

## Sami Akhtar The AFG Scholarship



I want to start by expressing my gratitude to The Honourable Company of Air Pilots for providing me with this scholarship. I would strongly advise applying if you are thinking about doing so. I was first hesitant to apply because I didn't know the procedure or my odds of being accepted. However, I decided to put an application through. It didn't take very long, and I didn't take it very seriously until I received an email inviting me for an interview.

This process was an eye-opening experience because it's something not many people have the chance to do. The interview was pleasant, and I learnt useful skills that are useful in situations, such as employment and academic interviews. Therefore, even if you are not awarded the scholarship, you can still apply and get useful experience.

The week at the gliding club was truly fun. I arrived first and was taken to the airfield where friendly club members showed me the fundamental operating procedures and rules of the airfield.

Following dinner, we had some time in the evening to talk with

other group members. The next morning, we immediately began flying, and as soon as I was in the air, the instructor handed me the controls. This was challenging, but it also helped me realise that the club wanted to maximise your potential and make the most of the opportunity. My first flight lasted around 30 minutes; it was an incredible start to flying. We then all took turns flying the K21 throughout the day with an hour break for lunch.

Not only was the flying enjoyable but also the groundwork was incredibly fun and productive. We were responsible for different tasks



on the airfield when we were not flying.

Therefore, there was not a moment where I had nothing to do. We were unable to fly the following day due to poor weather, but we did have access

to a simulator, where we could practise all day. This was useful since it allowed me to work on my landing and turning techniques rather than wasting a day. Later in the evening we had an opportunity to fly the motor glider. Which meant we still had some flying time even when the weather conditions were not suited for gliding. I was able to get a lift in a wave, and the instructor were adjusting the instruction to suit my needs. I therefore had every opportunity to get better in gliding in every manner.



For the next days, the weather was favourable for gliding, giving us abundant time to fly and giving me the chance to experience multiple loops and spins. After dinner, we would engage in short conversation about the day and the forecast for the next day. This was highly educational for me because I

discovered how to appropriately analyse various weather patterns and discovered many meteorological models. We used to have daily briefings after breakfast where we learned about the various launch directions and the weather forecast for the day.



Above all, I think I enjoyed the social aspect of the week as we stayed up late, going on walks and practising on the simulator.

On Friday we again had a regular flying day and were lucky enough to fly in the T8 with a club member that was not my instructor. I had the privilege to fly this historic and ancient aircraft which was a once-in-a-lifetime experience. I want to highlight this aspect of the course as all the club members were friendly and if you asked, they were happy to fly with you whilst your instructor was flying another group member. For example, my longest flight of 1 hour and around 20 minutes was with a club member that offered to fly with me. Hence the people around us were incredibly friendly and supportive.

Thus, it's a really an exciting opportunity and it ultimately comes down to learning, fun and a lifelong experience that you will remember for the rest of your life. Therefore, apply and play your chances, prepare for the interview and you never know you may be the next person writing this report. Therefore, don't hesitate and apply as it is an experience that I'm sure you won't regret.

