

Weightless flight: why not you?

Paris, 4 December 2012 - Who has never dreamed of emulating the astronauts or their childhood comic book or science fiction heroes, flying weightlessly and freely through the air?

Since the conquest of space began, only a few hundred astronauts have ever had the privilege of experiencing the pure emotion, the surprise, the wonder, the jubilation, the euphoria and the magic of these incomparable sensations, these moments that can never be forgotten.

Several thousand people however have also discovered weightless-



ness without ever leaving the atmosphere, on board aircraft specially fitted out for parabolic flights¹. Most of them have been researchers or scientists and their experience has for many years remained beyond the reach of space enthusiasts and those simply looking for adventure.

This morning's announcement in Paris by Yannick d'Escatha, President of CNES, the French Space agency, Jean-François Clervoy², Chairman of Novespace and ESA astronaut, and Gilles Gompertz, CEO of Avico, of the opening to the public of zero-gravity discovery flights on board the Airbus A300 ZERO-G, normally used by the space agencies for their research programmes, now make this dream possible.

A first in Europe

Starting in the first quarter of 2013, special parabolic flights will be arranged from the facilities of Novespace, a subsidiary of CNES and owner of the A300 ZERO-G, at Bordeaux-Mérignac airport, or departing from Paris (Le Bourget airport).

These flights, which for the first time in Europe will be accessible to non-professionals, are being marketed under the name "Air Zero G" by the Avico company, France's leading air broker, which today launched the www.AirZeroG.com website.

The first of the three flights scheduled for 2013 will take place on Friday 15 March.

¹ A parabolic flight is carried out on-board an aircraft which follows alternate climb and descent flight phases called parabolic arcs, thus offering periods of reduced or zero gravity.

² Jean-François Clervoy was selected in 1985 to be a member of the second group of French astronauts and began his astronaut training at Star City near Moscow. He joined the ESA astronaut corps in June 1992 and was sent out to NASA's Johnson Space Center in Houston to obtain his mission specialist qualifications. He performed three missions on the American Space Shuttle, amassing 675 hours in space

The Air Zero G flights

This one-day discovery of weightlessness will include flights of about two and a half hours, comprising 15 parabolic arcs, or a total cumulative time of 5 minutes in weightlessness.

They will accommodate 40 passengers divided into four groups in the free-floating zone, each of which can take ten passengers, a PNS (safety crew) and an instructor.

All the Air Zero G flights will take place in the presence of Jean-François Clervoy who will share his experience as an astronaut with the passengers throughout the course of the day and will participate with each group in turn during the flight.



Typical programme for an Air Zero G flight

- 8h45** Arrival at Novespace (Bordeaux-Mérignac airport)
Arrival formalities, issue of flight suit, preparation for the flight with your instructor
- 9h30** Briefing by Jean-François Clervoy
- Presentation of parabolic flights, the principle, flying techniques, the benefits for science and space research
 - Presentation of the Air Zero G flight crew
 - Description of the zero-g discovery flight (in-flight activities and events).
 - Safety instructions
 - Practical advice for making the most of the periods of weightlessness
- 10h15** Pause
Possibility of visiting the aircraft with your instructor
- 11h00** Light meal
- 12h00** Boarding
- 12h30** Closure of aircraft doors
Flight preparation (on-board safety demonstration)
Take-off
Access to the free-floating zone, preparation for the parabolic flights with your instructor.
For easier acclimatisation, this flight phase begins with a parabolic arc simulating Martian gravity (0.38g) followed by two more simulating gravity on the Moon (0.16g) and then 12 zero-g parabolic arcs (0g)
Return to seats in preparation for landing
- 15h00** Landing
- 15h30** Ceremony
Distribution of diplomas by Jean-François Clervoy
- 16h00** Light meal
Presentation of photos and films taken during the flight (by Novespace)
- 17h30** End



Air Zero G flights are accessible to anyone over 18 on production of an appropriate medical certificate.

Public price: 5,980 euros (tax included).

Information and reservations:

www.AirZeroG.com

Tel. +33 (0)1 58 61 27 27

As part of its duty to promote space activities and its policy of education and the dissemination of scientific culture, several places will be offered by the

CNES on each Air Zero G flight, one to the winner of a competition for students and the other to cultural partners, especially museums (for more information: www.cnes-jeunes.fr/web/CNES-jeunes-fr/7991-projet-parabole-etudiants.php).

Astronaute for a day



With three flights on the American Space Shuttle and more than 3,000 parabolic flights under his belt, Jean-François Clervoy's aim has always been to kindle public interest in space research and all that it has to offer. He is delighted to be able to share some of the magic of Space with a non-professional public: *"Thanks to the Air Zero G parabolic flights, one of the most spectacular aspects of space flight - weightlessness – becomes accessible. For the person discovering it for the first time, all existing notions of heavy and light are turned on their head. This feeling is so strange, that it is easy to see why it fascinates so many scientific disciplines. Experiencing weightlessness during a parabolic flight is really a chance to be an astronaut for a day!"*.

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Photos & videos:

<ftp://ftp.airzerog.fr>

Login: airzerogpresse

Password: dhg24mljs

NOVSPACE

Novespace, a subsidiary of the CNES, was created in 1986 with the aim of promoting microgravity as a scientific experimentation tool. With more than 50 parabolic flight campaigns carried out from 1988 to 1996 on-board its Caravelle Zero G, Novespace then commissioned its Airbus A300 ZERO-G. It organises an average of 6 parabolic flight campaigns per year, primarily for scientific and technological research programmes on behalf of the various space agencies (CNES, ESA, DLR, JAXA, etc.). It has also used the A300 ZERO-G for missions to observe the atmospheric fall-back of the Ariane 5 main cryogenic stage (EPC).

Since the A300 ZERO-G entered service in 1997, Novespace has performed 100 parabolic flight campaigns – the 100th campaign taking place from 3 to 14 December 2012 – making a total of more than 11,500 parabolic arcs and 70 hours of weightlessness.

For more information: www.novespace.fr



Avico is France's leading air broker and can offer an integrated range of air transport services: aircraft charters (incentive operations, business aircraft, sporting events, tourism flights, humanitarian or industrial emergencies, requirements expressed by companies, States and international organisations, etc.), management of aeronautical assets, aircraft sale and leasing, consulting and auditing and operations and airport services.

Avico was founded in 1996 and is based in Paris. It owes its development to its 7 locations worldwide (France, England, Ireland, Spain, Belgium, USA and Senegal), to the trust of more than 200 airlines and to the expertise of the more than 250 experienced staff of 15 nationalities employed by the Group.

Novespace has entrusted Avico with the marketing of the Air Zero G parabolic flights.

For more information: www.avico.com et www.avico-group.com