega will examine the possibility of using them in other regions of Switzerland.

*Wanda Bühler*



# Ask Rega

“For many years, I have been supporting a number of well-known institutions in Switzerland with a financial contribution. Naturally Rega is one of these. As my favoured institutions write to me regarding renewal of my patronage at different times of the year, I often lose track. What actually is the situation with regard to the validity of my Rega patronage? When does this period expire and what do I have to do to make sure I don't miss anything?”

Esther Gallay, Gland



Dear Ms Gallay



*A Rega patronage contribution is a voluntary donation to our institution. This means that it does not have a due date for payment as is the case with, for example, insurance premiums.*

*As a result, collecting the Rega patronage contribution annually established itself as the norm a long time ago. Our patrons receive a reminder about the continuation of their patronage at the beginning of the year, in a similar way to membership of an organisation. For logistical reasons, we send the renewal letters once, staggered during January and February.*

*We show a certain degree of flexibility in that patronage remains valid until 15 May of the following year. Until that date you can take advantage of Rega's services in accordance with the conditions of patronage, and you still have plenty of time to renew your patronage.*

*Yours sincerely*

*René Fritschi  
Head of Patronage Centre*

We are keen  
to hear  
from you!

**What would you like to know about Rega?  
Send your questions to  
“Ask Rega” at the address  
below:**

Swiss Air-Rescue  
Communications  
“Ask Rega”  
Rega Centre  
PO Box 1414  
CH-8058 Zurich Airport

Contact form  
[www.info.rega.ch](http://www.info.rega.ch)

# REGA FOR KIDS

## Spot the ten differences

Rega's youngest patients are well protected and transported in the warmth of an incubator. The crew secures this in the rescue helicopter or ambulance jet. Can you find the ten mistakes our illustrator Joggi made when he copied the first picture?

**Solution from No. 76:**  
You can find the ten mistakes on our website at [www.1414.rega.ch](http://www.1414.rega.ch)



© Illustration: Joggi / Peter Jost

## Competition

Join the dots – and you will be able to answer the following question:

What is the Rega ambulance jet drawing in the sky and what does it mean?

Write the answer on a postcard and send it to

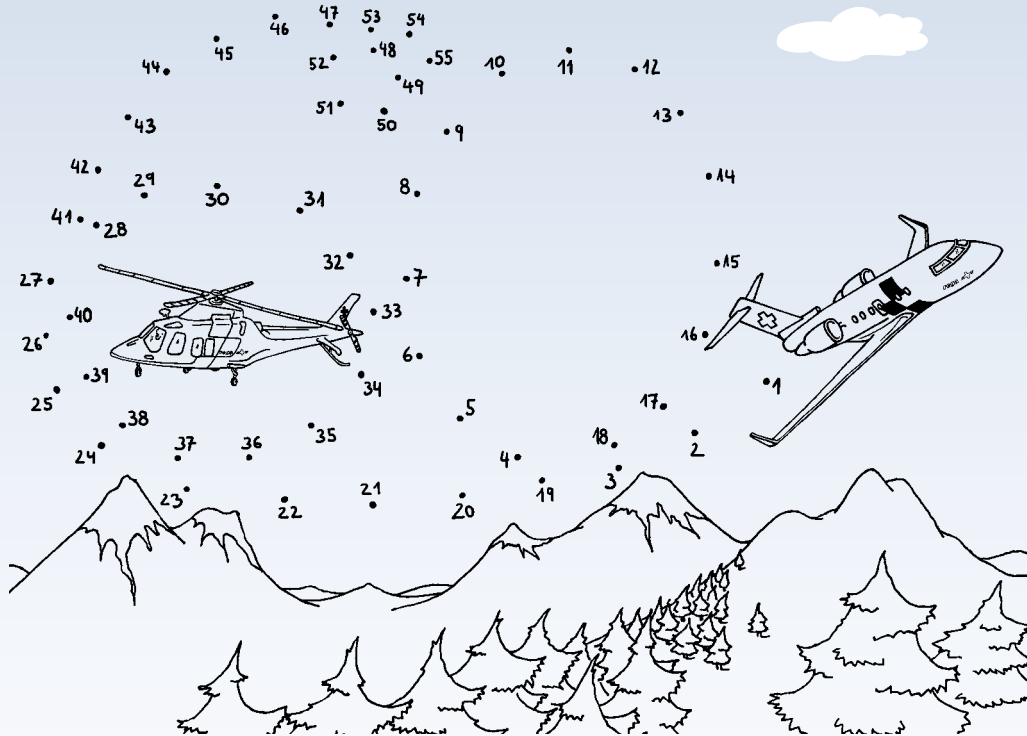
Swiss Air-Rescue Rega  
"Quiz" Patrons' Magazine 1414  
PO Box 1414  
CH-8058 Zurich Airport

