

Exercise EAGLE ALPE HQ NRDC-ITA Personnel Tackle the Notorious L'Alpe d'Huez

by Lt Col Tim Harbinson

A 12 man team from the Headquarters completed the final climb of the gruelling Alpe D'Huez stage of the world famous Tour De France and in doing so raised over a 1000 Euros for charity. The team which reflected the multi nationality of the Headquarters took time out from the busy preparation for ISAF 09/1 to complete the challenge. The event which was organized by Staff Sergeant Nick Pickering (UK NSE) tested the fitness and resolve of all members of the team. "There is no doubt that this is the hardest climb of the hardest stage of the Tour de France, and it is seen as a huge challenge for all serious cyclists", said Staff Sergeant Pickering who is a keen Army cyclist. "This leg of the Tour involves a climb of 1120m in 14km; that is hard work for professional cyclists so for us it was especially hard, the team did really well and should be proud of what they achieved."

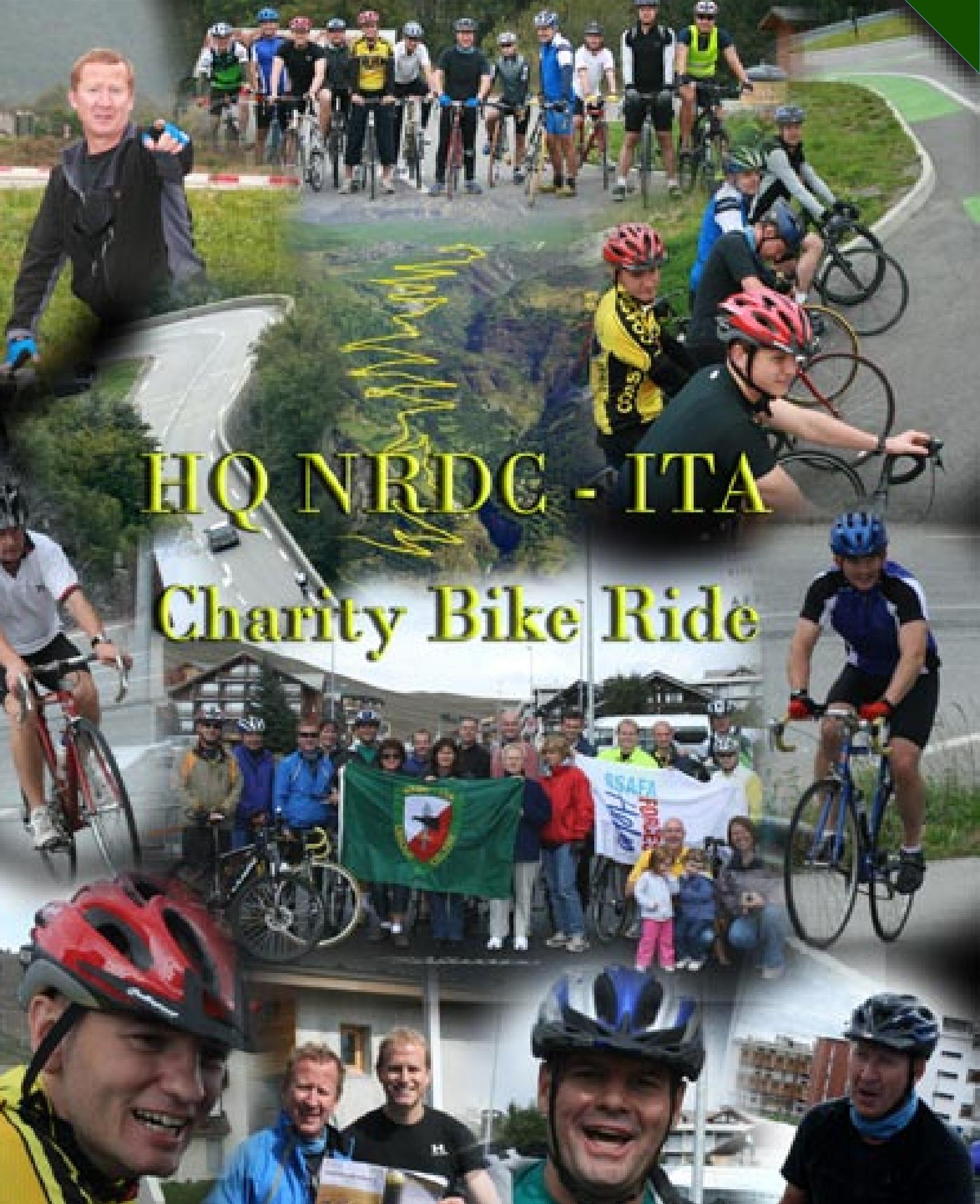
First to the top was Lt Col Elton Davis with the ADC to DCOM coming in just behind him. The Alpe D'Huez leg of the Tour de France regularly sees drama and accidents as the world best cyclists challenge for the coveted yellow jersey. "I have heard that the current record for this particular stage stands at less than 40 minutes," said Major Rupert Jackson. "That is a record that despite our best efforts was never under any significant threat!" The event was a great team building event for all involved and the team supported by families and friends never looked like failing the challenge.

"The road seems to go on forever and there are 21 hairpin bends that you have to get around, it's just a question of putting your head down and going for it", said Captain, Tom Scott, ADC to DCOM. "Our best time was 1 hour 15 minutes which is about half an hour slower than they do in the Tour de France, which just goes to show how hard the event was".

The team was well supported by wives, families and other members of the contingent throughout the event which was crucial to their success. "On every bend there was someone there to support you and that was a real help", said Lt Col Herve Riga FRA-A from the RSC. "What a sense of achievement and for a great cause; that was an amazing experience".

All in all it was great achievement and despite some sore legs and backsides all those who took part really enjoyed the event! Some will be back next year; others may decide that once is enough!





HQ NRDC - ITA Charity Bike Ride