



# PATROUILLE DE FRANCE

## US TOUR

**March 17 - May 6, 2017**





# EDITORIAL

## by the French Air Force Chief of Staff

**2017** is a highly symbolic year for the French and American Air Forces alike. It marks the centenary of the United States' entry in the Great War, the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the US Air Force, 100 years since the death of Georges Guynemer and, more generally, it is a year in which the French Air Force will commemorate the World War I flying aces.

All this goes much deeper than outward symbols and commemorations, it underscores not only the history of cooperation between our Air Forces, but also the fact that that cooperation is now more topical than ever. During World War I, the French and American airmen of the "La Fayette Escadrille" fought side-by-side, building the superiority in the air that was to play such a decisive role in changing the course first of the Battle of Verdun, then the Battle of the Somme, and then, irreversibly, all the battles which followed.

Our aviators continue to fight side-by-side in today's theaters of operations, protecting their fellow citizens. In the Levant, in the same Coalition force deployed to combat Islamic State, they fight the same enemy which has attacked innocent civilians both in France and the US. In the Sahel-Saharan Strip, the US Air Force provides support that enables the French forces to track down jihadist groups in a region the size of Europe and to sustain pressure in areas where they are active, thanks to ongoing air operations. Last, French and American air crew are part of NATO's collective defense countering any resurgence of power struggles, especially when these are played out in the air.

The *Patrouille de France's* US Tour celebrates this exceptional relationship, a relationship of steadfast allies determined to share their excellence in aeronautics to defend our shared values. As you read through this Press Pack, apart from the details of the tour schedule for the eight AlphaJet accompanied by an A400M Atlas, I would invite you to remember the deeper significance of the French aerobatics team's extraordinary trip.

**Général d'armée aérienne  
André Lanata**



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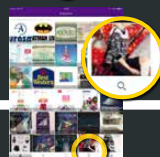
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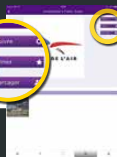
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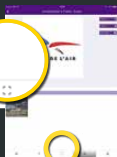
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# CENTENARY OF THE US ENTRY INTO WORLD WAR I IN 1917

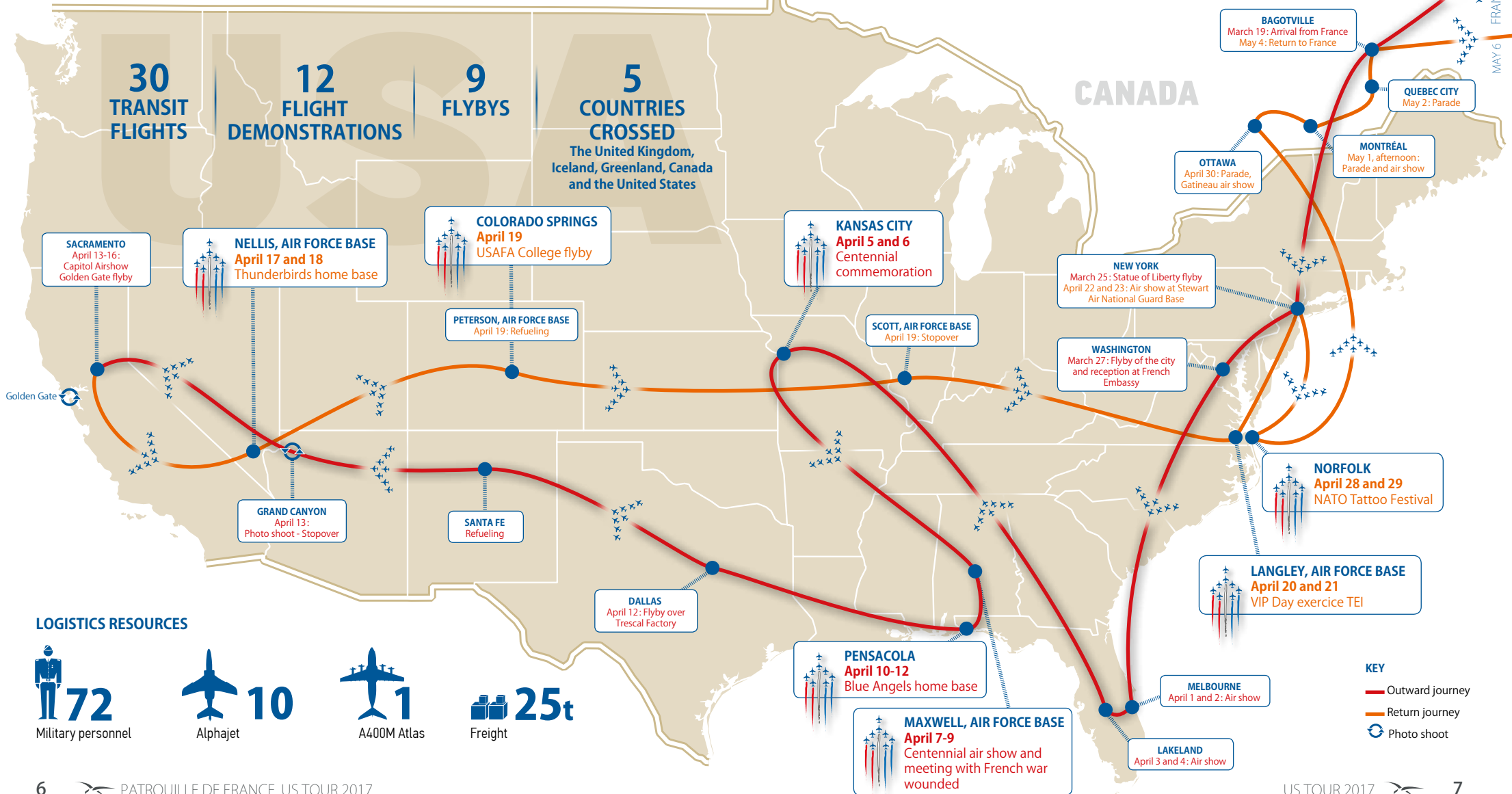
***“America is privileged to spend her blood  
and her might for the principles  
that gave her birth.”***

