

Press Release



Wednesday 1 March 2017

RAF NORTHOLT SET TO PEDAL TO POLAND

On 23 April (St George's Day), a team of cyclists from RAF Northolt will ride across Europe, from the Polish War Memorial to Poznan Airbase in Poland – a distance of 1200km in a gruelling 10 days.

The ride forms part of the unit's rigorous training and development programme, designed to develop the physical, mental and military skills of those taking part. Though the ride will be an arduous physical event in itself, the team will stop along the route at locations of military significance to discuss and enhance their military knowledge, leadership, ethos, history and core values.

The ride will also provide a chance to celebrate and cement further the close ties between RAF Northolt, Hillingdon, the local Polish community and the Polish Air Force. A Polish military cycling team is planning to meet the RAF Northolt cyclists at the German border and ride the final leg into Poland. The Team will arrive in Poznan on 3 May, which is Polish Constitution Day, a national holiday.

The team will also be using the opportunity to raise money for the RAF Benevolent Fund, an independent charity that provides assistance to RAF personnel, veterans and their families when they are in need. Keep an eye out for the team out and about in Hillingdon over the next few weeks while they are fund raising and on their training bikes across the Borough. If you see them, don't be afraid to stop and chat, ask how they are getting on with their preparations, and of course donate!

RAF Northolt's Station Commander, Group Captain David Manning, is an experienced triathlete and will be in the saddle leading the ride across Europe. He said: "First and foremost Pedal to Poland is a very tough challenge which will test and develop the operational edge of those taking part, not just in terms of physical fitness and ethos, but also teamwork, logistical and planning skills. The route we are taking is special and has been chosen so that we will have the opportunity to reflect and remember those who fought in both World Wars while building, further, the strong links between RAF Northolt, the Polish Air Force and our local Polish communities. We are also taking the opportunity to raise funds for the RAF Benevolent Fund who allocated charitable support to Northolt worth over £80,000 over the last 2 years to bolster the welfare support to my personnel. We will be out and about both collecting and training over the coming weeks and we're looking forward to meeting the public and hoping that they will donate generously. I must thank Councillor Ray Puddifoot and his team at Hillingdon Council for their support of this activity and their overall continued support of RAF Northolt."

You'll be able to get regular updates on Twitter (@RAFNortholt) Facebook (rafnortholtoff) and through local news outlets such as GetWestLondon. If you wish to donate online you can do so on the Virgin Money Giving <http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/team/pedal2poland>

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NHT-Official-20170223-039-001 RAF Northolt's Pedal to Poland Team. Group Captain David Manning is in the centre.