by 20 December 2011.

Ten winners drawn from the correct answers will receive a model Challenger CL 604 ambulance jet in the new design worth CHF 29.00.



Good luck!



© Illustration: Fides Friedeberg

**Solution from no. 76: The correct answer was B – Eurocopter EC 145. This Rega rescue helicopter was in danger from a laser attack.**

**The following have each won a pair of binoculars:** Debora Blickenstorfer, Adelboden; Hugo Bonnet, Neuchâtel; Kay Büttel, Emmenbrücke; Gérald Chevalley, Nyon; Miriam De Luigi, Sala Capriasca; Kevin Guignard, L'Abbaye; Shano Lichtensteiger, Thalwil; Adolf Lussi, Stans; Tizian Omini, Contra; André Marc Wermelinger, Flühl

Congratulations!



When "Leierchischte" plays for children, the adults are entertained too

# Rega song for adults and children alike

In nurseries, at family concerts, in schools, at open air concerts, on theatre stages and in traffic jams at the Gotthard tunnel – up and down the country, the "Leierchischte" duo delight with their musical diversity. It's all there in their new Swiss dialect "MUH" repertoire with the Rega song – even the sound of rotor blades.



Only truly all-round musicians can play so many instruments.



The new CD is here at last: the Rega song even includes the sound of rotor blades.

You can listen to the Rega song (in Swiss-German) on the Rega website and download it free for yourself or your children by clicking on the following link:  
[www.multimedia.rega.ch](http://www.multimedia.rega.ch)

For more than ten years, the all-round musicians from the Bernese Oberland, Roland Schwab and Ueli von Allmen, have been performing under the name, "Leierchischte". Their music and songs have an emotional impact on listeners. Children love the Rega song and are reminded of Rega stories. The idea of a Rega song took shape in 1997 as a result of an emotional rescue operation. A toddler aged just 17 months old had had an accident and urgently needed a Rega helicopter. Her worried father accompanied her on the flight. His name was Roland Schwab. Today Sara is fine thanks to the rapid help she received – her voice can even be heard on the radio in the Rega song. As well as this bittersweet story, the location of the homes of the two musicians also plays a role, as they live more or less either side of Rega's Wilderswil helicopter base in the Bernese Oberland and often see the red rescue helicopter take off and land.

"Music that makes you happy" is how they describe their songs on their website, [www.leierchischte.ch](http://www.leierchischte.ch). The "Leierchischte" formula is to perform music that has a rocky feel, that is cool, serene, jolly, reflective, witty, lyrical and rhythmical, with many different instruments and many different styles for many different people – in short, music for everyone. You can book "Leierchischte" for concerts and order their CDs via their website or in specialist shops.

Enjoy!

Ariane Güngerich

More information at: [www.leierchischte.ch](http://www.leierchischte.ch)



With the ambulance jet to catastrophe-stricken Japan – an exceptional mission

# A flight into the unknown

**In March 2011, an earthquake and tsunami bring misery and sorrow to Japan. Switzerland provides emergency assistance. A member of the Swiss Rescue Chain is taken ill in the disaster area. Rega is summoned – but the ensuing rescue mission brings with it many uncertainties, requiring constant updates and reassessment of the situation.**



Misawa Airport: Patient Bruno Maurer is set to begin his journey home to Zurich by Rega ambulance jet.

