

Student Bike Expedition To Mongolia Wins Prince of Wales Award

Wednesday 8 September, 2021

The second of our prestigious 2019 Prince of Wales's Expeditionary Awards was presented by Lord-Lieutenant of Fife, Robert Balfour, yesterday.

The Prince of Wales's Expeditionary Awards highlight the very best in leadership, challenge, courage and planning. The annual awards are selected from over one hundred Cadet and Reservist expeditions supported by The Ulysses Trust, whose patron is HRH the Prince of Wales. Each recipient receives a certificate which is signed by HRH The Prince of Wales.

The winner of the University Category was Exercise MONGOLIAN ENDURANCE 2019. This expedition was undertaken by 11 students from East of Scotland Universities Air Squadron (ESUAS) who deployed to Mongolia in August 2019.

The presentation was delayed by several months due to the COVID pandemic. Despite this set back, a suitable date was arranged for the formal presentation to be made.

Receiving the Prince of Wales Award from Lord Lieutenant of Fife Robert Balfour on behalf of the unit is the expedition organiser Chris Toward (pictured above left).

Attending the ceremony on behalf of The Ulysses Trust, was Lt Col Cath Davies MBE TD VR SCOTS, who is a volunteer member of the Trusts' Grants Application Committee and National Adventurous Training Adviser at the Army Cadet Force. Lt Col Davies noted the impact of the expedition on both the unit and the OCdts who took part in the adventure.

"It was great to hear how this exercise has helped support ESUAS's recruitment and retention, particularly after the last 18 months we have just been through. OCdts spoke passionately about how their time in Mongolia has affected their lives. This included an OCdt who has decided to become a Reservist because of this experience and plans to join the Army Mountaineering Association. Ex: MONGOLIAN ENDURANCE 2019 was a worthy winner of the award and a great example of how expeditions can make a real difference to individuals and units."

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.

The presentation took place on Tuesday 7th September 2021 at the ESUAS facility at Leuchars station, Fife. The Ulysses Trust is grateful to the Highland Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Association who organised the ceremony.

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