

First Flight Contest Winner Finally Takes Flight

*By Ken Philippart
All images courtesy of Ken Philippart.*

Eric Black, winner of the section's inaugural First Flight Commemoration Contest last December, finally took to the skies for his contest-prize of an hour of dual flight instruction. The flight instruction was donated by Experimental Aircraft Association (EAA) Chapter 190.

Greater Huntsville sponsored the First Flight Contest last year to commemorate the Wright Brothers' first successful controlled flight of a manned, heavier than air craft. Eric was named the winner on December 17, the 111th anniversary of the Wrights first flight, for his video titled, "*The Four Forces of Flight*" (<http://youtu.be/Inh3t5tekqE>.)

AIAA and EAA had been attempting to schedule the flight instruction since last spring but due to the training aircraft being down for an engine replacement and other issues, the flight had been postponed several times. While waiting for the flight instruction to take place, however, the EAA provided Eric with an orientation flight last February during Engineers Week.

Finally, all issues were resolved and Eric met Certified Flight Instructor Todd Brooks at Moontown Airport early on November 8 for his first flying lesson. Todd explained that the first lesson would center around demonstrating and understanding the four forces of flight, the exact topic of Eric's winning video.



Eric checks the aircraft fuel level

Todd guided Eric through the pre-flight procedures for the Cessna 172 aircraft, teaching him how to check the airplane's controls, fuel, oil and critical equipment.

With preflight complete, Eric climbed into the pilot-in-command seat as Todd assumed the

instructor role. Eric coaxed the engine to life and the flight instruction began. He taxied the aircraft onto the grass strip, firewalled the throttle and soared into the blue.

During the hour long lesson, Eric was hands-on the controls while Todd talked him through takeoff, climb, turns and other aerial maneuvers. Todd explained navigation and radio procedures as well. Upon return to Moontown, the duo executed a textbook pattern and landing.



Eric starts the engine



Back on *terra firma*, Past Chair Ken Philippart presented Eric with a personalized logbook, courtesy of the Greater Huntsville Section, to start him on his aviation career. Ken also presented Todd with a section coin in thanks for his instruction.

Todd immediately put the log book to use and logged Eric's first hour of dual flight instruction. Todd also mentored Eric on the next steps in his flying career including opportunities for flight scholarships.

Good things come to those who wait; never was that adage so true as the Greater Huntsville Section and EAA banded together to start a young man on his path to joining the ranks of American aviators.



*CFI Todd Brooks and Past Chair Ken Philippart
present Eric with his logbook*

The Greater Huntsville Section thanks EAA Chapter 190, Aaron Wypysznski and Todd Brooks for their generation donation of the flight instruction and aircraft.