Thomas Woodrow Wilson (1856-1924),  
28<sup>th</sup> President of the United States of America.

On April 6, 1917, US Congress voted to declare a state of war between the United States of America and Germany, following Germany's announcement of submarine warfare against neutral ships trading with the Entente countries and the interception by the British of a telegram from the German Foreign Minister, telling Germany's Ambassador in Mexico to negotiate an alliance with Mexico, against the United States. From that moment on, the Great War, which until then had been confined to Europe, became a World War. To commemorate the United States' entry into World War I, the *Patrouille de France* has been invited to tour America from March to May 2017 to perform in a number of air shows and flybys.

## MAP OF THE TOUR

**The *Patrouille de France* will go on a tour of the US lasting nearly a month and a half to commemorate the centenary of the US' entry into the first ever World War.**



# THE *PATROUILLE DE FRANCE* AMBASSADORS FOR THE FRENCH AIR FORCE

**It has been 31 years since the *Patrouille de France* last toured North America. It will now be there to pay tribute to the United States' entry into World War I alongside its allies and to reaffirm the history of fraternity that links the US and France.**

**F**lying under its tricolor roundel, the *Patrouille de France* (PAF) represents all French Air Force air crew, whether engaged in France on missions to protect and deter or taking part in overseas operations to combat terrorism, to keep and maintain peace or on relief operations to aid people in emergency situations.

All the PAF's nine pilots and thirty-seven mechanics have been members of French Air Force fighter squadrons, and will return to service after their time with the *Patrouille de France*.

Known affectionately as "La Grande Dame" the PAF is also a tangible reflection of the French Air Force's actions : to achieve the operational level required for the mission through a process of selection and initial and ongoing training. The *Patrouille de France* thus embodies the excellence, know-how and values of the French Air Force.

Accepting the American invitation, the *Patrouille de France* tour of North America entails a huge amount of planning:

It includes seventy-two specialized aviators and support personnel, ten

Alphajet and one Airbus A400M Atlas and twenty-four stops along the way, demonstrating the French Air Force's projection capabilities.

The equipment deployed for the tour will also showcase French industrial and technological excellence.

Proudly bearing the colors of the French Air Force, the *Patrouille de France* has won the hearts of millions of people in France, to the point where it has become the symbol of the country's Air Force and its aeronautics industry. It stands as a concrete link between the Air Force and the Nation.



**9 pilots and  
thirty-seven  
mechanics  
from French  
fighter  
squadrons**



# A LONG HISTORY OF FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN FRANCE AND AMERICA

**France is one the United States' foremost partners and its oldest ally. The PAF's involvement in the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the US entry into World War I on April 6 in Kansas City thus symbolizes an enduring friendship and the steadfast fraternity that links the two countries.**

**F**or the United States, France is a reliable and credible partner, one that can both express its own independent strategic vision and fully engage in crisis management.

The French Air Force and the US Air Force (USAF) share the same vision of the importance of air power, and both are among the rare Western air forces with the capability to undertake the full spectrum of air operations.

## **The joint deployment of French and American air crew fighting side-by-side**

Operational cooperation between France and the US has now reached an unprecedented level. Both nations are major partners in combating terrorism.

The joint deployment of French and American air crew fighting side-by-side in the Levant, in the Sahel-Saharan Strip (SSS) and within various coalition or NATO forces for over thirty years, has its basis in the deployment of their forerunners, who fought together in 1917 and, later, in the Second World War.

