

La Chronique

Commemoration for the 50 years of the maiden flight of the Alouette II

Toussus-le-Noble, France, March 15, 2005. Rotors du Monde society has organized a commemorative afternoon in Helidan Toussus-le-Noble airport established company's facilities in order to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the first flight of the Alouette II which took place at Le Buc airfield close to Paris on March 12, 1955.

Many personalities of the rotary wing community attended to the ceremony. Program was first announced to the audience by Mr. Patrick Garreau representing Rotors du Monde and who paid homage to the guests. Mr. Philippe Boulay presented then a remarkable history of the helicopter genesis in France prior Mr. Rene Mouille and Mr. Jean Boulet recalled design, test and development of the Alouette II. Mr. Jean-Pierre Bassler (Eurocopter's Publication Department Manager, Direction of Information & Communication) offered them a copy of Gerard Maoui's book " Rotors around the World ".

Two commemorative flights were then accomplished with Helidan F-GPEP registered SE3130 Alouette II s/n 1322 which carried "Aimer la Terre" (Love Earth) titles recalling its previous operator the "Armée de Terre" (Army). The pilot was Mr. Patrick Garreau (Helicopter Professional Pilot & Instructor). Mr. Jean Boulet, Mr. Rene Mouille and Mr. Vincent Furon (Rotors du Monde) took place for the first ride. Mr. Charles Schmitt, retired Director of Heli-Union, Mr. Charles Chung, H.A.I. International VP, and Mr. Roger Barson, son of Rene Barson who was the early Alouettes flight test mechanic, were on board for the second rotation.

A French Air Force "Fennec" helicopter and its crew from EH 03/067 "Parisis", the last air force unit to have operated the Alouette, also attended to the ceremony. The military chopper flew in formation with the Alouette II to take air-to-air pictures during the first flight and to take one's leave of the public prior heading back to its nearby base of Villacoublay.

A cocktail took then place still in Helidan's facilities in a very pleasant and friendly atmosphere.

Mrs. and Mr. Mouille as well as Mr. Jean Boulet have been very sensitive to that commemorative day which was organized with the support of Eurocopter, the Accor Group, Corsair and Helidan. Rotors du Monde society also would like to thank " Rapace 22 " crew of French Air Force EH 03/067 "Parisis" from Villacoublay and Mr. Lemerrier (Toussus-le-Noble Airport Deputy Commander) for their cooperation.

Last word is for Mr. Patrick Garreau to whom we have asked what was his feeling to have both Mr. Jean Boulet and Mr. Rene Mouille as passengers : *"It is first a tremendous delight but it is also the intimidation and pride to have on board the father of the Alouette as well as THE pilot who allowed the development of that gem. I believe that we try to fly and follow the procedures more than ever in order to be worthy of those illustrious passengers. On that day, I didn't really feel as being the pilot, but I was representing the whole corporation that did not have the opportunity to join and that owe so much to them. Probably the best return that I get after the flight was that little glow in their eyes but that is something that you can't tell ..."*

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