

Thomas Pesquet : biography and training

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KRr43tZdZKE>

Born in Rouen, France, Thomas Pesquet was an aerospace engineer and pilot before he was selected to join ESA's Astronaut Corps. As the youngest of ESA's new recruits, he completed the basic training programme designed to prepare trainee astronauts for the mental and physical challenges ahead.

Training for a flight is very, very long and it encompasses so many different things : languages, physical fitness, technology, science and also a lot of exploration type training, which I think is good, and really the principle is take a bunch of astronauts, put them in a very difficult, unusual situation underwater for nine days, or in a cave so it's skill-based technical training but also pretty much psychological training, and I'm glad I did a lot of this the first time around because it prepares you well for space.

In 2016 Thomas became the fourth French astronaut to travel to the ISS, launched inside a Russian Soyuz crew module from Baikonur in Kazakhstan. He spent almost six months onboard the Station as flight engineer, during which he worked on an international programme of experiments and carried out maintenance tasks including two spacewalks.

After returning to Earth, Thomas worked as a CAPCOM, acting as an interface between astronauts and ground control at NASA's Johnson Space Center.

He also began preparing for the upcoming Alpha mission, which will see him return to the ISS.

Throughout training, his spaceflight experience has made him a valuable asset to both colleagues and instructors.

This time I'm more into passing the knowledge kind of attitude, because there is this experience that I've had of being on the Station, so even with the instructors they're telling us, 'This is how it works' then you can have a conversation and say, 'Hey but on the Station we use it this way, maybe... doesn't it make more sense to use it this way?', etc. etc. '

Thomas has trained at centres across the world with the Station's international partners, becoming familiar with latest procedures and new hardware. By launch, he'll be ready for every eventuality in orbit.

The training is very diverse, every Space Agency is responsible for their own parts and bits and pieces so you go from NASA to Russia and here in ESA, and the specificity that we have here in Europe is that there's another layer there's a European component run by ESA, and then there's a national component run by CNES, they pick some experiments, they're funding them and they're sending them to the ISS.

Thomas Pesquet's upcoming mission will happen in a year which marks 20 years of ESA astronauts onboard the ISS.

Like those who came before him, he'll use the opportunity to build on his experience and practise new skills continuing to take European human spaceflight to the next level.