

Ex-Marine pilot dreams of ferrying folks into space

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Mark Stucky, surnommé "Forger", pilote d'essai pour Virgin Galactic, le 7 février 2019 à Washington

Mark Stucky fought in the Iraq war, once buzzed a Soviet warplane over the Sea of Japan and has flown all sorts of experimental aircraft.

Now, his dream is a taste of routine and repetition: to make the same trip as often as possible, in the same aircraft, ferrying six wealthy passengers into [space](#).

"Forger", as he is nicknamed, is a [test pilot](#) for the space travel company Virgin Galactic, founded by British billionaire Richard Branson.

Flying an aircraft called SpaceShipTwo, for a few minutes on December 13, 2018 he flew across the boundary into space over the Mojave Desert in California.

It is this kind of flight that Virgin Galactic hopes to make available on a weekly basis to rich customers, some day.

"This is a test pilot's dream," said Stucky, a 60-year-old former Marine with short gray hair.

"I want to do every flight," he added, although he will have to share them with other Virgin test pilots until flights get going on a regular basis—not before the end of the year, even if all goes well.

Reaching space remains a complex and dangerous feat. A friend of Stucky flying for Virgin died in 2014 after a wrong command in midair caused the aircraft to disintegrate.

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