

Thu, 11 Dec 2014 07:36:36, requiem009, []

Introduction

Mon, 15 Dec 2014 12:34:52, requiem009, [post_tag: flight-simulator, post_tag: flight-simulators, post_tag: flight-training, post_tag: requiem, category: uncategorized]

This is going to be a blog where I write about my flight training experiences. I decided to make this a public blog instead of a personal journal because there is a unique story behind how this has become possible that I wanted to share with people, and since I come from having predominately flight simulator experiences I also think that it will be interesting for other flight simmers out there as I document the transition from flight simulators to real flying.

I go by the online name of Requiem, and you may have seen some tutorial videos on my YouTube channels which help people deal with flight and air combat concepts using flight simulators such as Rise of Flight, Battle of Stalingrad, and Digital Combat Simulator. I have gained many friends and contacts through by creating these videos, but one in particular has grown to become not only a great friend, but a true mentor who is facilitating a life changing experience for my wife and me. In a little under a week I will graduate from University, but earlier this year I found out I was unable to enter my planned masters program after graduation due to falling short on a class requirement. Trying to fulfill this requirement to apply for this program, without a guaranteed acceptance due to its competitive nature, would have set me back another year and a half, and coupling this uncertainty with the sheer difficulty of the class made it something I couldn't bring myself to do over again. During this difficult period back in May I was thinking ahead as to what I needed to do that was best for my wife and me, and since I had few appealing options to move forward with after graduation from University I began making plans for the safest option where I would move back home and re-enlist in the Air Force.

At this point my friend brought up the possibility of me training to be a pilot instead, but this is something that I have never been in the position to fully undertake because of the costs involved. In an amazing gesture of goodwill my friend and his wife offered to help me with these costs because based off my videos and getting to know me he believes I missed my calling as a pilot. This offer was something I was extremely hesitant about because things like this just never happen in real life, so I needed to take some time with my wife and discuss it. She knew that this is something I always wanted to do, so although she was initially skeptical, after discussing it we accepted their offer to help me with flight training. Their belief in me is very humbling, especially considering his own experience as a pilot, and I will never be able to properly express my gratitude to them for even considering making this offer to us, let alone actually making it happen. We are very fortunate for having such wonderful and kind people become part of our lives as this is shaping up to become a truly defining moment for us, so we will be forever grateful to the both of them for this opportunity. I only hope to perform as well as possible during training and beyond to prove their faith and generosity isn't unfounded, and one day my wife and I hope to be in a position where we can help someone else in the same way as we are being helped now.

At the end of flight training I will be a certified flight instructor with private single engine, multi-engine, instrument, plus commercial ratings which will allow me to build up the hours required to begin work at a regional airline. This is definitely not an easy road to take, but aviation has been a passion for me since I was very young, so I can't imagine the regret I would have if I didn't accept this chance at a different life I always dreamed about but had essentially given up on. It is still hard to believe the sequence of events that transpired to bring us to this point, but I start flight training in the new year and I plan on documenting the experience as best as I can in this blog, so I hope you can read along and share the experiences with me as they happen.

- Requiem (Total hours = 1.0)

17 Days to go...

Fri, 19 Dec 2014 09:58:28, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone, I thought I would share some of the things I've done so far and how I'm preparing for the training as my start date gets closer, so this entry will be about my introductory flight earlier this year.