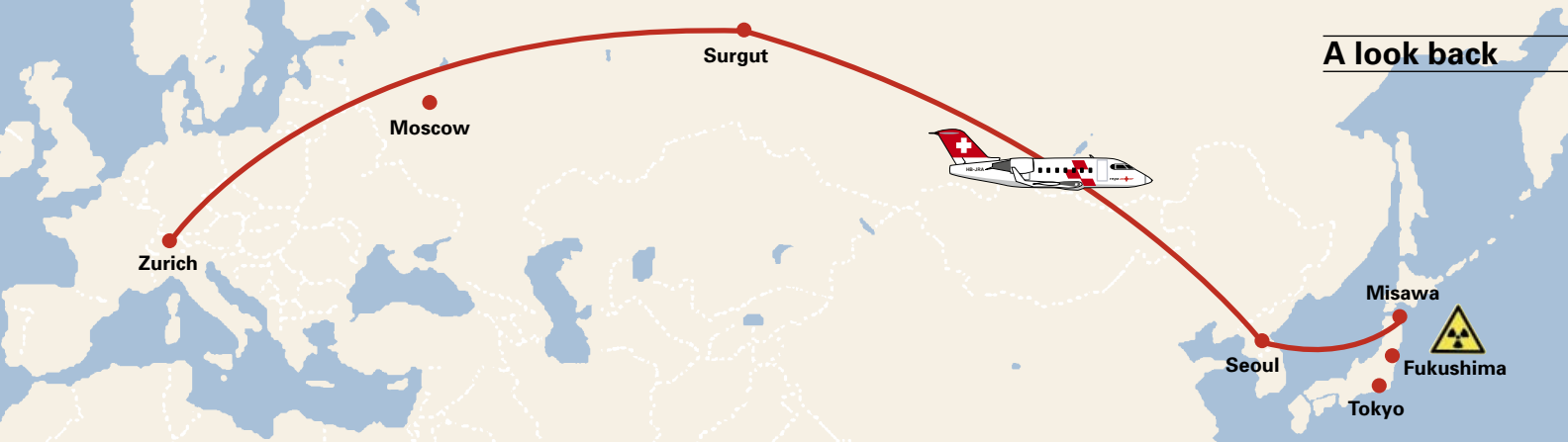
11 March 2011, the news comes thick and fast: a violent earthquake in Japan, a ten metre high tsunami, a damaged nuclear power station. More and more information about Japan's strongest earthquake since seismographic records began filters through to us via the media. The full extent of the devastation starts to become apparent. Rega has to deal with all manner of press enquiries: Are you flying to Japan? Are there casualties in Japan that Rega is going to pick up? No, Rega isn't aware of any patients that need to be repatriated. This is also the case a few days later. However, a team from the Swiss Humanitarian Aid Unit (SHA) is getting ready to fly out to the disaster zone on 12 March, a day after the first events. Shortly before setting off, team doctor Jürg Koller makes a note of Rega's international emergency number: +41 333 333 333. Of course he knows the number already, but you never know. And just a few days later, that is the number he needs to call. This particular incident is not, however, directly related to the events in Japan. Bruno Maurer, a member of the SHA team, has become seriously ill during the operation, in the wrong place

at the wrong time. Dr Koller arranges suitable medical care and is in close contact with the physicians at Rega's Operations Centre. Bruno Maurer is suffering from acute abdominal inflammation (perforated diverticulitis). He is lying in a hospital outside the danger area, in urgent need of an operation. Transporting him by air is out of the question for the time being. Only if his condition improves can he be flown home by Rega ambulance jet.

### **Many issues need to be resolved before the flight to Japan**

On Friday, 18 March 2011, one week after the devastating earthquake, the time has come; preparations are made for Rega's flight into the unknown. Unknown because the situation in Japan, particularly in the disaster-hit region of Fukushima, is liable to change at any time. What happens if airspace suddenly has to be closed or the wind blows radioactive particles in the wrong direction? The flight coordinators at the Rega Operations Centre and the dispatcher, responsible for the flight route, work flat out.





Permission to fly over Russia is still pending. The refuelling stop must be organised. Where should the crew spend the night? Which Japanese airport can be used? Many things need clarifying for this unprecedented mission. The flight coordinators and ambulance jet crew take various precautionary and safety measures. The intention is that the crew does not stay in Japan any longer than is necessary. As there are many uncertain elements to this mission, in addition to the flight physician and flight nurse, the crew is made up of the maximum number of pilots, that is, four. This allows them to rotate duties and comply with the statutory rest periods. It is still unclear at this point whether the outward and return flights will go according to plan, which is as follows: fly over Russia with a refuelling stop in Surgut, continue to South Korea stopping overnight in Seoul, then fly to northern Japan.

