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High-flier soars into US record books

FORMER RAF PILOT
LANDS IN 48 STATES

A HIGH-FLIER with Highland connections has flown his way into the record books in the United States.

Former RAF jet pilot Douglas Cairns, whose parents, James and Margaret, live at Invergloy House, Spean Bridge, knocked 33 hours off the previous record of 131 hours and five minutes for landing in all 48 mainland states.

Mr Cairns, who already holds five world speed records and two transcontinental records, fell victim to diabetes when he was diagnosed with type 1 diabetes at the age of 25 in 1989, losing his pilot's licence as a consequence.

He regained the freedom to fly in the US as a licensed private pilot in 2000 and three years later went on to complete the Diabetes World Flight, the first round-the-world trip by a type 1 sufferer, during which he dropped in on Inverness Airport.

His latest record-breaking attempt was to raise awareness of diabetes and funding for research into the condition, while also demonstrating that it need not limit the scope of people's dreams and ambitions.

In between taking to the air, Mr Cairns, who was brought

up on the shores of Loch Lochy, works as an investment specialist with Threadneedle Investment Management in London, for Asia and Global Emerging Markets equities.

Mr Cairns' flight, which started in Iowa, was not without incident. He said: "We had plenty of challenges en route with storms and tornado warnings forcing us down on two occasions.

"Ground fog in South and North Carolina and West Virginia at night added to the challenge of night landings."

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