

3AF MP

Profile of Dominique Teyssier

DOMINIQUE TEYSSIER AND JEAN-LUC OTAL, MEMBER OF THE SPACE TOURISM 3AF MP TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

Our French sister section is 3AF MP, l'Association Aéronautique et Astronautique de France, Midi-Pyrénées chapter, www.3af-mp.fr. See the Section News pages for the 3AF MP organization [chart](#). More information is soon to be placed on our web site at www.aiaahouston.org, but that has not yet been transferred from our former web site, www.aiaa-houston.org.

The relevant committee is in the technical branch of AIAA Houston Section, the International Space Activities Committee (ISAC), as shown on our organization [chart](#). The ISAC is chaired by [Ludmila Dmitriev-Odier](#).

Right: Image of Dominique Teyssier, Courtesy of 3AF MP.

Right: Image source for map, flag and coat of arms: [Wikipedia](#). Map of the Ardèche "departement" (in red) and the rest of France. Image credit: [Marmelad](#). The flag of the Ardèche "departement" in France. Image credit: [user:Spedona](#). The unofficial coat of arms of the Ardèche "departement" in France. Image credit: [Sryatsu](#).



Dominique Teyssier, Leader of the SME SatSys (SatCom System, Specialized in Satellite Telecommunications for Aircraft) and One of the First French Citizens to Reserve a Ticket to Achieve a "Baptism of Space" Aboard the Spaceship Developed by Virgin Galactic

\$200,000 for a few minutes of weightlessness! Even if the sum seems exorbitant to some, there are men who would like to realize their dream, and this has no price according to them! Dominique Teyssier is one of them. Leading SatSys, SME with ten employees and realizing an annual turnover of 500,000 euros, he did not hesitate to open his wallet for this opportunity. And when others accuse him of wasting his money, well, he once replied, "It seems to me that in France, money has always been a taboo subject. Many people buy expensive cars, boats, country houses for amounts far higher. I could do the same but that does not interest me. I am more challenged by 'being' than by 'having.' This is why I chose to participate in this adventure."

etched in my memory and even then made me feel like doing at least what Gagarin had done in 1961 [being the

first person in space and the first person to orbit Earth]," says Dominique Teyssier. In (Continued on page 15)



Dominique Teyssier's Childhood Dream

"When I was eight, I remember a movie showing only once at our only movie theater, a single screening, in our tiny village in Ardèche (France) where my father was a schoolteacher. The movie was, 'The Day the Earth Stood Still,' directed by Robert Wise. We were not many, maybe 10 or 15 students [in the theater]. It was the first time I went to the movies. This film is

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1969, he watched, enthralled, the images in black and white of Aldrin walking on the Moon on the television that his father placed outside the village's only shop, a small store that belonged to his grandmother. Memories! Yet when it came time to choose his path, he did not really know what to do for a living. He first began studying physics and chemistry, before entering business school, guided by his desire to work internationally. In the early 1980s, just graduated, he moved to Paris and worked in a travel agency. One foot in travel and soon another foot in aeronautics... In 1991, he earned a private pilot license in France, then the IFR flight rating (IFR, English for Instrument Flight Rules) and a commercial pilot license in Miami. He was lightly touching his finger on his childhood dream of becoming a pilot. But fate decided otherwise. At the time, "Of about 2,000 pilot graduates, half were unem-

ployed." recalls Dominic Teyssier. For two years, despite an economic downturn, he sought a position, a good career job... in vain.

Dominique Teyssier's Chance

"Many children dream of being a pilot, fireman or astronaut. The hardest thing is to realize one's dreams. I have the chance to do it," Dominique Teyssier can say now, sitting at his desk, filled with model airplanes and helicopters. Even though he did not have a career as a pilot, he will be in the shoes of an astronaut one day soon. In 2008 he discovered by chance that tickets were available for purchase to board the spaceship of the billionaire Chairman and CEO of The Virgin Group, Richard Branson. He participated in many phone calls with Virgin in England, then with World Travelers, the travel agency that markets such space travel in France, but without success. He re-

mained undeterred. Three months later he received a call from Jean-Luc Wibaux, consultant for World Travelers. "Just checking to ensure you are still interested..." In September 2011, his dream moved closer to reality when he received a letter from Virgin Galactic telling him that he was booked on SpaceShipTwo (the rocket airplane glider to be launched [dropped for an air launch at high altitude] by the mother ship, the airplane White Knight Two) and he received a giant book full of images of his future journey. "Right now, my relatives do not realize what I will be doing, but my staff is aware and smiling. As for my clients who are aware, they find it good. Some are jealous." says Dominique Teyssier. For him it is "...the culmination, the realization of the efforts made since 2001, when I worked tirelessly to support my products and my company." Today, he looks forward to the

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Left: Virgin Galactic mother ship White Knight Two. Image credit: D. Miller. Image source: Wikipedia.

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“being” than by “having.”***

Dominique Teyssier

Right: SpaceShipOne test pilot Mike Melvill after the launch in pursuit of the Ansari X Prize on September 29, 2004. Photo taken by RenegadeAven during Civil Air Patrol duties. Date: 29 September 2004. Image source: Wikipedia. Image credit: Renegadeaven at en.wikipedia.

Right: White Knight Two and SpaceShipTwo directly overhead during a flyby at Spaceport America. The Virgin Galactic logo is clearly visible on the underside of SS2. Date: 22 October 2010, 13:52:07. Image source: [Wikipedia](#). Image credit: [Jeff Foust](#).

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moment when he can, “... unbuckle my seat belt and experience weightlessness, floating in space, closer to the stars, enjoying the beauty of Earth from above.”

Before becoming a space traveler, Dominique Teyssier recalled, “In 1990, I left my position as marketing manager in a company that sold spare parts for aircraft to create my own company, AeroSoft. For three or four years, I made it work with a three-person team, creating flight planning software. Then I worked in the trading of aircraft (business jets and helicopters mostly) until 1999,

when I was hired by a startup in Toulouse, France, Easy Flying. This company specialized in flight planning on the internet, very innovative at the time. The adventure lasted until 2001, when the internet bubble burst. While we were the first software to market, investors [did not come our way to support us and make us a success]. The fall was very rapid. Having a hard time finding work, I decided to create SatSys in 2001, a company specializing in satellite telecommunications for aircraft.

“At SatSys, we design and manufacture satellite communication products for aeronau-

tical satellite systems, mostly for government aircraft and helicopters for telephony and internet access, software tracking system (which tracks the 3D trajectory of an aircraft) or cameras that take pictures and video for surveillance helicopters. I sell my products to the majority of manufacturers of aircraft and helicopters.

“When I created SatSys, I had to invest in everything by myself: technical studies, the first test prototype flight, etc. I experienced very difficult times. It took four years to get the first real contract, one with Eurocopter in 2005.

“Today, the goal of SatSys is to install our products on anything that flies. If our competitors are large companies such as Alcatel, Cassidian and Thales, this does not prevent us from doing well in the marketplace, because, like all small companies, we are able to produce ‘sheep with five legs’ [unusual products] for our customers.

“To date, our products are designed in Montréal and manufactured in Toulouse, and we operate commercially in Europe, Turkey, Canada and the United Arab Emirates, which together account for 80% of our turnover.

“Efforts have happily paid off. Today, our equipment is present on everything from very small aircraft such as unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) to the Boeing 747, and why not one day on White Knight Two and SpaceShipTwo?”

