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Honoring a Local Fallen Soldier Puts Hood Back on a Spin Bike *George Hood Aims at Another Guinness Record, Supports Memorial Fund*

While serving as a law enforcement professional in support of U.S. Marines in Afghanistan, George Hood became all too familiar with the tragedy of young soldiers and Marines dying on the battlefield as a result of Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs).

Hood conducted investigative operations targeting insurgent groups responsible for such devices. The combat environment's operational tempo and arduous conditions precluded any significant endurance training that Hood has developed in pursuit of world records. His longest session was about 90 minutes during a brief period on a spin bike at a make-shift gym in Kandahar.

But since his March 2009 return to the United States, Hood has had considerably more time to develop what has become a single-minded passion: raising funds for causes close to his heart and setting Guinness World Records for endurance on a stationary "spin" cycle.

The 52-year-old Aurora, Ill. man has three Guinness World Records, two of which are on the stationary bike. But Hood's records were often broken shortly thereafter by other athletes around the world. In April 2010, Hood rode for 175 hours in a failed bid to set a new record. However, his efforts helped raise nearly \$16,000 for the Injured Marine Semper Fi Fund and the Fox Valley United Way. He learned valuable lessons in that latest ride and is back at it again, with a dedicated crew committed to Hood reaching his goal of over 200 hours.

Along the way, he is determined to raise funds for Gunnar Hotchkin's widow, Erin, and three children, Tristan (4), Ethan (7) and Taylor (10). Hood's ride has been dubbed Operation "Hot Chicken", a reference to Hotchkin's nickname. In June 2010, Hotchkin, a Hinsdale native, was killed by an IED in Afghanistan.

Hood's ride for the Guinness World Record event is scheduled to begin at 2 p.m. Saturday, October 23 and last until Monday, November 1 at Urban Tri Gear, 210 Burr Ridge Parkway in Burr Ridge.
Catch the live stream of the ride at <http://www.ustream.tv/channel/hood-s-guinness-world-record-attempt>

Preston Bokos, Hotchkin's close friend, owns the tri-athlete business and is a crew member for the ride. Bokos approached Hood about raising money for the Memorial Fund that had been created for the Hotchkin family. "I was a friend helping a friend who lost his best friend....it was simply the right thing to do," said Hood.

Hood kicked off the fund-raising campaign on Sept. 29 with a 60-hour training ride at Eggsperience Restaurant in Naperville. The first of its kind in a local restaurant, the often-emotional event raised nearly \$4,000 toward the overall goal of \$25,000.

“I’ve connected with the family of Gunnar Hotchkin and I’m inspired by his wife and kids who miss him so very much,” Hood said. “I hope to raise awareness of all of our heroes overseas and move others to donate generously on behalf of Gunnar Hotchkin and his family.”

The current “spin” bike marathon riding record, only recently certified by Guinness World Records, is 200 hours and was set in March 2010 by Frank Tritscha of Germany.

Hood’s recent best was the 175-hour ride in April. Since then, Hood has trained covertly at Fuel Sports Performance Training Center in Crest Hill where he focused on pacing and distance drills under arduous conditions including heat and sleep deprivation. Since April, Hood’s training has included seven long rides of at least 24 hours: 24, 36, 48, 60 (twice) and 72 hours. “I am prepared mentally and physically for the challenge ahead,” Hood said.

A GWR adjudicator will be at Urban Tri Gear to certify Hood’s attempt near its planned finish time on the evening of Monday, November 1.

About George Hood

Four years ago, Hood knew little of what he was embarking upon when he turned to a “spin” bike to develop as an alternative form of cardio exercise.

His first spin cycle attempt, in January 2007, went for more than 90 hours, but was merely an “unofficial” record. Guinness declined to certify it due to administrative issues associated with the logbook that documents his progress (he must “travel” at least 12 virtual miles each and every hour that he’s riding).

That first ride raised funds on behalf of Illinois Concerns of Police Survivors (COPS). In July 2007, Hood set a GWR of 111 hours, 11 minutes and 11 seconds and raised nearly \$25,000 for the special needs kids of Kiwanis. At the time, he was a Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) agent, a post he retired from later that year after a 24-year federal law enforcement career. In May 2008, Hood set a GWR of 177 hours, 45 minutes on the stationary spin bike and raised nearly \$32,000 for YMCA youth.

Shortly thereafter, Hood deployed to Afghanistan. Recently nicknamed “The Godfather”, he is the only athlete in the world to have set this particular “spin” bike marathon record in repeated fashion. In those first three rides, Hood spearheaded nearly \$100,000 in donations for programs devoted to the causes cited, including many geared toward supporting youth.

Since then, his efforts have drawn international attention and he currently has followings in Australia, Canada, Mallorca, Spain, and England.

Hood’s reasons for riding: because he can, because he is committed, because he cares, and because he wants to make history. All are spelled out in more detail at www.RideGeorgeRide.org, the home for a wide array of information, photographs and videos of Hood’s previous rides and current campaign.

Under Guinness rules, Hood earns five minutes of break time for each “completed hour” of cycling and that break time is included in the overall marathon figure.

Hood’s first Guinness World Record performance came nearly a quarter-century ago. In 1986, while he worked in Hawaii as a Special Agent with the U.S. Naval Criminal Investigative Service (NCIS), he set the rope-skipping marathon record at 13 hours, 12 minutes and 11 seconds and raised money for the American Heart Association at a local YMCA.

The father of three sons, 16 to 21 years of age, Hood is a former Marine who now works as a personal trainer at X-Sport Fitness in Naperville. He is relying on his own grassroots efforts and that of friends and supporters to help spur on financial support this time around.

Donations for the cause are being accepted at www.RideGeorgeRide.org. To donate, simply click on the button at the top of the page and you will be taken directly to the PayPal site dedicated to the Gunnar Hotchkin Memorial Fund. Donations can also be made in the form of a check and dropped off to Hood at any time during the event.

Checks can be made payable to:

Gunnar Hotchkin Memorial Fund and mailed to: Urban Tri Gear, 840 East Ogden Avenue, Westmont, IL 60559

To learn more, visit www.RideGeorgeRide.org. Contact Hood at trainer4663@yahoo.com or 630-415-6222; event publicist Matt Baron can be reached at Matt@InsideEdgePR.com or

