

Josephine Riani The Duke Scholarship

Gratefully sponsored by the Honorable company of Air pilots I experienced a week long gliding scholarship with PNGC. My week of gliding at provided me with not just over 2 and a half hours of gliding time, but a new perspective on the world, literally and figuratively. I went into this experience unsure if I would ever learn to fly, and with no interest in the military, now I know I will find a way to learn to fly as it's an irreplaceable skill, as well as this the navy is no longer a distant concept, but provides very real and valuable, honorable experience, from the recommendation of people I met on the course I am now applying to the University Air Squadron near my university.



The airfield had a buzzing aura of ambition and excitement, we all wanted to be there and knew the opportunity that was being presented to us and everyone was raring to go. Here are some pictures of some of the gliders through the week:

There was one day which we had to take off due to the low clouds and rainfall, but it turned out to be a good day off midweek from the physical duress of gliding (moving gliders, running after them, launching them too) and we split off to do different things. I got the pleasure along with 2 other students to help do a maintenance check on the engine of GROB motor glider, when an issue was discovered we helped resolve it and amazingly had the joy of flying

the GROB in the coming days.

Great people, with corresponding excellent stories, taught us so much about their lives and how they got where they are today. Some pilots dreamed of being in the sky since they were 4 years old as they saw gliders soar over their back garden, and some joined the army and fell into flying helicopters. Though undoubtedly flying is not cheap, as long as you have no natural barriers there's nothing physically stopping you from trying, but alas money is an object to stop many. This is why these scholarship opportunities are so important, they provide the spark to encourage youngsters to have a go, perhaps they would never know otherwise.



Talking in the mess after a day of flying was just as vital as the flying itself, we exchanged banter with the course instructors and with other students, as well as conversing we enjoyed playing games, singing along with piano, going to the bar, and of course having a lovely meal after a hard day. It was so much fun, and it's lovely to make good friends.

Radio communicators, wing runners, instructors, winch retrievers, winch launchers, and everyone behind the scenes, I have to thank them so much because it never could have happened without every single person involved.