#### Outward flight and constant reassessment

On Friday evening, the mission starts with take-off at 10.00pm from Zurich-Kloten Airport. Fourteen hours later, the crew lands in Seoul, South Korea. Now the statutory rest period needs to be complied with. Only then can the crew head for Japan. The pilots are in regular contact with the flight planners at the Rega Operations Centre. They are constantly monitoring weather and wind forecasts and paying particular attention to changes in the radioactivity in the disaster-hit region of Fukushima. Fortunately the wind is blowing away from northern Japan. Before taking off from Seoul, the crew fills the aircraft with as much kerosene as possible.

Back from Japan: Rega's chief pilot, Urs Nagel, is checked for radioactivity.



Just how much fuel will be available in northern Japan, if any, is as yet unknown. The flight from Seoul to Misawa is mainly over the sea and takes just under two hours. The Rega ambulance jet lands as scheduled at the American air base in Misawa, some 400 kilometres north of Fukushima. Before the Rega team is allowed to open the aircraft doors, the Americans at the military base measure the ambulance jet's radioactivity. No problem. The patient and SHA team doctor Jürg Koller are waiting in an ambulance. They have already been checked for radioactivity. The Rega flight physician confers with her colleague, and then they transfer the patient, Bruno Maurer, to the ambulance jet. After just over an hour, the Rega ambulance jet takes off again.

#### Return flight and final precautionary measures

Just like the outward flight, the return journey goes without a hitch. In Japan, team doctor Jürg Koller had done everything he could to ensure that Bruno Maurer obtained good medical



Everything is fine: no radioactivity is detected in the ambulance jet's engines either.

treatment. During the flight, he receives extensive care from the Rega medical team and is well looked after. Everyone is pleased to see that the patient is now much better again, as he must have been in a precarious state of health a few days earlier. After over twelve hours, including another refuelling stop in Surgut, Russia, the Rega ambulance jet lands at Zurich-Kloten Airport at 5.07pm on Monday, 21 March 2011. Final safety measures are in place here too: the aircraft door may not be opened until SR Technics staff have checked the jet for radioactivity, as they now do for every aircraft arriving from Japan. Specialists from the Paul Scherrer Institute also check the six-strong Rega crew, the patient and the SHA team doctor, as well as the luggage and medical equipment. Extensive readings are taken, but everything is fine. The ambulance is waiting and the paramedics take charge of Bruno Maurer. A conscientiously carried out mission into the unknown ends well. The Rega crew have a particularly out-of-the-ordinary experience to add to their collection.

*Ariane Güngerich*

# Prevention is better than cure



With the sharp rise in travel, travel-related deep vein thrombosis, also known as “economy class syndrome”, has been in the spotlight in recent years. It can be caused by a lack of movement due to sitting in a cramped space with bent knees on long plane, bus and train journeys and motorbike trips, as well as to insufficient fluid intake, and, in some cases, a certain predisposition. Dr Olivier Seiler, Rega’s deputy Medical Director, explains and gives tips on how the risk of thrombosis can be reduced.

A feeling of heaviness and tension in the leg, followed by pain when standing and walking, swelling and bluish discoloration of the skin are the first signs of a thrombosis. The slowing down of blood flow caused by a lack of legroom encourages the formation of blood clots (thrombi) which usually occur in the small veins in the calf muscles, but may then also affect the larger veins. In serious cases, there is a risk of the thrombus becoming detached, travelling in the bloodstream through the pulmonary artery into the pulmonary vessels and blocking them, resulting in pulmonary embolism. Breathlessness and/or sharp chest pains are symptoms of this life-threatening disease. If thrombosis is suspected, medical advice and treatment must be sought immediately.

