

The Saint Exupéry Training Centre

The aeronautic patrimony comes to the help of disabled people

Located in the CUERS PIERREFEU airfield (VAR) the CASTEL MAUBOUSSIN FOUNDATION aims at elaborating the training and professional integration of disabled people in the aeronautics fields.

The only organisation of this kind is found in France. Thanks to the help of THALES and DASSAULT AVIATION in the technological fields (aircraft equipments, embartqued camera system, the foundation gives its trainees lessons in theory and practice which will give them the opportunity to take a private pilot licence, provided they obtain medical approval.

After this first step, the trainees wishing to take a professional pilot licence can apply in order to be able to get jobs in various fields such as air survey, forest fire prevention for local SDIS, cargo transport, traffic survey, pollution etc..

Strengthened after several years' experience, the foundation wishes to develop and continue its activity thanks to new partnerships allowing the Foundation to buy and maintain a new aircraft equipped for the needs of handicapped pilots and student-pilots.

These new partnerships will preferably be taken on mid- or long-term in order to give the Foundation the opportunity to contemplate the future with serenity and to carry on its work with the student-pilots throughout their course from the beginning of their training up to their professional insertion.

Origins

The CASTEL MAUBOUSSIN FOUNDATION originated in 1995 thanks to the determination of an AIR France pilot ; LUC ADRIEN, who's always had a passion in aeronautics as well a strong concern for disabled people's cause, and thus ever since he was a teenager.

Aims

To prove that it is possible to provide disabled people (motor or sensorial disabled) with a training followed by the acquisition of a real job in the field of aeronautics. The figures then spoke for themselves: over 200 000 disabled people are unemployed, which is 27% of the active disabled population.

Meanwhile, for these people, very often morally and physically shaken by their handicap, finding a job adapted to « an ordinary way of life » remains the best way to recover and live their life again.

In 1999, the pilot training centre called the SAINT EXUPERY TRAINING CENTER was created. The whole structure was set up at the airfield of CUERS PIERREFEU, in the VAR departement. Helped by the AGEFIPH (association that runs the funds for the insertion of the disabled people), the CASTEL MAUBOUSSIN foundation managed to obtain two aircrafts (MORANE SAULNIER) specially equipped for manual use and managed to get what was needed to ensure its activity).

The first students could at last begin their lessons. Their aim was to take the private pilot licence. But it was not enough, the students wished to earn their living thanks to their passion but that was illegal. A disabled could pilot as an « amateur » but he could not apply for a professional pilot licence.

LUC ADRIEN , helped in his crusade by DORINE BOURNETON , fights in order to obtain an official status for disabled professional pilots from the french government,. A status which gives them today the same guarantees as those given to other pilots. But he has to prove that it is not a dream and show the truth : with equipment adapted to his/her needs, a disabled pilot is as reliable and safe as a « normal » pilot.

This is why the Foundation is looking for private or public sponsors in order to validate the competence of its pilots within real conditions of professional activity. Its aim is to justify the righteousness of its

approach to the Civil Aviation General Direction. In 2002, a first contract was signed with the LOT (south west of France) Fire and Rescue Service (SDIS) and ever since it has been renewed every summer. The CASTEL MAUBOUSSIN FOUNDATION committed itself to the SDIS to provide two pilots as well as an aircraft specially equipped for them. These pilots, on short- term contracts, successfully fulfilled their air survey mission during the summer, which was to prevent forest fire in collaboration with local firemen.

Then the Lot SDIS wished to develop a new device to transfer pictures onboard in order to provide the Rescue Operating centre with a checking point in real time, which is more efficient and faster.

THALES joined the partnership and offered its « savoir-faire » and experience in order to improve the technics of photo transmission in real time. It was so successful that on november 24th 2003, the French Minister of Transports signed a note which allows disabled pilots -provided they obtain a medical approvance- to take and pass the professional pilot licence and therefore make their dream come true. That was a first victory; since the Foundation's early beginnings four disabled students have taken and passed their licence and four others are under training at the moment.

Insertion in the fields of aeronautics

In this sector of activity that employs 130 000 people (GIFAS figures), there was no training or insertion program for disabled people. In this context, the Foundation has, during the past three years, proved that a process of formation and insertion via an economical activity is absolutely necessary in order to :

- help private or public aeronautic industry to reach the quota of 6% of disabled employment.
- achieve the rehabilitation of disabled people in great difficulty
- Bring the number of this population up to the required level

The disabled -always having the COTOREP label- are usually unemployed before they start their formation. Half of them are known by the CAP EMPLOI or ANPE networks. Still aeronautics jobs offered to disabled people can vary:

Learning a job compatible with one's handicap.

On the ground or during a flight, aeronautics can provide a wide panel of jobs.

Ground jobs : good relationships between the CASTEL MAUBOUSSIN Foundation and the Staff Director (DRH) of various big companies (such as AIR FRANCE, DASSAULT, THALES...) shows that someone who volunteers for a job, even on the ground, is more likely to get it if he knows the basic notions of flying.

For instance, if someone volunteers for an air controller job in a company (also called air switchman), then it will help a lot if he is already a private pilot. : the problems encountered by a navigating crew will be familiar to him and it will be easier for him to understand the situation.

Of course they won't all become pilots, all of them won't become air controllers, or long distance flight preparators or flight quality engineers, but all of them will get a job corresponding to their abilities in such fields as mechanics, aircraft maintenance, computing, secretarial (director's assistant), public relations etc...

What they'll all have in common will be their job in an aeronautic company, and their pilot licence (for those who didn't go further) will be a proof of what they are really capable of doing within the company together with a wonderful acknowledgment of themselves after their accident.

