Beat: Sports

OLYMPIC TORCH RELAY CARRIED BY THOMAS PESQUET&101 YEARS OLD VET. ROGER LEBRANCHU

MONT ST MICHEL, NORMANDY

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USPA NEWS - Today, on Friday, 31st May the Olympic torch arrived in the iconic Mont Saint Michel, in La Manch Department, Normandy. One of the most notorious native form Normandy, the French astronaut Thomas Pesquet, carried the Torch, from the up the hill of the Mont Saint Michel, lite to the cauldron, lite up by Roger le Branchu, a dynamic and highly beloved and respected veteran, who at one hundred and one years, carried the torch. The French Minister of Culture Rachida Dati, held his arm, and walked with him, in the arena, of Paris 20224. Our correspondent, present on site, managed to ask questions to both Thomas Pesquet and Roger Lebranchu. We publish the short interviews, in this report

THOMAS PESQUET THE MOST FAMOUS FRENCH ASTRONAUT IS PROUD TO CARRY THE TORCH HE IS PROUD TO CARRY THE TORCH IN HIS NATIVE NORMANDY

Thomas Pesquet, the notorious young French astronaut, speaks to the journalists on site, as he has just completed the short journey from the abbey of Mont Saint Michel; knowing that the flame had difficulty lighting between the previous torchbearer and Thomas Pesquet, at the top of Mont Saint Michel where the wind is strong, in a metro, alternating sun and drops of rain. Yes, I'm super proud to carry the Olympic flame, because it's a unique moment for an athlete."

USPA QUESTION to Astronaut THOMAS PESQUET
Is it even more special for Thomas Pesquet, an iconic French Astronaut, famous in the USA but also the rest of the world, to carry the Olympic flame in Normandy, he, who is a native of this region, with a strong historical connection with the United States."

RESPONSE FROM THOMAS PESQUET to USPA:
"Yes, it's a very special moment, because indeed as a child of Normandy, and especially a few days before the commemoration of the 80th anniversary of D-Day. The United States is following us for the Olympic and Paralympic Games and also particularly in this momentum of the 80’s anniversary of D-Day, in Normandy, Libertyland.

TWO TEAM REALS SPICE UP THE DAY
The cycling team relay, orchestrated by the French Cycling Federation (FFC), played out against the majestic backdrop of Mont-Saint-Michel, assembling a 24-strong peloton featuring past and present champions and volunteers and riders of all ages. Riding alongside Guillaume Martin, the captain of this relay, was Nathalie Diart, a former road cyclist who participated in the first Games to include women's cycling, Los Angeles 1984. Claude Carlin, a 1984 and 1988 Olympian, also flew the flag for the discipline, as did Lydie Mahe, the 2023 double French champion and three-time French Cup winner in para-cycling. This team relay was a prime opportunity to shine a light on the twelve disciplines promoted by the FFC, from road and track cycling to mountain biking, BMX racing and Freestyle, and even cycle polo.

Earlier that day, another team relay went down in Sainte-Mère-Eglise, paying tribute to 24 youngsters aged 15 to 25 in civic service roles. Among those taking turns carrying the Olympic torch were Adeline Passard, doing civic duty with the Manche Handball Committee to roll out a collective project; Fanny Rivallant, serving with the Manche education authority to help with educational, teaching and citizenship activities at primary schools; and Ethan Larsonneur, a young volunteer with the Universal National Service at the Cornat high school.

NEARLY 120 TORCHBEARERS FROM HOUSEHOLD NAMES TO UNSUNG HEROES STEP THE FOR FTHE RELAY

The crowd lining the route got to salute inspiring figures such as Victorien Erussard, a staunch advocate for the environment. His standout performance at age 26 in the Route du Rhum, where he clinched a podium finish despite never having spent a night at sea before, marked a pivotal moment in his life. Together with this boat and his teams, he sails around the world to raise awareness of the need to protect the oceans through documentaries and school projects. 24-year-old Pauline Mazier, a licensed referee with Union Sportive Avranches Mont-Saint-Michel, carried the Olympic torch at the Abbey of Mont-Saint-Michel.

The relay drew together big names such as Thomas Pesquet, Europe's most seasoned astronaut, who showed up on the ramparts of the rocky outcrop, not far from Daniel Mangeas, the voice of the Tour de France until 2014 and also the French race walker Maëlle Bire-Heslouis.
Other sporting icons took their turn at Mont-Saint-Michel, including Felicia Ballanger, the invincible track queen from 1995 to 2000, and the Olympic skeet shooter Éric Delaunay, who came in seventh in Rio 2016 and fifth in Tokyo 2020. There was also Roger Lebranchu, who will turn 102 in July and is a walking tale of resilience. After surviving Buchenwald, he went on to become a multiple rowing champion. He lit the cauldron at the end of the day, accompanied by his grandson, symbolising his determination and indomitable sporting spirit.

Tomorrow, the Olympic torch will knock on the door of Brittany in Ille-et-Vilaine. It will begin its journey with a deep breath of fresh air in Saint-Malo, the famous Privateer City. The remainder of the stage will take it to Feins, with a segment in the Etang de Boulet, before moving on to Fougeres, Paimpont and Saint-Just before reaching the Breton capital of Rennes.

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