My friend and I met for the first time at this point and he came out to see me for this flight and to have a look at the school, but unfortunately the weather didn't co-operate, so he missed it as I went out again the following week when the weather was more conducive to smooth flying. I would have loved for him to have seen the stupid grin on my face as I finished the intro flight, but just meeting him was great as it reinforced my impression that he is a very genuine and caring person. He gave me a GoPro so I could record this flight, but I didn't charge it correctly "facepalm", so I ended up only recording about 1/2 a second of footage before the camera battery died...That brain fart has been rectified though so any future flights I want to record will be done properly :-)

The biggest differences I noticed compared to my simulator experience were the aircraft's rudder pedals, and obviously the fact that I was sensing real inputs to my body instead of having the visuals from my monitor as the sole stimulus. I didn't feel like I was flying un-coordinated, but the pedals themselves were very stiff compared to what I was used to from my pedals at home and it seemed like only a light touch was needed. I performed the takeoff and began the climb, but it was a little bumpy below 2500ft until suddenly the air become incredibly smooth above that. That fast transition was really cool to feel and it made the controllability much easier. Having owned a TrackIR is something which must have helped too, as the instructor noted that I was looking around for traffic without any prompting, while flying around. We flew out towards where I live and tried to locate my house, but we were unable to find it, so we attempted some touch and go's where I handled the "touch" and the instructor handled the "go." The first one was a bit difficult because we entered the circuit at the base leg a little bit too high, so we came in a little fast on final. I felt like the second touch and go was easier since the timeline wasn't as compressed due to having an entire circuit to go through and prepare for landing. Although I didn't get the stall warning as I was touching down on either of the landings we didn't touch down too firmly. After the touch and go's we went back to the home field for a full stop landing which the instructor did since it was pretty windy and required a short field approach.

I absolutely loved the flight and it has been a very long wait to get back into the cockpit in a couple of weeks. I had realistic expectations of this flight so I knew I wouldn't move the earth or anything, but the instructor said I did well and had a natural feel for the airplane, so that was encouraging to hear from him.

- Requiem (Total Hours = 1.0)

Merry Christmas! (11 days left)

Thu, 25 Dec 2014 18:52:12, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Thought I'd sneak this in to say Merry Christmas everyone! I hope Santa treated you well today. Santa brought me a few golfing outfits (khaki pants/collared polo shirts), but I hate golf though so it means I can hopefully look the part even if my flying doesn't :-)

There are only 11 days left now, and it's been pretty busy here with my Mum visiting from Australia for a couple of weeks so she could see me graduate from Uni and spend some time with my wife and I. She also got to meet my friend making this happen which was a very special moment for all of us. During the graduation it felt weird wearing that big gown and hat...It must have shown too, because apparently I looked really serious when I walked across the stage lol

Since school ended a few weeks back I've begun prepping for my first day by getting familiar with the Piper Archer and other material. I've been making up a bunch of notecards to help with memorising things like the various V speeds as well as answers to questions about the aircraft itself. Probably the most interesting thing has been the V speeds because some of them I never really worried about adhering to *that* much in a combat flight simulator as I usually flew by feel with my head outside the cockpit most of the time looking for baddies. These sorts of things we can neglect in simulators are definitely important now though so I've committed them all to memory. The more info like this I can take care of now, the less painful the "drinking from a firehose" will be once I start the program.

The other material online I've been going over is so I know what to expect early on in the first few lessons. Reading these makes me glad I bought the A2A Cessna 172 for FSX a while back and did a bit of pre-reading in my final semester because I read a Student Pilot manual and practiced bits of it in the sim when I had the time. Just the basics like level turns, practicing trim usage in climbs/descents, traffic patterns, etc...so going over the FAA handbook and the stuff in the initial lessons has been a good refresher. What sucks though is that I had my G940, TrackIR, and TrackClip Pro destroyed by carpet cleaning contractors a couple of weeks ago, so I haven't been able to practice with the simulators recently and have only been reading things. Luckily, they are reimbursing me and I'll have a new TIR on the 30 December.

There is only so much I can do by rote memorisation though, so I can't wait to get into the cockpit and actually start manipulating things and going over checklists to kick that muscle memory into gear. I learned a new term here as my mate calls this type of practice 'chair flying.' I don't want to ramble on too much so that's it for today, just got to keep my head down and keep on reading until the start date.

Cheers!

- Requiem (Total Hours = 1.0)

'Twas the night before Chris...err...January 5.

