



Rajhaan Hayman - RAFCT Gliding Scholarship

An Unforgettable Week

This past summer of 2025, I had the incredible opportunity to participate in a gliding scholarship with The Honourable Company of Air Pilots at the Portsmouth Naval Gliding Centre (PNGC), based at Middle Wallop and Upavon Airfields. I had no idea what to expect from gliding, but the week turned out to be one of the most exhilarating experiences of my life.

Taking to the Skies

I flew in the ASK-21 glider and even got to try a motor glider, which offered a completely different, powered flying experience. Being part of a syndicate was a highlight of the week. I teamed up with others to prepare and retrieve our glider, challenging ourselves to work as efficiently as possible. It was amazing to see how quickly we gelled as a team.

Learning the controls was both fascinating and humbling—each flight demanded intense focus as I gripped the stick, adjusted the rudder pedals, and managed the airbrakes to navigate take-offs, circuits, and landings. My instructors were phenomenal, guiding me through every step, from winch launches to soaring through the skies. The post-flight reviews truly shaped my progress. After each flight, we'd sit down to dissect my mistakes, turning every error into a valuable lesson and boosting my confidence to handle the ASK-21, N7, more effectively on the next flight. By the end of the week, I was taking off and flying circuits independently—a thrill I'll never forget.

Staying on the military base at Middle Wallop, I had the privilege of dining and socializing in the Officers' Mess, listening to instructors' stories and getting a taste of Army life.

Discovering New Horizons

The week wasn't just about flying; it opened my eyes to a world of aviation careers I hadn't previously considered. Talks from seasoned pilots and professionals introduced me to diverse paths, such as becoming a helicopter pilot or serving in the armed forces. I left with a clearer vision of where I could take my passion. I'm already planning to return to Middle Wallop and join a gliding club closer to home to continue building my skills.

A Heartfelt Thank You

I can't thank The Honourable Company of Air Pilots, the Air Pilots Trust, and the PNGC volunteers enough for making this week possible. If you're passionate about flying, I highly recommend this scholarship. It's an experience that will stay with me forever, and I'm incredibly excited to see where this journey takes me next.

