

La Patrouille de France en route pour les USA

This morning (March 17, 2017), the Patrouille de France flew from Salon-de-Provence for its US Tour 2017. Until May 4, 2017, across North America, accompanied by an A400M, The PAF will celebrate, in its own way, the 100th anniversary of the US entry into the war alongside France. A tour of nearly 7 weeks preceded by a transatlantic convoy which required a special preparation of the crews and their airplanes, and which imposes the presence of a Falcon 50M SAMAR.



During its American tour, the Patrouille de France in the colors of the Franco-American solidarity will perform 12 demonstrations and 9 passages and commemorative parades. © French Air Force

Since the beginning of the week, as the departure for the United States approached, the effervescence was at its height in the corridors of the building of the Patrouille de France, all the South of the Air Base 701 of Salon de Provence. The excitement seized the staff of the team until the start this morning of military training for the North American



After painting the drifts, the mechanics finish the decoration by affixing the identification number of each aircraft. © PAF



Installation of additional fuel cans under the Alphajets wings, necessary for long distance transport. © PAF

But excitement does not mean agitation, even if an unusual activity reigned for a few weeks already in this squadron a little particular of our Air Force. The preparations were well underway, rattling somewhat the oiled time of the team in normal times. Each pilot, each member of the operations or the secretariat took part in it, making his own contribution to the construction of the trip and the entire mission.

Mechanics of the PAF on the bridge

A few cables, in the hangar, field of the technical team, this same fever was perceived also. It is there that the forty mechanics prepared the 10 Alphajets for the great crossing: painting of the drifts, and addition, under the plans, "big cans", additional tanks intended to carry extra fuel, necessary for the transatlantic flight.

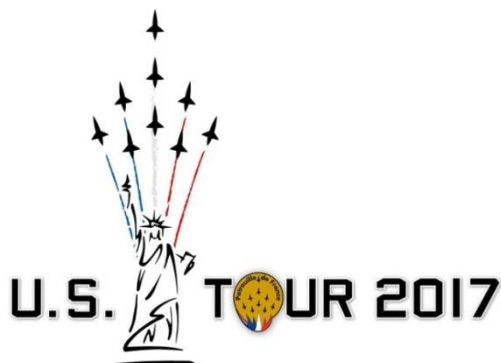


The crews underwent survival training in the maritime environment, provided by the instructors of the Training Center for Survival and Rescue of Naval Aeronautics © PAF

Throughout the duration of the convoy, the Alphajets will be accompanied by a 50M Falcon 50M from the French Navy performing the maritime rescue mission (SAMAR), a precaution that complements the maritime survival training received by the crews and ensured By instructors of the Training Center for Survival and Rescue of Naval Aeronautics (CESSAN).

The PAF in autonomy thanks to the A400M

In the A400M bunkers providing logistical support, no less than 25 tonnes of freight was loaded. It is the weight of a perfect autonomy in the implementation of airplanes away from their base. Technical equipment, spare engines, smoke benches, luggage and more than 40 PAF personnel, make up the four-engine cargo.



Official Logo of the 2017 Patrol Tour of France in the USA © Armée de l'Air

So it was with a slight delay on the schedule that the Patrouille flew away. It was originally scheduled to take off at 10 am. A minor breakdown on the N ° 2 plane forced the aircraft to return to the car park to allow the mechanics still present to intervene. And at 12 o'clock precisely, Commander Christophe, leader, at the head of the formation well aligned in two boxes on the track of the BA701, gave the signal of departure by launching in the radio the message which took at that moment All its meaning: *"Come on, this time it's gone! We're going ... Take off!"*. Some fifty privileged spectators, families and some friends, were present on the tarmac.

This departure for a month and a half of travel across the Atlantic puts an end to several months of intense preparation and gives the official kickoff of the US Tour 2017 of the Patrouille de France, thirty-one years after its Last stay in North American soil. It was in 1986, on the occasion of the centenary of the Statue of Liberty.

Transatlantic shipping

After a short stop in Orléans, the PAF, will head towards England. It will join, after a second stage Lossiemouth, on the west coast of Scotland. It is on this Royal Air Force airbase that is home to 3 Tornado operational squadrons and Westland Sea King search and rescue helicopters that the Falcon 50 of the Navy will join the formation.

The system will now take off again for Keflavik International Airport (Iceland), the first day of the conveyance, which will continue on the North and Kangerlussuaq route (ICAO code: BGSF) to Greenland and Goose Bay (CYYR) To Bagotville (Canada). It is in this first city, on the American continent, that the Patrouille de France is expected on Sunday 19 March, before embarking, after 3 days rest and reconditioning aircraft in a "meeting" configuration ... its US Tour 2017.

Philippe Chetail



Tournée Américaine de la Patrouille de France 2017

- March 17: Departure from France
- March 19: Arrival in Bagotville
- March 25: New York: Statue of Liberty
- March 27: Washington: City Tour - Reception Embassy of France
- 1st and 2nd April: Meeting in Melbourne (Florida)
- April 3 & 4: Sun'n Fun Lakeland (Florida)
- April 5-6: Kansas City: Commemoration of the Centenary of the US Entry into War with France
- April 7-9: Maxwell AFB: Centennial Meeting
- April 10th to 12th: Pensacola (Blue Angels Base)
- April 12: Trescal plants, partner and stopover in Santa Fé (refueling)
- April 13: Grand Canyon Flight
- April 13 to 16: Sacramento: Capitol Airshow
- April 17 and 18: Nellis Air Force Base (Thunderbirds base)
- April 19: Colorado Springs - Overview USAFA College
- 19th April: Peterson AFB (refueling)
- April 19: Scott Air Force Base
- April 20 and 21: Langley Air Force Base - VIP Day
- April 22-23: New York - Meeting Stewart Air National Guard Base
- 28th & 29th April: Norfolk Tatoo Festival
- April 30: Ottawa: Gatineau Parade and Meeting
- May 1st: Montreal: Parade and meeting
- 2 May: City of Québec - Parade
- 4th May: Bagotville - Departure and Return to France