

Gliding Report – Tinashe Masama

First of all if you are reading this and you are thinking of applying for the gliding scholarship JUST DO IT!!!!. Go for it. Does not matter what grades you have or where you come from, it all relies on your hard work and determination. Anyway, enough of the boring motivational talk. Let's get into this. At first I'm going to be really honest with you, I had no faith whatsoever that I would get the scholarship. But thanks to the Honourable Company of Pilots and the guys who interviewed me, who gave me this incredible experience of flying which I will never forget .

Firstly, I arrived at the gliding club on Sunday afternoon. It was around 4pm when we initially got started with the tour of the accommodation and also meeting the scholarship winners and instructors. After we had put our stuff away in our rooms and we got our logbook and text book , we headed for the field where the gliders were and the launching point of where the gliders would launch from. In the meantime, we were met by the fellow club members of the gliding club and introduced to the tractors and how the gliders were launched by the winch. Luckily, some of us had the chance to learn how to drive a tractor which I became really good at (was the best driver but we shall leave that for another day).

We also got the chance to help put the gliders away and see what it looked like on the inside of a Puchacz. Now this was my favourite time of the evening, roast dinner. I just want to thank John and Silvia for the tasteful and amazing food they made for us throughout the week. After the roast dinner we had some pudding and then headed off to our rooms for an early start the next day.

Monday Morning, usually I would complain waking up early because it was a Monday, but as we were getting ready to fly I was prepared and ready in time for breakfast at 8 o'clock . We met with the instructors at breakfast and split into teams of two . I was with Alan who was my instructor for the week. As it was my first time flying a light aircraft like a glider I went to the simulator with Alan to get familiar with the controls . After having some time on the sim we headed to the launching point. We had some nice weather during the week except Thursday and Friday. This was where the nerves started to kick in as Alan told me I was the first one to go up in the glider. At first I did not like the launch because it felt like my guts were going to explode but during the course I got used to it. Once we were in the air , Alan handed me the controls and taught me how to turn left and right and some of the rules in the air. Throughout the day I was getting used to the controls and driving the tractor. I would spend about 6 mins up in the air. We finished around 6 getting ready for dinner. And that was the day done.

On Tuesday we made some pizzas for dinner. Before we got into that Peter the other instructor introduced us to circuits and the different landmarks in the area. We also got introduced to using the rudder. At this point I still wasn't used to the launch and still nervous. But I was already a professional at driving the tractor. Most of the day I was practicing using the rudder and trimming the glider, which I got okay at the end of the week. On Wednesday as I was used to the controls I landed for the first time which I think I did alright at. It wasn't difficult. I also had the chance to learn about stalling in the glider.

This is when the weather decided to mess up everything. We had an early start on Thursday just to get flying before it started raining but unfortunately we had to end very early. But I was



lucky enough to go up twice and do left hand circuits by myself with Alan just giving me some tips. So we ended up just going back to the clubhouse and some of us went to the sim and some of us learned about Air Law led by Peter.

Thankfully on the last

day we did some ridge soaring. I spent around 45 minute up in the air and got to enjoy the view one last time . We only had one launch each because of the weather. As it was the last day , i was like i might as well try the hunters chicken which was really nice and some apple crumble and custard. We were given our certificates by one of the members of the Honourable Company of Air pilots who was really nice and gave us a motivational speech. We ended up staying in the conference room playing pool to end the week of great moments.

One of the greatest moments was when I finally trimmed the glider or did the whole circuit by myself. But it was a wonderful experience. I want to thank everyone who was involved, especially the instructors and the guys who I spent the week with. I also want to thank Air Pilots for this brilliant opportunity that i will never forget. THANK YOU.



Here's me just struggling to strap myself in.