

Press information

Hearing impaired pilot leads first Scandinavian Round the World Flight

Since childhood Johan Hammarström, 28, had a dream of becoming a pilot. There was only one obstacle – Johan's severe hearing impairment formally disqualified him from taking a pilot's license. He refused to let his disability holding him back from fulfilling his dream and after years of struggling he managed to become a pilot anyway – against all odds.

Now, Johan is writing history again, becoming the first severely hearing impaired pilot in the world to complete a round the world flight in a light aircraft. March 15, 2006 World Flight for Hearing takes off – the first flying expedition of its kind.



Quick facts/Johan Hammarström

Date of birth: May 3rd, 1977

Lives: Old town, Stockholm

Family: Girlfriend Wanja

Profession: Area Operations Manager for the medical IT Company Sectra Imtec AB

Hearing disability: congenital hearing impairment on both ears 60 dB, uses GN ReSound Metrix hearing aids.

Pilots license: soaring license 1992, single engine aircraft license 1996, multi engine and instrument rating 1998

Time to complete WFH: More than 2 years of preparation, 6 months project time, 6 months concluding work with speeches and exhibitions.

- The WFH team is now doing the final preparations before the take off from Barkarby Airport in Stockholm Sweden the 15th of March
- Johan Hammarström will be the first hearing impaired pilot to fly around the world in a light Aircraft
- The crew consists of Johan Hammarström, Henrik Ejderholm and Martin Håkansson. All experienced pilots with 35 years of accumulated flying experience.
- The expedition aircraft Worldflyer is a Diamond DA42 Twin Star and will be the first diesel powered aircraft to fly around the world
- WFH will be the first Scandinavian team to complete the challenge of flying around the world in a light aircraft (maximum take off weight less than 2000 kg).



Breaking barriers

The World Flight for Hearing project was initiated to break barriers and to show that hearing impaired people can reach their life goals. This idea was the driving force behind World Flight for Hearing (WFH) – the childhood dream that has grown to a manifestation for hearing impaired people all around the world.

- I did not only want to fly around the world, I also wanted to show the world that although I have a hearing impairment, I am able to achieve my goals in life, Johan Hammarström says.

- That's why it feels so fantastic to complete the first round the world flight in a light aircraft - although I am hard-of- hearing.

40 000 miles through 40 countries

March 15, 2006 the World Flight for Hearing aircraft called *Worldflyer* takes off from Barkarby Airport in Stockholm, Sweden. Project manager and main pilot is Johan Hammarström, 28 and in his crew – the two close friends and experienced pilots Henrik Ejderholm and Martin Håkansson.

During the next five months the team will complete the unique round the world flight eastbound and will land in 50 cities and almost as many countries. Throughout the course of the project, the team will engage in a large number of different activities such as speeches at hard-of-hearing organization and schools for hearing impaired children to mention a few things. The purpose of these activities is to create attention and exposure around hearing impairment and to inform the world that there are more than 120 million people in all ages, religions and social classes suffering from hearing impairment world wide.

- Since this is the first round the world flight with a hearing impaired pilot I believe that I can contribute to changing attitudes towards hearing impairment. Ultimately, wearing a hearing instrument should not be considered to be more odd than wearing a pair of glasses.



Quick facts/World Flight for Hearing (WFH)

Take off: March 15th, 2006 from Barkarby airport in Stockholm

Crew: Johan Hammarström, Henrik Ejderholm, Martin Håkansson

Route: Around the world eastbound via Europe, Africa, Asia, Australia, North- and Central America, Greenland and around Europe

Total airborne time: Approximately 300 hours

Total number of stops: Approximately 50 stops in total.

Aircraft type: Twin engine Austrian aircraft Diamond DA42 Twin Star

Return date: August 31st, 2006

Activities: More than 50 speeches before, during and after the flight. Several large scale events such as "Show for hearing" with top-class artists and scenic flights for hard of hearing children.

Long struggle to become a pilot

"Hard of hearing people cannot be pilots". That was the message Johan got many times as he grew up. According to the European rules hearing impaired without flying experience are not allowed to take a pilot's licenses. For Johan it was very difficult to accept this message and he started to apply for dispensations. His dispensation application was rejected numerous times but Johan refused to give up. After many attempts, Johan finally managed to find an audiology professor that helped him to do special tests to prove to the medical board of the civil aviation authorities that Johan would be capable of flying an airplane in instrument conditions, with the right

technology. The dispensation application was finally approved and Johan could complete his pilot training.

By learning about his own limitation as hearing impaired, Johan has also learned to see the opportunities:

- Usually there is a solution to every challenge. Often the solution is to have the right technology, but almost as often the solution is to have the right knowledge and self-awareness.

Johan does not work as a professional pilot today but in his job as area operations manager for a medical IT company, he often flies light aircrafts to customers and partners all over Europe. Through WFH Johan wants to de-stigmatize hearing impairment and also inspire other hard-of-hearing and deaf people to reach their life goals.



Quick facts/Worldflyer (Diamond DA42 Twin Star)

Manufacturer: Diamond Aircraft Industries, Austria

Weights: 1230 kg basic empty weights, 1785 kg maximum take off weight

Dimensions: 2.49 m high, 8.56 m long, 14.2 m wingspan

Range: Auxiliary tanks and ferry tanks enables 24 hours in the air without refueling

Cruise speed: 160 knots normal cruise, 120 knots long range cruise

Service ceiling: 18 000 feet and 11 000 feet on single engine

Special equipment: Life raft, emergency flairs, 2 emergency transmitters, satellite phone, HF-radio, paperless cockpit, water maker, additional satellite navigation and communication equipment.



First Diesel powered round the world flight

For World Flight for Hearing a top modern Diamond DA42 Twin Star aircraft is used. The aircraft is propelled by two diesel engines of 135 bhp each. This makes the flight even more historical:

- Diesel is totally new in the general aviation world. We are the first ever team to try this engine concept in a round the world flight, Johan Hammarström says.

DA42 has a glass cockpit meaning that digital displays are used for all cockpit instruments and the traditional “clocks” have been removed. The aircraft fuselage and wings is made of modern materials such as composites and carbon fiber.

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Main sponsor: GN ReSound is technology leading hearing instrument manufacturer.
www.gnresound.com



Gold partner: Swedish Association for Hard of Hearing People



Gold partner: Shell Aviation

WFH is also actively working with 40 hard-of-hearing, professional audiology, and healthcare providers world wide.

WFH is a non-profit charity organization registered in Sweden. The purpose of the organization is to spread information and de-stigmatize hearing impairment world wide by completing the first ever round the world flight with in a light aircraft with a hearing impaired pilot.