



‘We just want to show unity’; Snowbirds kick off cross-country tour on Canada’s East Coast

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HALIFAX -- The iconic Snowbirds kicked off their cross-country tour Sunday in Atlantic Canada.

"For us, as the Snowbirds, we just want to show unity and help provide some normalcy to people," said Captain Logan Reid of Snowbird Eight.

The military aerobatic team will be performing fly-bys across Canada in the coming days as part of Operation Inspiration, as a way to show support for everyone going through a difficult time amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

"It's such a strange time for everybody," says Reid. "For us, it's really a passion to get out and do what we do best, which is to stick together, demonstrate unity and teamwork, and just a strong show of support for everybody out there. I think it just means a lot when, right now, it feels like you're going in an alien world travelling to the grocery store – to see some jets overhead, reminding Canadians all is well, and we're going to get through this."

Reid says the squad felt it was important to start their tour in Atlantic Canada. Sunday's flyover took the Snowbirds directly over Portapique, NS, where the mass shooting began two weeks ago.

"We deeply saddened and heartbroken about obviously everything that's gone on," says Reid. From the shooting to the loss of our friends on the Freddy and the Cyclone, and then just everyday Canadians keeping up their fight and those are losing their lives, and the front-line workers – everyone's going through so much," said Reid.

Having an opportunity to see the famed aerobatic troupe was a welcome diversion for many Nova Scotians.

"It was touching to see," said Nick Seidl, who watched them in Shubenacadie, N.S. "I'm glad we came out for it. It was everything we expected. It hits you in the heartstrings, that's for sure."

With the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and back-to-back tragedies, Nova Scotia Premier Stephen McNeil decided to lift some restrictions on Friday and open back up parks.

For many Haligonians, having a chance to get outside on a Sunny day was needed after a tough few weeks.

"I think it makes a big difference when you can connect with nature," said Aaron Cook, one of many spectators taking in the sights at the Public Gardens on Sunday,

"With everything that went on, it's just heartbreaking," says Cook.

"I was getting house fever," says spectator, Phillip Silver. "So, I'm glad I came out today and went around and got some nice fresh air and had my timmies, and now I'm in here,"

Experts say connecting with nature is an important part of recovering from traumatic events.

"There are unquestionable benefits to nature, including improved immune functioning and better mental and physical health," says psychologist Dr. Simon Sherry.

With each passing day, memorials continue to grow across Nova Scotia to remember those lost in recent tragedies. Sherry says it's never been more important for people to pull together.

"When dealing with a province-wide stressor, or really a series of province-wide stressors, as we are right now, gestures and symbols of solidarity are immensely important," says Sherry. "It's heartening to see Nova Scotians showing their best, despite feeling our worst.



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