PRINCE OF WALES'S EXPEDITIONARY AWARDS ANNOUNCED

Wednesday 20 May, 2020

Cycling across Mongolia, snowshoeing in the Alps and exploring the depths of Scapa Flow are some of the highlights of The Ulysses Trust's 2019 Prince of Wales's Expeditionary Awards.

Each year the Trust presents the awards for the best expeditions it has supported in the previous year. These awards highlight the very best in leadership, challenge, courage and planning. The categories are: Cadet Forces, Volunteer Reserve Forces and University Officers' Training Corps Units. Each of the award-winning units will receive a unique certificate signed by The Ulysses Trust's patron, HRH The Prince of Wales.

CADET CATEGORY: EXERCISE: TIGER VENTURE MATRAVERS: On 17th February 2019, cadets from the Matravers CCF deployed to the Alpes Maritime in Mercantour National Park, France. This was the unit's first overseas expedition and one that The Ulysses Trust was delighted to support, since Matravers CCF is a new cadet unit, formed in 2017 under the Government's Cadet Expansion Programme. This state-funded school has a high percentage of disadvantaged pupils and the cadets who took part in this expedition all came from this cohort. The cadets spent a demanding week trekking on snowshoes through the Alpes Maritime learning not only snow skills but also about the ecology and the history of this alpine environment. The expedition demonstrated that such adventurous activities can make a huge difference to the lives of young people from Matravers School. The Trust granted £3,000 to the expedition. Contingent Commander Captain E Fairnington said: *"Our Cadets had the opportunity to take part in a world-class activity thanks to The Trust. There was no way they would've been able to afford this without your support."*

RESERVIST CATEGORY: EXERCISE: NORTHERN SCAPA TARTAN: 2019 marked the centenary of the scuttling of the German High Seas Fleet in Scapa Flow after the end of the First World War and the SCAPA 100 project encouraged divers to dive the multitude of wrecks and salvage sites to commemorate this centenary. On 12th October, 5 members of 7 SCOTS deployed to Scapa Flow to develop their diving skills and improve some of the more technical aspects of deeper and longer diving such as decompression procedures. The reservists dived to inspect the impressive wreck of SMS Konig, one of three battleships, lying in 38 metres of water, as well as many other sites. This was an excellent example of a challenging expedition that was undertaken close at home, thus minimising transport costs and environmental impact. The Trust granted £1,500 to the expedition. Capt Mike Dunnigan said: *"Diving in a dry suit in the colder UK waters is a skill in itself. To then push ourselves to dive deeper into the often quite poor visibility of the dark waters in Scapa Flow around the wreck sites certainly pushed me towards the edge of my comfort zone."*

UNIVERSITY CATEGORY: EXERCISE: MONGOLIAN ENDURANCE 2019: From 22nd August to 7th September 2019, 11 students from East of Scotland Universities Air Squadron (ESUAS) and 3 mountain bike instructors deployed to the remote Mongolian countryside, to cycle 680 kilometres across deserts, steppe and mountains. The aim of the expedition was to utilise the harsh Mongolian landscape to enhance the attributes of leadership, self-sufficiency, physical and mental endurance, teamwork and risk management. The expedition was made up of 3 stages starting with a three-day ride across the Ghobi desert; Stage 2 comprised cycling 70 kms through the Arts Bogd mountains; and the final stage was spent in the Khangai mountains. This ambitious and physically challenging expedition has had a significant impact on the unit, boosting morale and improving recruitment and retention. The Trust granted £6,000 to the expedition. Officer Cadet Fraser Briton said: *"Ex Mongolian Endurance was a genuinely surreal experience, with a tremendous sense of accomplishment upon completion. It was genuinely inspiring to see our team work so efficiently together, with empathy on show, and so I am thankful for the opportunity."*

The announcement of the awards coincides with the publication of the charity's Annual Review 2019 which highlights another successful year for the Trust. The certificates will be awarded at formal ceremonies across the UK later in the year. The Ulysses Trust welcomes applications from Cadet, Reservist and University Officer units seeking financial assistance for their own expeditions. The Trust also welcomes donations to help support others to benefit from these life-changing experiences. Find out more www.ulyssestrust.co.uk

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