

BIKING IN TRIBUTE

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For Immediate Release

A constant quest to live his life to its fullest has propelled Florida native John H. Cook throughout his 40-something years. Today it—and sheer leg power—are propelling him on yet another adventure: A bicycle ride across the entire continental United States, a journey undertaken in tribute to the children of fallen U.S. military servicemen and women.

From his undergraduate days at Tulane University in New Orleans, funded by an Air Force ROTC scholarship, to his present career as a captain, instructor and pilot evaluator for Northwest Airlines, John's professional life has frequently taken him aloft, while his feet have remained firmly on the ground. Following pilot training at Reese Air Force Base in Texas, he flew KC-135 air refueling tankers from Robins AFB, Georgia; Kadena Air Base, Japan; and Castle AFB, California. He served on the dedicated crew for the commander of the U.S. Central Command (USCENTCOM) before joining Northwest Airlines as a pilot in 1989. Along the way he found time for graduate studies, obtaining his Masters in Systems Management from the University of Southern California.

An avid traveler, his airline career is perfectly suited for pursuing his passion for photography, his evocative black-and-white studies of the people and cultures he's encountered garnering critical praise. But it's his enthusiasm as a triathlete—especially the biking portion of the running, swimming and cycling event—that led him to use a leave of absence from Northwest to tackle a lifelong dream: bicycling across America. Having undertaken cycling tours in Hawaii, the San Juan Islands and Oregon, and using his bike as practically his primary means of transportation at his home in Minneapolis, John Cook has now set his sights on San Diego, Calif., the ultimate goal of a trek departing Melbourne Beach, Fla., on February 5, 2007.

"I've thought about a cross-country bike trip for many years," said John, "but not until I talked with a friend who had actually ridden across the States and then found myself with the time, did I think I would ever get the chance to try it myself." But John's adventure is more than a transcontinental cycling tour. He realizes "that there are those that have sacrificed life and limb so that people can make the choices that we as Americans do to live our lives freely." Thus, he has decided to pay tribute to those serving in our military by honoring their sacrifices and the sacrifices of their families during his lone bicycle ride across the United States. We are honored that he has chosen our organization, the Children of Fallen Soldiers Relief Fund, as a beneficiary of his and his supporters' largess.

Following a route blazed by cycling organizations and individuals before him, his journey begins from his sister's home in Melbourne Beach, an Atlantic coastal community on Florida's famed Space Coast. His planned route will take him up the coast and through cities including St. Augustine, Tallahassee, Chattahoochee, and Pensacola, Fla.; Mobile and Grand Bay, Ala.; Vancleave, Larue, Perkinston and Poplarville, Miss.; Bogalusa, Woodland, Baton Rouge and DeRidder, La.; Kirbyville, Beaumont, Richards, Austin, LaGrange, Lockhart, Kerrville, Comstock, Fort Davis, and El Paso, Texas; Las Cruces, San Lorenzo, Silver City and Riverside, N.M.; Hatcher, Florence Junction, Mesa, Tempe, and Phoenix, Ariz.; Imperial Valley, Live Oak Springs, Buckman Springs and finally San Diego, Calif. Along the way John's tour will take him through charming towns and communities representative of the great American spirit. Friends and family along his route eagerly await his visit.

We invite you to join us in support of John Cook's adventure and share his compassion for our military and their families. Visit our website and look for the bicycles to learn more about us—and John's selfless odyssey. If you wish to donate on John's behalf, we all welcome your generosity. If you prefer you may also donate to the Children of Fallen Soldiers Relief Fund, Inc. in John's name through Just Give, Network For Good or another charitable organization. For military, non-profit, educational, media and corporate sponsorships, please contact us directly to find out how you can share in this tribute.

We invite schools, churches, veterans groups and military bases to help by gathering individuals to show support to John by rallying him on as he travels through your town. Spreading the word is as easy as passing this information on to others and notifying your local news and radio stations.

John said, "I chose the CFSRF as the organization to raise money and awareness for because I so strongly believe in their mission. I believe that higher education, whether college or trade school, is extremely important for anyone who wants to have a chance in today's society." Like us, John knows that awarding scholarships to children who have had a parent killed in Iraq or Afghanistan is a tangible way of giving them thanks for the sacrifice that they and their families have made.

To learn more about John Cook and his transcontinental cycling tour, visit his Web site at:
<http://web.mac.com/jhcook3/iWeb/BIT/Biking%20In%20Tribute.html>

The Children of Fallen Soldiers Relief Fund, Inc., is a 501 (c) 3 non-profit organization that provides financial and emotional support to U.S. military children and spouses affected by the war on terrorism. The program has been further expanded to include families of severely disabled veterans of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom. CFSRF was founded in 2003 by Rebecca Campbell to honor our service men and women who have made the ultimate sacrifice for our continued freedom. For more information visit us at: <http://www.childrenoffallensoldiersrelieffund.org> or <http://www.cfsrf.org>.

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