AVIATION ON MARS? AIRBUS PERLAN 2 GLIDER TO HELP TEST ITS LIMITS

News / Manufacturer

By pushing the atmospheric envelope at the edge of Earth’s stratosphere, the Airbus Perlan 2 glider’s next tests should pave the way for both future aviation on Mars and Earth-based commercial hypersonic aircraft, Allan McArtor, the Chairman and CEO of Airbus Group, Inc.. told me.

The Perlan 2 sailplane/glider, which had its first test flight last September in Oregon, will attempt to reach its optimal cruising altitude of 90,000 feet as early as this coming June in Argentina , says McArtor. When it does, it will be the highest that any winged vehicle, powered or otherwise has gone.

As part of the Perlan Project — a nonprofit supported by title sponsor Airbus Group and others; the glider’s two-man crew will scientifically sample the stratosphere at altitudes exceeding those of even the U-2 and the SR-71 spy planes.

McArtor stresses that Perlan 2 will offer NASA and other space agencies what he terms the first real in situ flight data in an environment analogous to Mars' own atmosphere.

"Perlan 2's wingspan [of some 84 feet] will just barely fit between first and second base," said McArtor. But he says it should allow the Perlan Project to learn whether that's a wingspan that would allow for optimum maneuverability in Mars' two percent atmosphere. And Perlan should also give the team real time data on how the craft would handle banking and potential stalls in such a Martian atmosphere.

An artist's conception of the Airbus Perlan Mission II glider at its target altitude of 90,000 feet, which it will

Image not found or type unknown

An artist's conception of the Airbus Perlan Mission II glider at its target altitude of 90,000 feet, which it will reach later this year without benefit of an angine, setting a world altitude record in the process. Credit: Airbus Perlan Mission II.

SOURCE: FORBES
ARTICLE LINK:
https://50skyshades.com/index.php/news/manufacturer/aviation-on-mars-airbus-perlan-2-glider-to-help-test-its-limits