Flying jobs

They are all the jobs that can be performed in a flying aircraft. But one has to point out, to avoid confusion, that public passenger transport is not our subject. We're only dealing with aircrafts in charge of very specific missions for public or private company.

Disabled pilots are not allowed to perform passengers flights with paying passengers, still they can be captain with a crew which number is not limited.

These various missions can be for exemple:

- Parachute dropping
- Map survey for a geographic institute
- Air Survey on account of a state corps (Control of road traffic)
- Air control of sensitive areas (MOD activities)
- Forest Fire Control for SDIS authorities
- Off shore research for fresh water
- Off shore pollution control
- Aerial photograph

All these missions are performed in an aircraft with a crew of one, two or three people. Each of them qualified in a specific field such as :

- 1 Pilot
- 2 Co-pilot or an agent of the Corps that required the mission.
- 3 System operator (for instance the person handling the computer on board or the video camera)

Human and material means

The CASTEL MAUBOUSSIN FOUNDATION has at its disposal on the airfield two hangars for the aircrafts, a lecture room equipped with the pedagogical material, offices and three aircrafts equipped with a integrally manual pilot system (flight commands adapted to disabled).

An instructor (a professional pilot) teaches aeronautic theory and

practice to the student-pilots who wish to take their Private Pilot Licence Aircraft (PPLA).

All members of the Foundation are unpaid.

These members, due to their professional background, can teach all required subjects and/or bring some other competence :

-LUC ADRIEN : Chairman and founder of the Association, 747 Boeing Pilot at AIR France.

-PIERRE CROZET, formerly General in the Air Force and commander of the training Center of the Military Airlift Command

-FRANCOIS RIVOIRE, formerly chairman of a private company

-GUY MITAUX-MAUROUARD : ex chief test pilot at DASSAULT AVIATION (RAFALE)

-ROGER PAINDAVOINE :formerly captain in Air Customs

The CASTEL MAUBOUSSIN FOUNDATION partners

The AGEFIPH (Fonds pour l'insertion professionnelle des personnes handicapées) Institutional sponsor, helps student pilots financially (60%)

Contact : Mr PHILIPPE BLANC

DASSAULT AVIATION

THALES Technical partnerships. Provides all the air-control device.

AGPM

Admission process for general formation (non professional pilot)

A disabled person wishing to perform a professional reconversion in the fields of aeronautics will start an administrative journey which will lead him to be accepted as a student pilot (non professionnel at first).

This first formation will be their birth to a new identity among the world of aeronautics, at whichever level they start.

First step: before the pilot inspector of the DGAC, the student pilot must prove that he can get in and out of an aircraft by his own means (in case he needs to eject himself should any accident happen) whatever those means are.

The first medical examination by an aeronautic doctor will show that it is impossible to pilot an ordinary aircraft. Therefore a second examination will be required before a derogation committee which will determine whether the student can pilot an aircraft specially equipped for him. In France there are ten aircrafts specially equipped. The CASTEL MAUBOUSSIN FOUNDATION owns three of them and it is the only association which actually uses them for professional reconversion.

Once these obligations are performed, the new student is integrated to Foundation (which financially participate to 60% of the training fees). The student will only be charged for 15% of the total amount. The 25% remaining amount has so far to be financed by the Foundation's partners (AGPM, AIRBUS...)

The theoretical and practical formation -ground and flight- starts for a time adapted to his psychological handicap (one needs to accept one's new physical condition after an accident. Experience shows that paraplegics need five years to « exist » again) and his physical handicap (strain, tiredness, immobility etc...)

After about 30 hours of flights, the student pilot will be left alone in his aircraft, in order to perform a full traffic pattern. After 45 hours the student pilot will feel more self-confident and be able to fly on his own within a radius of 30 kilometers around the airfield. Then he will take his first official exam (theoretical and practical) : the Basic Brevet (BB) .

After 90 hours, the student will acquire all the notions of the long distance navigation and safety measures. He will be able to file a flight plan and fly on his own over distances of more than 300 km, landing during his flight on several airfields he does not know (official local

stamps required as a proof). He will then be able to take his second official examination, acknowledged world-wide, which will make him a true pilot : the PPL(A)

The private Pilot Licence Aircraft.

To take this exam, he needs to attend five theoretical sessions and if he manages to validate them, he's allowed to take the practical aspect of the examination. That is a four hour flight, in the presence of a instructor -pilot of the DGAC. During the flight, he will have to prove that he is perfectly self reliable, regarding the flight, navigation plan (unpredictable modifications), maniability (ability to fly the aircraft in the full flight enveloppe) , vocabulary (communication with air controllers) etc...

At his stage of the training, the student pilot will cumulate 35 weeks with the FOUNDATION representing :

100 hours of theoretical lessons

7 to 800 hours of personal work (books or EAO)

120 hours of flying lessons

Then, when the pilot has accumulated 150 hours of flight as a captain he will be allowed to work as a trainee in real conditions.

Today, the SDIS 46 of CAHORS employs our pilots every summer during two months in order to prevent forest fire over the whole department. For the past four years these pilots have been in charge of missions (on a short-term contract basis) by the SDIS.

Homologation Process to become a professional Pilot

For those who have already passed their PPL (A) and who can start a professional Pilot Licence, the FOUNDATION now offers another cursus together with the homologating organisations which ensure the theoretical and practical part of the formation. It lasts between 18 and 24 months.

The FOUNDATION succeeded twice: once with the Ministry of

Defence, in the Air Force . A first disabled student entered the Air School at Salon de Provence to take and pass the CPL's theoretical program, which is the first licence which makes it possible to work on an aircraft. He will then be directed to an insertion Company : HANDI AERO SURVEILLANCE (which is in the course of elaboration) before getting a job in the public or private sector.