### Pre-travel risk assessment

Treatment during a journey usually proves to be difficult or even impossible (no doctor on location, lack of medicine). Prevention, therefore, takes on great importance. So before you set off on a long journey during which you will be sitting down for more than eight hours, check whether the following risks might apply to you:

- pregnancy and the four-week period after giving birth
- pronounced varicose veins
- obesity (BMI over 30)
- fixation of leg (plaster cast, splint, paralysis)
- serious heart disease or cancer
- venous thrombosis or hereditary blood-clotting disorders
- contraceptive pills or hormone replacement treatment
- debility following major surgery
- over 60 years of age

To be on the safe side, contact your doctor. He or she can advise you and, if necessary, prescribe anticoagulant drugs and explain how to use a syringe.

### Activity protects

Travel-related deep vein thrombosis is generally a rare illness. By paying attention to a few important points, you can considerably reduce the risk on long journeys. Avoid sitting or standing for long periods. Move your feet frequently, jiggle your legs about, rest your legs in an elevated position where possible, and go for a walk high above the clouds every hour. Drink plenty of non-alcoholic fluids and avoid coffee as much as possible. If specifically required, use class I or II compression stockings.

We wish you a pleasant, pain-free trip!

*Francesco Argenton*



Order your free brochure  
(available in G/F/I) from:  
[www.swissheart.ch/shop](http://www.swissheart.ch/shop)



Rega drawing competition

# The lucky winners

**In the last issue of the patrons' magazine, 1414, Rega invited children to take part in a drawing competition. The three winners have now been chosen and their pictures will feature on a Rega carrier bag.**

Over 800 children took part in the grand Rega drawing competition launched in June 2011. It was not an easy task to select twelve finalists from the mountain of colourful and excellent works of art. Our panel of judges – made up of René Prêtre, paediatric heart surgeon and Swiss of the Year 2009, Samantha Taha, presenter of the radio and TV programme “Zambo”, Roland Schwab and Ueli von Allmen, children’s singer-songwriters who perform under the name “Leierchischte”, Samuel Glättli, illustrator and cartoonist, and Wanda Bühler, the Rega representative – actively assisted us in this task.

The twelve finalists’ pictures were put to an online vote held over two weeks at [www.rega.ch](http://www.rega.ch). Visitors to the website decided which three designs would emerge as winners and feature on Rega carrier bags and postcards during the forthcoming anniversary year.

The three lucky winners are: Célia (7) from Onex; Jeff (7) from Court and Celine (11) from Haag. Congratulations!

The main winners and finalists had the opportunity to visit the Rega Centre at Zurich Airport with their families at the end of August and receive their prize from the Rega shop. A particularly unforgettable experience for the young artists was the visit to the hangar, where they admired the red and white rescue helicopters close up and watched the arrival of a Rega ambulance jet with great excitement.

The twelve finalists’ artwork will be preserved for posterity in the 2012 Rega wall calendar, which can be bought at [www.shop.rega.ch](http://www.shop.rega.ch). The carrier bags with the three winning pictures and the postcards will be available at various events during the jubilee year.

*Wanda Bühler*

The judges display the work of the twelve finalists – from left to right: Samuel Glättli, Wanda Bühler, Roland Schwab, Ueli von Allmen, René Prêtre, Samantha Taha



“The sky has been Rega’s stamping ground – for 60 years”: it is hard to put it any better than 12 year old Sebastian, finalist in the Rega drawing competition. On 27 April 1952, Swiss Air-Rescue was founded in Twann on Lake Biel, thereby laying the foundations for a professional Swiss air rescue service. Sixty years on, Rega would like to thank its over 2.3 million patrons for their many years of loyalty.

During 2012, our jubilee year, you can look forward to special festivities in late April at the Rega Centre at Zurich Airport, for example, as well as Open Days at selected lowland helicopter bases.

Keep up to date during the anniversary year by checking the activities and dates online.

[www.60years.rega.ch](http://www.60years.rega.ch)



Book tip

## Rega’s success story and the faces behind it

60 years of Rega – that is six decades of unforgettable missions, great achievements, setbacks, momentous events and personalities. For her book, “1414”, freelance journalist Franziska Schläpfer interviewed 30 people. The flight physician, the Swiss Alpine Club rescuer, the pioneer, the media spokeswoman, the patient: they all tell their own personal stories relating to Rega. The 240-page work also features portrait photos of the interviewees and an illustrated chronicle.