This relationship between the two nations can also be seen in their involvement



**The PAF's visit  
to Norfolk on April 28  
and 29 demonstrates  
the French Air Force's full  
commitment to NATO,  
alongside the United States**

in the military structures integrated within the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). The presence of General Denis Mercier, former Chief of Staff of the French Air Force, at the head of Allied Command Transformation (ACT) reflects how important NATO is to France, considering it to be a fundamental component of her defense and national security strategy. Seen from the opposite point of view, the presence of a French General at the head of one of the Alliance's two supreme commands reflects the confidence felt by the US and NATO in France.

# HIGHLIGHTS OF THE US TOUR



## COMMEMORATION OF THE US ENTRY INTO WORLD WAR I IN KANSAS CITY



**A**pril 6, 1917 is the date on which the US entered the war. One hundred years on, a major international ceremony is being held in Kansas City on April 6, 2017, organized by the US World War I Centennial Commission at the National World War I Museum and Memorial.

US political and military leaders, veterans' associations and the descendants of war veterans are all invited to the commemorative ceremony, together with many foreign representatives from Australia, Austria, Belgium, Great Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Hungary and Italy.

Political and military leaders as well as eight French soldiers wounded in war will also attend the ceremony, remembering the courage and ultimate self-sacrifice of the heroes of the First World War.

A number of historical texts will be read during the ceremony, including extracts from speeches made at the time,

newspaper articles and, also literary texts, interspersed with archive video footage and musical interludes, recalling the particular ambiance of the era.

A military parade consisting of various units and flag bearers is also planned, together with a flyby by US Air Force and *Patrouille de France* aircraft.

The centennial commemorations are a highpoint in the series of commemorative events being held to celebrate the friendship that has endured between France and the United States since the War of Independence.

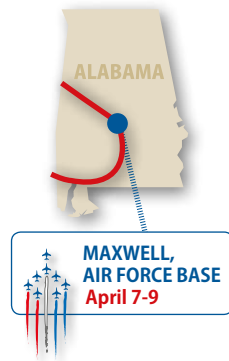


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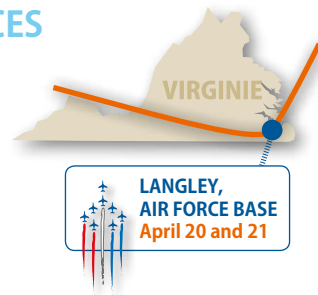


## CENTENARY AIR SHOW, MAXWELL AIR FORCE BASE: A CENTURY OF AIR POWER

**O**n April 8 and 9, the *Patrouille de France* and the Thunderbirds will fly together at an air show at the Maxwell US Air Force base in Montgomery (Alabama). The theme of the air show is Heritage to Horizon: Legacy of the Great War - A Century of Air Power. It will commemorate the centenary of the United States' entry into WWI and also the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the US Air Force.



## TRILATERAL EXERCISE INITIATIVE (TEI), HIGH-LEVEL COOPERATION BETWEEN THE ALLIED FORCES



**O**n April 21, the *Patrouille de France* will join the French Air Force's Rafale jets taking part in the TEI exercise at Langley Air Force Base (Virginia).

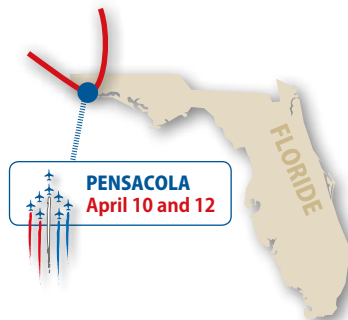
The French, British and US Air Forces meet every year at Langley

Air Force Base, in Virginia, for the TEI exercise (Trilateral Exercise Initiative). This very high-level exercise is held to train the three air forces in jointly engaging in a heavily-defended theater. The most cutting-edge and effective

combat resources are deployed for the purposes of this exercise (F-22, F-35, Rafale, EF-2000), demonstrating the high level of interoperability and mutual trust that exists between the three air forces.

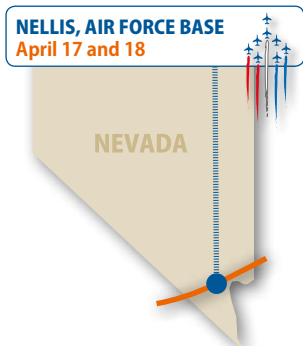
## FRIENDSHIP FOUNDED ON AERONAUTICS EXCELLENCE: MEETING WITH THE BLUE ANGELS AND THE THUNDERBIRDS

During the tour, the *Patrouille de France* will fly in formation with the two US aerobatics teams, the Blue Angels and Thunderbirds. The program includes members of the US teams flying in the backseat with the PAF, with air shows and formation displays.



