

IN ENGLISH, PLEASE



L'anglais pour voler
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THE JERSEY CHRONICLES CHAPTER 1 - DAYS 1 TO 3

Day 1 - First Air Experience

On arriving at the aero club, Hélène meets Neil, her flying instructor, who sets the objective for this first flight: observe the primary effect of an aircraft's main flight controls. The lesson starts on the ground, in the briefing room where Neil, with the help of a small wooden model aircraft, explains the basics of flight. Hélène is not a total novice on the subject, having flown quite a bit with Eliot, so the words ailerons, rudder, elevator, yaw, pitch or roll are not completely new to her. After booking out with ATC, to let the control tower know of their intention to work in the south-east training area, they walk to the aircraft and continue preparing for the flight by going through the various checklists. During the external inspection, as they walk around the PA28, Neil points out the various items that must be checked before each flight. Continuing inside, the pre-start, starting and after-starting checks are completed. They listen to the ATIS before requesting taxi clearance, then taxi out to the holding point, and complete the engine power and pre-take off checks.

Once airborne, Hélène has her first taste of the "you have control", "I have control" ritual each time Neil hands the controls over to her. He encourages her to look outside more, at "the big picture", rather than at the instru-

ments, "the small picture". She also has her first tentative steps at trimming. The view of the island from above - and of the Normandy coast on the horizon - is probably awesome, but Hélène is so focused on trying to keep the damn thing straight and level between maneuvers that she doesn't really have the opportunity to enjoy the scenery. Also, the training area is above water, which adds a little to the difficulty of finding reference points. Back at the club house, Hélène feels elated. From what she has experienced today in terms of travel organization and flying training, she comes to the conclusion that learning to fly in Jersey is definitely a viable project.

Day 2 - Medical certificate

However, before committing herself further to the adventure, Hélène decides to worry about medical certification. It would be too bad to be unable to complete her training because of some unforeseen medical problem. The medical certificate must be delivered by an Approved Medical Examiner (AME) of the State of Licence Issue (SOLI). The Aero Club provides the name and phone number of Jersey's only AME and, in the days following her first flight, Hélène starts making inquiries. As could be expected, the price of the medical examination is much higher in Jersey than in France. There is always the possibility of getting a French medical certificate and having it transferred to the UK CAA, but it means a lot of time wasted in paperwork. It also incurs a transfer fee to be paid to the CAA, as well as additional expenses for the translations in English - authenticated by a certified translator - of the required documents. It seems to be a lot of hassle for questionable gain, so Hélène chooses to keep things simple and she gets her medical certificate on her second trip to Jersey.

Day 3 - Getting drenched

It rained all day the day before and it is still grey and windy in the morning, but Hélène decides to go all the same. Her foot passenger day trip ticket is not refundable anyway. If flying is not an option due to the conditions, there is always the possibility of learning some theory or chatting with other grounded club members. It could even be an opportunity to discover some of Jersey's landmarks - other than the airport - one of the island's mottos being: "don't let the rain damper your day". On the ferry, the first message from the captain is that, due to the weather and tide conditions, the crossing might be a bit rough, especially during the last 20 minutes, when the boat has to face the open sea to enter Jersey's harbour. Passengers are advised to take extra care when they are moving in the cabin, particularly if they are carrying hot beverages or food. Knowing the predilection of the British for understatement, Hélène gets ready for a bumpy ride. Actually, the sea gets rough straight after exiting Saint Malo's harbour. The crew is on high alert, ready to dispense sick bags to weary passengers with the background music of metal dishes crashing around in the ship's galley. As expected, the lesson is cancelled due to the gusty winds. Early in the afternoon, it starts raining and, as the saying goes, it never rains but it pours!

The two lessons to be learnt from this trip are that if you want to learn to fly in Jersey you need good sea legs and if you don't want the rain to damper your day, you'd better carry proper rain gear! Hélène is quite happy that this episode happened this early in her training, as it will inevitably happen again. At least now she has a better idea of what to expect.

Vocabulary

THE DAMN THING	la fichue machine
DAMP	humide
TO PUT A DAMPER ON STH	gâcher
DRENCHED	trempé
TO BE ELATED	être ravi
THE GALLEY	la cuisine de bord
A LOT OF HASSLE	beaucoup de complications
TO HAVE GOOD SEA LEGS	avoir le pied marin
RAIN GEAR	Un équipement contre la pluie
A SAYING	un proverbe
TENTATIVE	timide, hésitant