“1414 – Die Erfolgsgeschichte der Rega und ihre Gesichter” is due to be published (in German) mid-2012 by Wörterseh-Verlag.





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# “Heroes of the air”

Flying through the air – that’s when I’m in my element. Be it on the ski-jumping hill, parachuting or visiting the Breitling aerobatics team. The feeling of freedom that air gives me is unique. Unfortunately the landing comes much too soon...

We ski jumpers are often described by journalists and fans as “heroes of the air”. Even though our flights end just a few seconds after take-off, we get relatively close to the dream of flying. As only the skis and our bodies clad in ski jumping suits keep us in the air, the feeling of flying is particularly intense. You hear the wind and feel the speed in a unique way.

In ski flying, we can thrill spectators with jumps or, to be more precise, flights of over 240 metres. At the Four Hills Tournament, which always takes place around New Year in Germany and Austria, tens of thousands of spectators throng to the hills and millions more watch us jump on television. In Switzerland, the Summer Grand Prix is held every August in Einsiedeln and our home World Cup event takes place in Engelberg in December. Come and watch sometime and get bitten by the ski-jumping bug!

I’m extremely focused when ski jumping and can’t always enjoy the feeling of flying. Parachuting is quite different – staying airborne is a great deal easier. In ski jumping, what you really enjoy about the jump is the take-off when you get it just right. When you jump out of a plane, you always get back to the initial body position, so you can relax on your way down or try out a few manoeuvres. But I have to concentrate as well when parachuting, such as at the time of opening the parachute or on the approach to the landing. It’s this great variety of challenges that I particularly enjoy.

As a four-time Olympic Champion, World Champion and winner of 20 World Cup events I could actually stop now, I’m already a minor “hero of the air”. But ski jumping is such fun that I’ve decided to continue jumping on the world’s hills. Being a ski jumper is the best job in the world! On a training day, when I’m getting ready on the start bar on the hill in Einsiedeln for a training jump on a beautiful summer’s day, I often pause briefly to take in the panoramic views of the mountains from the Etzel to the Mythen. Surely everyone would like a work place like that!

For me, the real “heroes of the air” are, however, the Rega pilots. Rescuing injured people from steep mountainsides in the most difficult conditions from the air, that’s a heroic deed. There’s no wind gauge up there. The situation must be assessed based on experience and expertise and analysed in split seconds. The rescuers must also be ready to set out on a mission at any time, as their jobs involve human lives and not “just” victories and medals. It’s only thanks to these flight physicians and pilots that life-saving first aid and rapid transport to the nearest hospital are possible.

We sportsmen and women live with the risk of injury. But crashes tend not to happen very often in ski jumping and aren’t very dangerous thanks to the steep hill. All the same, I’ve had the odd mishap myself, but fortunately nothing serious enough to call out Rega. I and my Swiss skiing colleagues do, though, find it reassuring to know that Rega is there as a strong partner. Last year, for example, Rega provided a straightforward and rapid flight home for the skier, Nadia Styger, after her crash in Canada. The coaches of the junior alpine skiing team, who were involved in a road accident in Scandinavia, also benefited greatly from Rega’s expertise.

The “heroes of the air” at Rega depend on our financial contributions. I’m a Rega patron not only because I want to be covered in the event of an accident, but also to show solidarity with people who can be helped in times of need.

A very big thank you to Rega’s “heroes of the air” for their daily rescue missions.