### Meeting with the Blue Angels

The Blue Angels are the US Navy Flight Demonstration Squadron. They are based at Pensacola in Florida for the season of air shows and at El Centro in California during the training season. Founded in 1946, they were one of the first military aerobatics display squadrons in the world, and are one of the most spectacular. What makes this squadron so special is the fact that, even now, the pilots fly without anti-G suits, aboard F-18 Hornet combat aircraft. It is also one of the most active demonstration squadrons, performing upwards of 70 shows a year across the US.



### Meeting with the Thunderbirds

The Thunderbirds are the US Air Force air demonstration squadron. Based at Nellis AFB in Las Vegas, the Thunderbirds currently fly F-16 Fighting Falcons and perform over 88 shows a year. Originally formed in 1953 at Luke Air Force Base in Arizona, the squadron was named 'Thunderbirds' in reference to the strong influence of Amerindian and popular culture of the American Southwest, where it was officially founded. The Thunderbirds are part of the USAF combat force and can quickly be integrated in a combat unit.



## PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN THE FRENCH AND THE US AIR FORCE ACADEMIES

The French Air Force Academy, located at "Général Pineau" Air Base 701 in Salon-de-Provence alongside the *Patrouille de France*, develops and maintains close links with its American equivalent, the US Air Force Academy (USAFA) in Colorado Springs (Colorado). Since 1969, the two academies have run an exchange program for eight officer-cadets, lasting one semester. This historical and prestigious cooperation program is very popular among the cadets. Training under the exchange program is provided by French and American list officers and professors, who work for a period of three years at each academy.

In tribute to this emblematic collaboration, the *Patrouille de France* will fly over the USAFA on April 19, 2017.

COLORADO SPRINGS  
April 19

COLORADO



## TRANSATLANTIC RELATIONS AND NATO: NATO FESTIVAL

The *Patrouille de France* will perform at the "NATO festival" held in Norfolk on April 28 and 29. Norfolk is home to the only NATO command in North America, the Headquarters, Supreme Allied Commander Transformation (HQSACT). As another symbol of transatlantic relations, the Commander is French, General Denis Mercier, former French Air Force Chief of Staff. This is one of two NATO supreme commands, the other being Allied Command Operations, stationed in Belgium under an American General.

VIRGINIE

NORFOLK  
April 28 and 29  
NATO Tattoo Festival



# AIRBUS A400M ATLAS SPEARHEADING LOGISTICS SUPPORT FOR THE TOUR

The A400M Atlas will be used for logistics support during the *Patrouille de France's* tour. Around 25 tonnes of equipment and about sixty passengers will be transported for the 24 stops on the tour. This operation is a major technical and logistical challenge. It involves sending a French Air Force unit overseas, not unlike deploying a fighter squadron on overseas operations.



**B**oasting cutting-edge technology and new air transportation capacities, the A400M Atlas is the French Air Force's new-generation tactical transport aircraft with strategic airlift.

Stationed at Orléans-Bricy Air Base 123, and equipping the 61<sup>st</sup> Transport Squadron, the A400M Atlas features

greater airlift capability and range compared to the C160 Transall or C130 Hercules which it is to replace.

Throughout 2017, the A400M Atlas will keep to a regular schedule of operational transport missions from France to projected air bases and forward posts in the Sahel and the Levant, making either

tactical landings or air drops. By the end of 2019, France will have a fleet of fifteen A400Ms, giving it all the tactical capabilities it requires. Such a capability is crucial for projecting the French Armed Forces around the world, and the French Air Force ultimately aims to have fifty A400Ms.

# A400M

## Technical specifications



### Dimensions

Length	45.10 m
Wing span	42.40 m
Height	14.70 m
Wing area	221.50 m <sup>2</sup>

### Cargo compartment

Beam	4 m
Height	3.85 m
Length	17.71 m
Volume	340 m <sup>3</sup>



### Maximum payload, logistics flight: 37 tonnes



"Tiger" attack helicopters 2



or 5-tonne trucks 2



or VAB armored vehicles 3



or Pallets (NATO standard) 9

or Parachutists 116



### Medical evacuation version

Wounded on stretchers 66

Morphée intensive care unit  
(to be upgraded in a few years)



Air drops: the maximum air drop weight is 25 tons in several drops (tactical flight)

# THE FRENCH AIR FORCE AN INSTRUMENT ENSURING THE FORCE AND SECURITY OF FRANCE AND PROTECTING FRENCH CITIZENS



**T**he French Air Force is an instrument ensuring the force and security of France and protecting the people of France, both in France and in overseas theaters of operations. Protecting French airspace at all times, ensuring nuclear deterrence and the capability to immediately enter theaters of operations, the Air Force is both an affirmation and a guarantor of our nation's freedom of political action and sovereignty

anywhere in the world, at any moment and in real time.

