

Jake Kenny - Grayburn Scholarship

My earliest memory of aviation was visiting a local airfield cafe as a child with my grandad. Ever since I have longed to fly, so when the opportunity to apply for the scholarship arose I couldn't be more excited.

The selection panel were very friendly but the interview was tough and I went away thinking of all the things I wished I had said. To my utter surprise, I was greeted with good news the next day.



Then it came to the summer, time for the adventure to begin!

I arrived to find a fantastic atmosphere, my instructor Carmen was everything you could ask for from a great instructor. We spent the first week or so learning pre-flight checks, the essential flight manoeuvres and emergency drills.

The next Wednesday I watched Carmen step out of the cockpit and wave goodbye. My first solo, just eight days after the start of training! Around ten minutes after takeoff, the wheels of my C152 touched the ground once again and it was all over. A cosmic experience I will never forget.

After going solo the confidence in my ability as an aviator developed greatly, in this period I consolidated the skills learned pre-solo with myself as the only tool for evaluation. It gave me a sense of responsibility I have been yet to find elsewhere in life.

The post-solo fun was over, now came the most daunting part, navigation! Although this was the most challenging part of the course it was by far the most rewarding. From seeing places I've never noticed in my local area to getting 'unlost' over Gloucester. Navigation gave me a great taste of what flying is like after achieving the PPL.



Being situated very close to Birmingham Airport, Coventry Airport is subject to airspace restrictions. To practice obtaining and responding to airspace clearances, my instructor and I took the opportunity to fly directly over the Birmingham Airport runway, the UK's 7th busiest airport! This experience gave a small insight into the aerodromes I could be landing at in the future.

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With 45 hours exactly, the dreaded skills test was finally here. Due to the short time period of my training, I didn't complete my final exam until the day before, only adding to the apprehension. After spending all night preparing I was nervous the morning of the skills test.



I wasn't looking forward to the fact the route involved crossing a MATZ (military air traffic zone), nor was the weather ideal, despite this it went surprisingly smooth. We arrived back at Coventry Airport to conduct the landing stage of the test. Having learned the crosswind was too strong this section had to be done the next day, meaning another anxious night's sleep.

The next morning, three landings later, it was all over. I had just become a private pilot! A goal I have dreamed of for years had just turned into a reality. Just three weeks and two days after first arriving, it was already over.

Probably the fastest and most exciting three weeks of my life so far, this is an experience I will never forget. It was made even better by all the amazing people at Almat Aviation. Especially to Carmen and Glynn for helping to accommodate my tricky timelines, I can't thank everyone there enough!

I'd also like to give a huge thank you to the Honourable Company of Air Pilots as this opportunity would never have been achievable at this stage of my life without your help. What I have been able to achieve thanks to your organisation is unthinkable, I will forever be grateful for the generosity of Mr Grayburn and the members of the Company.



As for the future, I have my final year of Sixth Form to finish. Once I have my A-Levels I hope to enrol on to an integrated course with a provider such as L3, if possible to a scheme such as Generation easyJet. Regardless of the path I take towards a career as an airline pilot, this scholarship will prove invaluable, not only in terms of technical skills but also with the personal skills I have gained along with a greater confidence in my own ability. In all, this scholarship has fuelled me more than ever to further pursue my dreams to fly as a commercial airline pilot.

Once again I'd like to extend a sincere thank you to the Honourable Company of Air Pilots. To anyone who is considering whether to apply (as I was last year), I couldn't recommend it more.