

# A Pilots Promise- Ross Edmondson's round the world challenge

**Sevenoaks' own Ross Edmondson is currently embarking on a childhood dream as he has set the aim of flying around the world within the next 12 months to help raise money for charity.**

The project engineer, 35, set off from Pittsburgh, USA on May 6th and has so far covered over 5,500 miles having flown over 40 hours\*



If successful, Ross will be part of an extremely rare and illustrious club of small aircraft pilots that have managed to fly around the world.

The challenge will be completed in six one-month stints over the course of the year with Ross returning back to Iraq for work in-between.

**CommunityAd** were fortunate enough to talk with Ross to find out more about his fantastic journey.

## What first attracted you to flying?

Ever since I was young, I was stereotypically, for a boy, interested in airplanes and flying. I spent a lot of time on flight simulator, and would set it up to carry out long distance flights into (to me) unusual parts of the world. As soon as I was able to save up some money, and had the time available in a summer from University, it was an easy decision to get my licence.



## When did you complete your flight training and what experience have you had flying to different locations? (prior to this challenge)

I trained for my Private Pilot Licence at Fort Pierce, Florida, in 2005, and then for my Commercial Pilot Licence in Sarasota, Florida in 2010. Until now I have flown myself to more than 40 countries, with the biggest adventure before this being a 4-month flying journey through 26 African countries with a British obstetric surgeon, conducting medical training and setting up training exchanges to help combat maternal mortality. I also spent 6 weeks, and 150 flying hours, travelling around Alaska and Arctic Canada in summer 2018, going as far north as 600 miles from the pole in Eureka, Canada.

(Note from Ross: lots of info and photos from this and other flights on my website: <http://katamarino.co.uk>)

## Has flying around the world always been a dream of yours? And how did you feel about making it a reality through setting up this challenge?

Flying around the world is something I first carried out in flight simulator as a young teen. It went well, apart from crashing into Mt Everest. Before I even got my licence I knew there were three major trips I wanted to take; coast to coast across the US (completed in 2007, and many times since), the length of Africa (2013), and then around the world. It's tremendously exciting that my flying experience, work and life situation have all come together at the right point to put this final plan into action (although I'm already thinking about "What next?").

## From your childhood to the present day, is it fair to say you always been an adventurer and where has that come from?

That's a fair assessment. Most of my family have an adventurous streak, although I'm the first to get in to flying. Before that, it was hiking, camping, sailing, and anything else that could have something of an "expedition" feel about it; and I still love those other activities today, often combined with the flying!



## What route and countries are you most looking forward to visiting through your challenge?

I'm looking forward to a number of sections for different reasons. The remote beauty of the north Atlantic, especially the ice caps of Greenland. The Andaman Islands in southeast Asia, as they're somewhere I never thought I'd visit otherwise, and really have little idea what to expect. Exploring Australia and New Zealand will be amazing; my mother is from New Zealand and it's over 10 years since I last visited. And finally, the incredible distances across the Pacific.

## What will be the most challenging routes you will have to take?

Physically, the 2 oceans; Atlantic and Pacific. The big challenge in the Atlantic is the weather, with low cloud and ice a constant threat, and the conditions are very harsh if anything goes wrong and you find yourself in a survival situation. The Pacific has more benign conditions, but the distances are enormous; the longest flight, between Hawaii and California, will take around 17 hours.

In terms of bureaucracy, I have heard from many other pilots that getting through airports in India seriously challenges the patience!

## Through this incredible challenge you will be raising money for the African Promise Charity, why have you chosen this charity?

African Promise was set up by a school friend of mine, after he spent time in Kenya working on school refurbishment and was impressed by what an impact it had on the children there and their prospects. He's now dedicated over ten years to the work, currently supporting 7 schools and raising funds to start partnering with an 8th.



The charity is very low overhead, with the vast majority of money collected going directly to the projects in-country, which includes facility refurbishment and improvement, provision of teaching materials such as school books, funding salaries for additional teachers, and funding school lunches for the children. I have followed the growth and progress of the charity and been really impressed by the impact it has and the long term, sustainable partnership view it takes. The changes that they make are made to last and deliver permanent improvements to the situation there.

## What is the target amount of money you would like to raise for African Promise?

I have set an initial target of 5,000 pounds; we have already raised ¼ of this and I hope to be able to raise the target higher!

## You work out of Iraq but how often do you go back home to Sevenoaks?

Right now, I only get back to Sevenoaks a few times a year, which is a real shame. I hope to increase this now that I have a young niece there, and a nephew on the way!

To follow Ross's journey and donate to African Promise visit:

[www.katamarino.co.uk](http://www.katamarino.co.uk)

\*accurate as of 22/5/19

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