At a time of uncertainty, the aviators work alongside one another, tracking down terrorists, whether it be in the Sahel-Saharan Strip or in the Levant, at the same time tackling renewed threats to the borders of Europe. In this endeavor, the French Air Force, with its ability to conduct every form of air operation, affirms its

position as one of the world's major aerospace powers.

The year 2016, just like the previous year, was an extraordinary year in many ways. The French Air Force remains engaged for the long-term, beyond its operational contracts, in France and on overseas operations. Working alongside the men and women of other nations' armed forces, the aviators are 100 % committed to protecting France and the French.



## BALTIC AIR POLICING

POLICING THE SKIES FOR THE BALTIC STATES

**341** air operations

**461** flying hours

**23** actual interceptions

## AIR SECURITY

PROTECTING AND DEFENDING FRENCH AIRSPACE

**611** FIGHTER JET SORTIES

**91** takeoffs on emergency response operations, including **44** cases of loss of radio contact and **4** cases of in-flight assistance

**98** cases of entry into prohibited airspace

**35** abnormal behavior

(in-flight emergency, transponder failure, trajectory difficulties, escort operations)

**462** HELICOPTER SORTIES

**41** takeoffs on alert for **11** intercept missions and **30** surveillance missions over sensitive sites **2** permanent air safety arrangements missions

**2** PERMANENT AIR SAFETY ARRANGEMENTS MISSIONS

including **50** sorties and **132** flying hours

**14** ADAPTATIONS PPS

including **126** sorties and **253** flying hours

## REASSURANCE

E-3F MISSIONS FOR NATO

**11** air operations

**109** flying hours

## CHAMMAL

**1,218** air operations

**10,109** flying hours

**1,028** munitions fired

## BARKHANE

**2,850** air operations

**16,000** flying hours

# FRENCH AIR FORCE ACTIVITY IN 2016

# PRESENTING THE PILOTS







**ATHOS 1** 

## LEADER

**Squadron Leader  
Christophe DUBOIS**

3<sup>rd</sup> year in the PAF  
2,200 flying hours  
Mirage 2000-5 pilot

## MECHANICS

CWO Christophe Seva  
et CMS Julien Da Trindade



Georges Guynemer



**ATHOS 2** 

## RIGHT WING

**Captain  
Damien BOURMAUD**

2<sup>nd</sup> year in the PAF  
3,100 flying hours  
Mirage F1 CR  
and Mirage 2000D pilot

## MECHANIC

CMS Philippe Colin



Joseph Vuillemin



**ATHOS 3** 

## LEFT WING

**Captain  
Cyril TOUZET**

2<sup>nd</sup> year in the PAF  
2,200 flying hours  
Mirage 2000-5  
and Rafale pilot

## MECHANIC

CMS Jérôme Garreau



Maurice Boyau

## ATHOS 4

### SLOT

**Squadron Leader  
Nicolas LIEUMONT**

2<sup>nd</sup> year in the PAF  
2,000 flying hours  
Mirage F1 CR  
and Mirage 2000C pilot

### MECHANIC

CMS Vincent Goux



## ATHOS 5

### OUTSIDE LEFT

#### Captain

**William LEROY**

6<sup>th</sup> year in the PAF  
3,300 flying hours  
Mirage 2000-5 pilot

### MECHANIC

CMS Séverine Caux



## ATHOS 6

### OUTSIDE RIGHT

#### Captain

**Bertrand TARDIF**

3<sup>rd</sup> year in the PAF  
3,200 flying hours  
Mirage F1 CR pilot

### MECHANIC

CWO Olivier Grandjean



Charles Nungesser



René Fonck



Jean Navarre





## ATHOS 7

### LEAD SOLO

**Captain**

**Hervé AUBERT**

5<sup>th</sup> year in the PAF  
3,500 flying hours  
Mirage 2000-5 pilot

**MECHANIC**

CMS Grégory Guimpied



## ATHOS 8

### OPPOSING SOLO

**Captain**

**Benjamin CHANAT**

4<sup>th</sup> year in the PAF  
3,300 flying hours  
Mirage F1 CR pilot

**MECHANIC**

CWO Lionel Viers



## ATHOS 9

### RESERVE PILOT

**Captain**

**Benjamin MICHEL**

4<sup>th</sup> year in the PAF  
3,200 flying hours  
Mirage 2000-5 pilot

**MECHANIC**

CWO Jimmy  
Rakotomalalavololona





**A FLYING ACE  
FOR EACH PILOT**

**SPECIAL  
TAILFIN  
DESIGN FOR  
THE TOUR**





# ALPHAJET



Jointly developed by Dassault and Dornier, the Alphajet is a light but powerful twin-engine jet used for training fighter pilots at the air bases in Tours and Cazaux. It is widely-recognized for excellent flight performance and maneuverability. This explains why it is the aircraft used by the *Patrouille de France*, since it is ideal for performing maneuvers such as inverted flight and knife-edge passes ("Sheriff" sequence). In an air demonstration, its tight turning radius means it can be flown at 550 km/h while remaining almost continually facing the audience.



