Press Release

Perlan Project partners with Airbus Group to fly a glider to the edge of space

Airbus Perlan Mission II to build the world's most advanced glider and fly it to 90,000 feet (27,432 metres) by surfing enormous mountain air waves

Mission is set to break all wing-borne altitude records for sustained flight by manned aircraft and harvest invaluable data about our atmosphere and ozone layer

Oshkosh, Wisconsin – July 28th, 2014 – Perlan Project Inc., a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit aeronautical exploration and atmospheric science research organization that utilizes sailplanes (gliders) designed to fly at extremely high altitudes is pleased to announce that it has partnered with Airbus Group – a global leader in aerospace – to fly a glider to the edge of space (+90,000 feet – 27,432 metres).

Airbus Perlan Mission II was unveiled today at the EAA AirVenture Oshkosh fly-in convention, the largest annual gathering of aviation enthusiasts and professionals in the U.S., by Jean Botti, Chief Technical Officer at Airbus Group, and Einar Enevoldson, Chairman, Founder and Pilot at Perlan Project Inc.

Tom Enders, CEO of Airbus Group, stated, "Our company is built on the shoulders of aviation pioneers who pushed boundaries in their own times – people who flew higher, farther, faster. Hence, when we learned of the Perlan Project and its quest to soar to record heights, we knew we needed to find a way to be a part of it. Partnering with the Perlan team is consistent with our core values of furthering innovation in aerospace and of inspiring the next generation of designers, manufacturers and aviators."

"After a thorough evaluation of the engineering and scientific planning behind the Perlan Project, Airbus Group is convinced that this important mission will be a success," stated Botti. "We believe it is critically important for us to advance climate science and aerodynamics research. With the Airbus Perlan Mission II, we particularly see an opportunity to gain experience and data related to very high altitude flight – an area of interest for future aerospace applications."

Einar commented that "when Perlan Project began focusing on securing partnerships to help us complete the mission, we never dreamed we would be so fortunate as to secure a partner of the calibre of Airbus Group. Thanks to their technological and financial support, we are well on our way to the edge of space. Now it's just a matter of completing the world's most innovative glider and catching the right wave."

"We are proud and excited to be a part of the project team, and we look forward to bringing our engineering and manufacturing expertise to the table to help ensure the success of the Airbus Perlan Mission II," added Airbus Group CEO Enders.

Perlan Project is still seeking sponsors and partners and associates for the mission and its international educational programmes seeking to inspire and promote science and technology education.

The Perlan Project Story

From 1992-98, Perlan's founder and NASA test pilot Einar Enevoldson collected evidence on a weather phenomenon that no one at the time even knew existed: stratospheric mountain waves. Like huge ocean waves, these waves of air are kicked off by strong winds blowing over the tops of high mountain ranges like the Andes. These waves of air then shoot straight up towards space. As a pilot, Einar quickly figured out that you can use a glider to ride those waves all the way up to near space. And he set out to prove it. This became The Perlan Project.

In 1998 meteorologist Dr. Elizabeth Austin teamed up with Einar and expanded upon his findings proving that it is the stratospheric polar night jet and the polar vortex that are factors in sustaining these mountain waves allowing them to reach up to 130,000 feet (39,624 metres).

In 1999 Steve Fossett, the record-setting aviator, sailor, adventurer and first person to fly solo non-stop around the world in a balloon, decided to fund Perlan Mission I and became one of its pilots.

On August 30, 2006 Steve Fossett and Einar Enevoldson smashed the existing altitude record for gliders by soaring up to 50,671 feet (15,460m) in a standard glider using these stratospheric waves of air.

And they could have gone even higher!

The problem was that their pressure suits expanded so much inside the cabin that they couldn't move the flight controls and safely control the aircraft anymore. So they came down, and quickly decided they needed a custom glider with a pressurized cabin.

. . . . . Perlan Mission II was born.

In 2014 Airbus Group became the partner and title sponsor of Airbus Perlan Mission II.

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Sometime in 2015/16 the Airbus Perlan Mission II intends to set new altitude records by flying a purpose-built pressurized high-altitude glider (the Perlan 2) higher than any other manned wing borne aircraft has ever flown in sustained flight using stratospheric mountain waves and the polar vortex and in so doing harvest invaluable data about earth's atmosphere and its ozone layer

About Perlan Project Inc. - www.perlanproject.org
Perlan Project Inc. is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit aeronautical exploration and atmospheric science research organization that utilizes sailplanes (gliders) designed to fly at extremely high altitudes.

About Airbus Group – www.airbusgroup.com
Airbus Group is a global leader in aeronautics, space and related services. In 2013, the Group – comprising Airbus, Airbus Defence and Space and Airbus Helicopters – generated revenues of € 57.6 billion and employed a workforce of around 139,000.

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