Simon Ammann



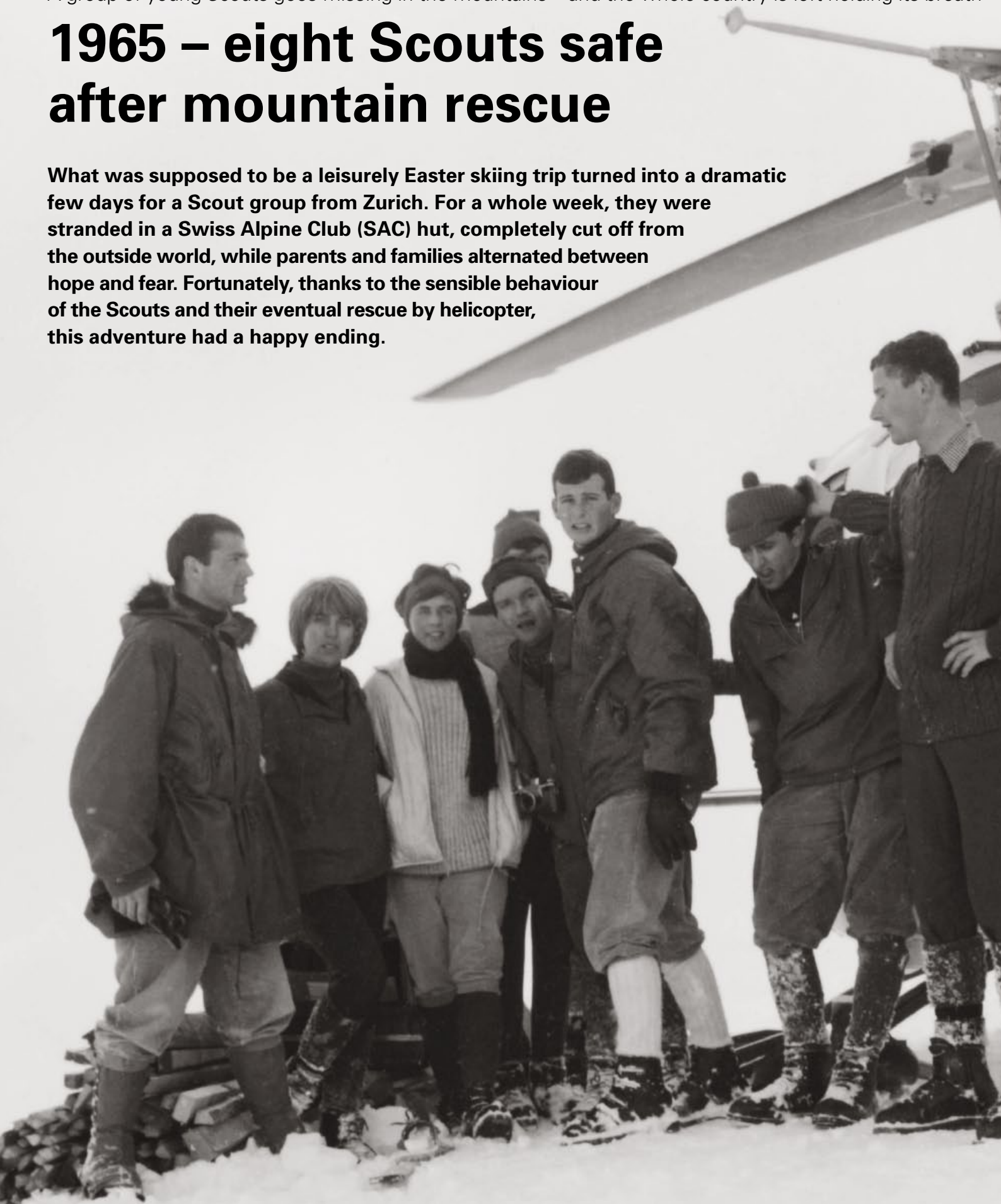
**Simon Ammann**

Ski jumper  
Double Olympic Champion  
Vancouver 2010  
Double Olympic Champion  
Salt Lake City 2002

A group of young Scouts goes missing in the mountains – and the whole country is left holding its breath

# 1965 – eight Scouts safe after mountain rescue

**What was supposed to be a leisurely Easter skiing trip turned into a dramatic few days for a Scout group from Zurich. For a whole week, they were stranded in a Swiss Alpine Club (SAC) hut, completely cut off from the outside world, while parents and families alternated between hope and fear. Fortunately, thanks to the sensible behaviour of the Scouts and their eventual rescue by helicopter, this adventure had a happy ending.**







Rescued by helicopter:  
great relief for the Scouts.