## Specifications

Wing span	9.16 m
Length	11.85 m
Height	4.19 m
Wing area	17.05 m <sup>2</sup>
Empty weight	3,345 kg
Max weight on takeoff	7,250 kg
Powerplant 2xTurbomeca Larzac 04	2 x 1,320 daN
Ceiling	15,000 m
Max. speed (Mach 0.86)	1,000 km/h
Fuel capacity	1,960 l

# DISPLAY FORMATIONS



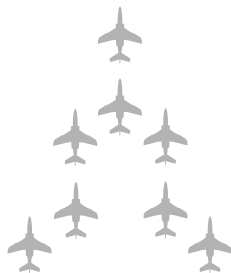
Diamond



Lozenge



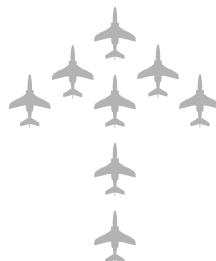
Duck



Apollo



Very wide  
arrowhead



Arrowhead

The *Patrouille de France* can adapt its display sequence depending on the weather. Three types of display are possible.

**“High” show.** The demonstration can be performed on a vertical plane. There are no clouds to disrupt maneuvers, some of which require flying at high altitude.

**“Low” show.** The ceiling, or cloud base, makes it necessary to fly at lower altitude. In this case, the display is performed at an oblique angle. The *Patrouille de France* cannot perform its famous “Heart” routine in these conditions.

**“Flat” show.** Weather conditions are not good, the cloud base is low or visibility is seriously reduced. In this case, to perform for the audience, the pilots fly on a horizontal plane.

# THE OPERATION OF THE PATROUILLE DE FRANCE

## Joining the Patrouille de France

Fighter pilots who wish to join the PAF must have at least 1,500 flying hours and have achieved the rank of Squadron Leader before they can join the *Patrouille de France* in the Slot, Left Wing or Right Wing positions. Following an administrative pre-selection procedure, applicants go to Salon-de-Provence for a selection day. They are given an insider's view of the unit and fly with the team in the backseat. They are also interviewed for selection in front of the team. They are assessed on their motivation and their personal qualities, which are of key importance if they are to be representatives of the French Air Force as well as to ensure that the team will work together flawlessly in performing their duty. Once all the applicants have been interviewed, the pilots choose who will be their three new team members.



## New season, new team, new routine

The team leader of the *Patrouille de France* is like an orchestra conductor, advised by former leaders and the pilots in his own team to work out a new routine which will enthral the spectators below during the 20-minute display. The performance is split into two parts. The first part, following the leader's orders, is called the "ribbon", and consists in eight jets flying in tight formation. This artistic and voluptuous phase gives the spectators a chance to admire slow sequences in different formations, such as the Duck, the Arrowhead or the Cross-piece. The second part of the demonstration consists



in synchronized formation aerobatics. The team divides into smaller groups of 2, 4 or 6 planes to perform more thrilling and breathtaking maneuvers.

### Progressive, controlled training

A *Patrouille de France* demonstration is called a routine. During the winter, the team goes through intensive training to perform the routine. This training period lasts six months, from October to May. They conduct two or three flights each day to learn all the ins and outs of the routine in a progressive and controlled manner. Training starts with a series of flights with four planes, so that the year's three new pilots can get to grips with formation flying as practiced by the *Patrouille de France*. It moves on to include eight planes, rehearsing and debriefing each sequence in the routine, notching up over a hundred flights in all. A flight safety committee, whose members are French Air Force experts, oversees the maneuvers; the final routine is then presented to the French Air Force Chief of Staff, who approves the year's demonstration.

The season of air displays can then begin: the *Patrouille de France* is authorized to perform all over the world.

### Coaching – physical training and teamwork

To fly in a tight formation of eight jets implies that the pilots must have incredible expertise and be in excellent physical condition: they fly at speeds of between 300 and 800 km/h, at a distance of only 3 or 4 meters from one other. During a sequence of maneuvers, they are subject to increases in gravitational force of between -3 to +7G. To prepare the body for such extreme conditions, the pilots undergo

in one another, essential ingredients for excellent team spirit.

