

Aviation Sans Frontières Honored at Bastille Day Ceremonies



This year's Bastille Day (July 14th) ceremonies in France are dedicated to healthcare providers and others who mobilized against the coronavirus. A special tribute will be made to those fighting the pandemic on the front line, including the teams of Aviation Sans Frontières.

Critical air support for medical relief

From the start of the crisis, Aviation Sans Frontières (Aviation Without Borders) mobilized the aviation community to provide logistical support to hospital centers and to caregivers across France. The humanitarian organization, best known for its activities in sub-Saharan Africa, offered healthcare workers quick and comfortable transportation to hospitals where they were needed, principally in northeast France and around Paris.

To improve efficiency and responsiveness, the organization set up an online platform coupled with a team of flight operations managers that connected caregivers with private aircraft operators, including aircraft manufacturers and flight schools.

In total, more than 420 caregivers were flown at no charge to 65 destinations, mostly in France (60), but also in Switzerland, Luxembourg and as far as the UK.

The results of the operations organized by Aviation Sans Frontières between April 7 and June 30, 2020:

- More than 435 hours flown
- More than 300 legs
- More than 420 passengers carried
- Twenty-six operators participating
- Twenty-four different aircraft types used from the four-seat Cirrus SR22 to the Dassault Falcon trijet
- Sixty-five airports visited in France and elsewhere in Europe

This new method for transporting caregivers can be quickly reactivated in the event the healthcare system experiences a new wave of the Covid-19 pandemic. The mechanism is dormant for the moment, but participants are committed to mobilizing as necessary.

Supporting hospitals and nursing homes in Ile de France (the Paris region)

In addition to transporting caregivers, ASF organized an unprecedented mobilization of flight attendants grounded by the crisis, providing volunteers to hospitals and other care facilities. After specialized training, these air transport professions were able to support hospital staff from AP-HP, Public Assistance and Hospitals of Paris. They have provided critical reinforcements in the care of patients and families dealing with Covid-19. In Ile de France hospitals and nursing homes, they have been an invaluable resource for reception, support and prevention. They are also participating in COVISAN, a group established by the government to stop the spread of the epidemic after containment. To date, there are still 200 volunteers in the field.

The Bastille Day ceremonies pay tribute to the commitment of all of the aviation and health professionals who have been mobilized. Until the pandemic has been overcome, Aviation Sans Frontières teams and partners will remain ready to fly into action.

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