It was the tranquillity of the mountains that they had originally wanted to experience, but on that Easter Sunday – 18 April – the silence suddenly started to feel oppressive. At this point, the eight Scouts from Horgen and Oberrieden realised that they would probably remain stranded in the Etzli hut, in the canton of Uri, for some time. Snowstorms had been raging all night, leaving half a metre of snow outside the hut, and the snow was still falling with no sign of stopping. On Easter Monday, in light of the fresh snowfall and mild temperatures, they decided to abandon their plan to make their way down to the valley. This was the right decision, but it was also one of serious consequence. For nobody knew whether the Scouts had reached the hut safely or if they had been caught in an avalanche during their ascent. Over the next few days, the weather conditions ruled out any possibility of attempting reconnaissance flights or rescue operations. Back home, the uncertainty over the fate of the Scouts was unbearable.

### A misunderstanding

On Easter Saturday, when the weather had still been fine, the Scouts had set out from

Bristen in the Maderan Valley in the direction of the Etzli hut, equipped with skis and the necessary gear – for three days, they thought. However, in view of the long-term forecast of poor weather, the hut warden had assumed that the planned trip would be cancelled and had taken the opportunity to return to the valley by helicopter.

The Scouts therefore arrived to find a cold and empty hut. There was no firewood and the food, which had been brought up two weeks earlier, was locked in the storeroom. Two days passed before they dared to break in to get at the provisions. What worried them most, however, was the fact that they had no means of sending a message to put their loved ones' fears to rest. There was no telephone in the hut, and the days of the mobile phone were still a long way off.

### A small transistor radio: the only source of news

The father of one of the Scouts had forbidden his son from packing his small transistor radio. But the boy had secretly taken it with him all the same, and this proved useful now. Listening to the national news, they heard the reports that they had gone missing, and about the aborted rescue operations and their parents' agonising uncertainty. They listened as national broadcasts repeatedly appealed to them not to attempt the descent under any circumstances. Not that this idea would have occurred to them anyway, given that a four metre snowdrift had piled up outside the hut. For the next five days, they lived from one news bulletin to the next and passed the time playing cards. They were not afraid, but were anxious to let the outside world know that they were safe. However, their attempt at tinkering with the small radio to make a transmitter failed.

### Huge media coverage – rescue operations unsuccessful for days

The level of interest in the incident throughout the national media knew no bounds; every day they reported on the “mountain drama”. Locals, rescuers and above all the Scouts'







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families were in a constant state of tension. For days, all attempts by police, SAC rescue teams and rescue helicopters to get to the hut were scuppered by the bad weather. Swiss Air-Rescue was powerless to help at its forward operations base in Sedrun, as the helicopters remained grounded in the fog. On the Thursday, the front page of the "Blick" newspaper reported: "No trace!"

**They're alive!**

*"Newsflash – we have reached the Etzli hut – all of the missing Scouts are in the hut and are safe and sound".* This radio message from the head of the SAC rescue service, Pius Condrau, was greeted with huge relief at 12.34pm on Thursday, 22 April and left parents and relatives in Bristen jumping for joy. The news spread across the country like wildfire. Friday's headline in the "Blick" proclaimed in large red letters: "They're alive!"

The countless hours of toil and frustration on the part of the rescuers ended the next day with the challenging rescue by air. Helmut Hugl, the pilot of the Heliswiss helicopter, later



Suddenly everything happens very quickly: the rescue team leads the Scouts to the helicopter.

described the approach and landing at the hut, where visibility was still poor, as a "flying trapeze act". The parents were finally reunited with their children in Sedrun. The youngest of the Scouts – who later went on to become a military pilot – remarked: "I feel as if I've been reborn. Perhaps we've all grown up a little over these past few days".

"We need help": the signal to the pilots through the fog.

*Walter Stünzi*





# 60 years of Rega – 60 years of forging valuable contacts

Next year, Rega will reach a milestone in its history: 60 years of existence. Without your patronage contributions, Rega would not be in a position to celebrate this very special anniversary. We are therefore very grateful to you, our patrons, for your valuable support.

You may be experiencing a change in your family circumstances, moving to a new home in the next village, welcoming a new addition to a growing young family or simply querying the status of your patronage: whatever your reason for getting in touch, this contact enables us to keep your personal patronage details up to date.

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We look forward to hearing from you soon, whether by e-mail or telephone.

*René Fritschi*  
Head of Patronage Centre