### The *Patrouille de France* in public

During the summer season of aerial displays, which runs from May to October, the team performs around forty official demonstrations in France, Europe and worldwide, usually two each weekend. In addition to air demonstrations, the *Patrouille de France* performs aerial parades at commemorations, inaugurations or opening ceremonies for events. Throughout the summer season, the team of mechanics changes: field mechanics go on tour with the pilots, to

### Aerobatics pilots fly at speeds of between 300 and 800 km/h, at a distance of only 3 or 4 meters from one other

daily sports training throughout the winter. Being in peak physical condition not only enables the pilots to progress with flight training but also to deal with the intense pace of the demonstration season ahead. Also, taking part in regular team sports means that the team bonds and develops confidence

ensure that the aircraft are ready for each flight, while the repair mechanics split into two groups: some of them accompany the team to displays for on-site aircraft maintenance, while others remain in Salon-de-Provence to carry out corrective and preventive maintenance on the fleet of Alphajet that remain behind.



# HISTORY



## Sixty-four years of air demonstrations

**1931.** The first air demonstration was performed in France by a group of instructors from the local flying school in Étampes, flying Morane-Saulnier MS-230 planes. Their display was so successful that the team was chosen to perform at national and international events.

At around the same time, in 1934, the "Weiser" team in Dijon flew in a formation consisting of 18 planes. They flew Morane-Saulnier MS-225 and Spad 510 planes. They rose to fame for displays in which their planes were tied together with cable.

In 1937, the Patrouille d'Étampes relocated to the air base in Salon-de-Provence, and was renamed the Patrouille de l'École de l'Air. The Second World War interrupted the activity of these different aerobatics teams. In 1946, Captain Perrier, who had previously flown with the Patrouille d'Étampes, re-established an aerobatics team at the school for air instructors in Tours, called the *Patrouille de Tours*.

This formation team returned to Étampes in 1947, and was officially named the demonstration squadron of the French Air Force. Flying twelve Stampe SV4s, it was to represent the French Air Force at national and international aeronautics events. These planes were used at air demonstrations until 1953.

## Fighter squadron teams

In 1950, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Squadron based in Dijon established the Vampire team, followed in 1951 by the 4<sup>th</sup> Squadron based in Friedrichshafen. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Squadron, in Reims, was training with F-84G jets.

The teams formed by these squadrons paved the way for the *Patrouille*

de France (PAF), set up in 1953. This prestigious name was first used by the 3<sup>rd</sup> Squadron team, under the command of Squadron Leader Delachenal. Then, in Algiers, Jacques Noetinger, a commentator at the air display announced the team, for the first time, as the "*Patrouille de France*".

In 1954, the *Patrouille de France* was based with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Squadron in Dijon, flying Ouragan jets, followed by the 12<sup>th</sup> Squadron in Cambrai in 1955, flying Ouragans and then Mystère IV in 1956, then with the 4<sup>th</sup> Squadron in Bremsgarten in 1956, flying Ouragans, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Squadron in Dijon from 1957 to 1961, flying Mystère IV, and the 7<sup>th</sup> Squadron in Nancy from 1962 to 1963. These squadrons were tasked with continuing in the tradition of the *Patrouille de France* as well as showcasing French aeronautics technology abroad.

## The *Patrouille de France* in Salon-de-Provence

In January 1964, the *Patrouille de France* was disbanded due to budget cuts. However, the Air Force Academy in Salon-de-Provence had established its own air demonstration team back in 1937. Thanks to this team, which reformed in 1957 and was equipped with Fouga Magister jets, Air Force Staff was able to save the *Patrouille de France*. In a letter dated February 10, 1964, Defense Minister Pierre Messmer gave his decision: "*It is my honor to inform you that this team will henceforth bear the name of the Patrouille de France*".

For the next thirteen years, to the delight of the public, the team continued to use the Fouga Magister. The PAF's last display using this aircraft was on September 16, 1980 in Salon-de-Provence.



## Taking off around the world

In 1981, the *Patrouille de France* had seven Alphajet, adding one more the year after. With each passing year, the formation team drew larger and larger crowds at events across France, but its fame also spread beyond the borders. In 1986, the legendary parade over New York, to commemorate Gustave Eiffel's Statue of Liberty, together with many other demonstrations around the world, showcased the French pilots' excellence and the PAF's diplomatic role.

In 2004, the *Patrouille de France* amazed the crowds, at over 45 official demonstrations, in France, but also in China, India, Malaysia and Abu Dhabi. In 2007, they performed in Morocco, Qatar, Jordan, Oman and Dubai. In 2008, the team performed in Greece, Spain, Belgium, Great Britain, Italy and Germany.

2009 was another extraordinary year - for the first time ever, a woman flew with the prestigious aerobatics team, becoming its leader the following year. It was also the year in which the French Air Force celebrated its 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary, and a massive tour was held as part of Brazil's Year of

France celebrations. The *Patrouille de France* traveled 50,000 km in just two months! It made forty stops along the way, first to Moscow, then Greenland and Quebec. It performed in Brasilia on September 7. It then went on to Rio de Janeiro, Buenos Aires, Santiago de Chile and, for the first time, performed in Martinique and Guiana, before traveling to Dubai at the end of the year. 2010 got off to a flying start, with the *Patrouille de France* putting in an appearance at the first Bahrain International Airshow, where the team's performance was a huge success.

