

Air Cadet Earns Flying Stripes



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Now that 22 Red Knight Royal Canadian Air Cadets warrant officer Bailey Hollingsworth has enjoyed the feeling of flying solo, she never wants to stop.

Hollingsworth went through the rigorous Power Pilot Scholarship (PPS) program, sponsored by Canada's Department of National Defence, in Medicine Hat, Alberta, this summer.

"They want a really well-rounded person because they only select 18 kids per region," said Hollingsworth.

According to Royal Canadian Air Force Reserve captain Sharon Olsen, who previously served as a PPS supervisor, only the best of the cadet program are chosen to participate each year.

“Maybe 100 out of all the cadets across Canada attend this program,” said Olsen, who lives in Powell River. “It’s the elite who go.”

After a series of tests, interviews and exams, candidates appear before a selection board. The last local cadet went through the program 10 years ago, according to Hollingsworth’s commanding officer Ken Boyd.

“It’s not very often we get one,” said Boyd. “Bailey’s really adapted well to flying.”

According to Boyd, most cadets start the program at about age 12. Hollingsworth joined when she was 15 and was not initially enthralled.

“I thought it was boring the first night,” said Hollingsworth, “but the second night was amazing.”

After living in the same house her entire life, the 18-year-old graduate of Brooks Secondary School has her sights set on a military career. She plans to attend Vancouver Island University and take an automotive trades course before entering the military.

“I’ve always had an interest in the military and the cadet program has always shown the discipline and structure I like and want in my life,” said Hollingsworth.

Hollingsworth considered different options for her future, such as civilian universities and employment, but she said her decision always came back to the military.

Hollingsworth became the first member of her PPS class to fly solo after a circuit-flight exercise that included takeoff, climbing, turns, descent and landing. Hollingsworth completed the circuit with her instructor, then he just hopped out of the plane and told her to lock the door, she said.

“It was amazing; I realized I was going solo and it was one of those things that was so real,” said Hollingsworth. “I did all my checks and was shaking like crazy. I taxied out, took off and landed, and everything was done perfectly.”

On her first solo flight, Hollingsworth said she remembers it being quiet and looking around and being completely alone.

The new pilot said she has never been satisfied with being just okay at something.

“If I want to be good at something,” said Hollingsworth, “I want to be the best at it.”