2012 saw the making of *Patrouille de France - the Movie*, produced by Airborne Films. The film traces 60 years of history of the "Grande Dame", with flights over many symbolic French landmarks.

The PAF celebrated its 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2013. As an ambassador for the French Air Force, it embodies the sense of fraternity that exists between men and women who push themselves to the limit to inspire the world.

The *Patrouille de France* carries on the traditions of the aviation pioneers, demonstrating the excellence of French pilots across the world.





# 2017, YEAR OF THE WORLD WAR I FLYING ACES

In 2017, the French Air Force will be paying tribute to its World War I Flying Aces. 2017 marks the centenary of the death of one of the most legendary aces, Captain Guynemer.



The Flying Aces are a symbol of the French Air Force. The term Flying Ace was first used in 1915 to describe a military aviator whose name was listed in the Armed Forces official communiqué for shooting down five or more enemy aircraft. The process of accreditation was based on two criteria: shooting down an enemy aircraft over French territory, and confirmation of this by friendly troops on the ground or by two other pilots.

**For the US Tour, a portrait of a French World War I Flying Ace will be painted on the side of each of the Patrouille de France's AlphaJet.**



When World War I ended, the French Air Force had 189 French Flying Aces, together with 8 American Aces.

## CHARLES NUNGESSER, THE “INDESTRUCTIBLE”

**A**t the start of the war, Nungesser was in the Cavalry, but became a pilot in 1915, first as a bomber and then as a fighter pilot. He was seriously wounded many times, but would refuse any drawn-out convalescence and flew in spite of being in pain, earning him the nickname, “The Indestructible”. On August 15, 1918, he shot down a number of German observation balloons, and was credited with his 45<sup>th</sup> victory.

After the war, Nungesser opened a flying school in Orly, where aviator Hélène Boucher learned to fly.

Between 1923 and 1925, the World War I hero went to the United States where he was the star attraction in a touring air

circus, in which he re-enacted his aerial combats from the 1914-18 war. The tour was a triumph, attracting 200,000 fans to the show in Chicago. The aerial acrobat became a star, whose story was immortalized in the Hollywood film *The Sky Raider*, in which he played himself.

If America took him so to heart, it was also because he fell in love with the young American, Consuelo Hatmaker, marrying her in 1923 at La Madeleine church in Paris.

In 1927, consumed by the desire to push himself ever further, Nungesser and François Coli took up the challenge to fly from Paris to New York. They took off from Le Bourget airport on May 8,



1927, attempting to cross the Atlantic in their plane, the Oiseau Blanc (White Bird), but disappeared without trace over the ocean. Charles Nungesser was thus a key figure in French-American history, coming to embody the deep bond between the two nations.

## THE “LA FAYETTE” ESCADRILLE, SYMBOL OF THE HISTORY OF FRENCH-AMERICAN RELATIONS

**O**n April 18, 1916, the “Tête de Sioux”, or “American” escadrille (Escadrille N.124), which in time became the “2/4 La Fayette Escadrille” fighter squadron, was formed at Air Base 116 in Luxeuil. At the time it was made up of young Americans, who, in 1914, chose to join the Foreign Legion to fight for justice and freedom, even though the US had yet to enter into the war. It took nearly eighteen months before these pilots, fiercely attached to France and French values, were able to

fight with the Air Force, under French command, while keeping US nationality. Under the command of Captain Georges Thénault, they risked their lives in the “Tête de Sioux” escadrille (Escadrille N.124), which was to become a legend in World War I history. Over two hundred and fifty American pilots fought under the French flag before the US entered



the war. Sixty-eight of them were killed in combat. The “La Fayette Escadrille” was credited with forty-one victories during World War I. Drawing on the heroic past and the traditions of the La Fayette Escadrille, the French aviators of the 2/4 fighter squadron have, since 1973, distinguished themselves in the closed world of nuclear deterrence.

**“La Fayette, we are here!”** Général Pershing, July 4, 1917

**April 18, 1916**  
Escadrille N124, named “La Fayette”, formed  
December 6, 1916

**February 18, 1918**  
The Escadrille was officially made the 103rd Aero Squadron

**December 1, 1942**  
Fighter unit GC II/5 took the name of “La Fayette”

**July 1, 1947**  
GC II/5 becomes GC II/4, thus becoming part of the 4<sup>th</sup> Squadron

**1973**  
“La Fayette” squadron, which became fighter squadron EC 2/4 in 1949, tasked with tactical nuclear duties

**September 1, 2011**  
EC 2/4 “La Fayette” reformed at air base 125 in Istres with the original squadrons

**2018**  
EC 2/4 equipped with two-seater Rafale, at air base 113 in Saint-Dizier



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