Sun, 04 Jan 2015 20:38:34, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

I dropped my mum off at the airport yesterday for her to fly back to Australia, and she arrived home safely on the big A380 after a 16hr flight. I hadn't seen mum in a couple of years, so it was great to have some quality time with her. Having her here was such a strong reminder of how much we missed each other since we saw each other last, so the airport departure was a tough moment. Just like all of us here in the US though, she and my family back home are excited at the journey I'm starting on. I'm in some good hands here. 987654321987654321

So, basically it's the night before my program starts and I'm excited much like a kid waiting for Christmas Day to arrive. I spent the morning getting my gear all sorted out for tomorrow, so I double checked I had everything I needed and made sure all my devices were charged. I've included a picture of most of it, but there are many books to go with all of that too 987654321987654321

I also got about an hour of simulator time in Rise of Flight with some mates which was nice as I don't expect to have much free time, but in the best way! Then I did some more refresher reading of my notecards plus some chair flying...but all of the prep stuff aside I just feel good about getting started as I have really supportive people around me, both close and far away, who are making this possible. I'm very fortunate and grateful for that.

I'll be doing my best to write a post each day to keep track of how this all goes, so it's just a matter of trying to get some sleep now to find out what tomorrow and a different future brings...

- Requiem (Total Hours = 1.0)



Day 1

Mon, 05 Jan 2015 21:48:52, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Today was the day I started training and I really enjoyed it. The weather was very cold (remember I'm used to warmer climates :P), but the sun was out and the skies were clear. The instructors here are great and very helpful. There was the initial paperwork to deal with when I arrived, so once that was out of the way I was asked if I wanted to fly today...to which I replied a firm "Yes!" of course...so while I waited for my flight in the afternoon I plunked myself in the break area and did some reading about what would be covered. As little breaks I would go out to the window and watch aircraft takeoff with a grin on my face thinking how I would be doing that myself in a few hours :)

The basic plan was to do some straight and level flight, turns, climbs, and descents. There was a lot we went over though because unlike simulators there is more to all of this than just the flying. Checklists for the preflight inspection, before engine start, engine start, after engine start, taxi, etc...help make the process very methodical so hopefully with lots of practice I will get the hang of it as trying to take in this amount of information was difficult. I don't expect to get everything perfect of course, but I'm sure it will get easier over time.

Although it was very cold with the wind I enjoyed the pre-flight inspection and being able to run my hands over the airplane. There is just something so cool for me being able to physically place my hands on it that you can't get from a simulator. After that was done we entered the cockpit and I bumbled around trying to get myself situated and figure out how I needed to get my gear sorted and myself strapped in. My instructor went over the different aspects of the cockpit and I found that my chair flying paid off as I was able to follow along and find the controls quickly using the checklist as I started the engine. The glass cockpit is going to take getting used to though as it's like learning how to use a new computer operating system, but you need to do this while flying the airplane too. My instructor was doing a great job explaining it to me, so with some more reinforcement it should become easier to manipulate it. It was a lot to try and take in.

The taxiing was straightforward, but I couldn't quite get my seat sorted out properly, so before we entered the taxiway I tried to adjust it. After a few failed attempts at raising it myself (due to my weight being applied to the seat) I had to contort and sit way up off the seat so my instructor could bring the seat up for me. If anyone was watching it would have probably looked as if I was 'mooning' them out the left window...

For takeoff there was a Cessna inbound on a 2.5 mile final, so I was told to just keep going after turning the corner onto the runway to not interfere with his approach. No worries! Power is applied (albeit slightly slowly as I felt a bit throttle shy) and we start rolling, then that big difference in RL compared to sims kicks in...The rudder pressure. Initially it was a bit wobbly for me but I straightened it out, rotated, and began the initial climb to 2000ft. Then we turned away still climbing from the airfield and we flew off so I could practice a few turns. 10 degrees, 20 degrees, then 30 degrees. I felt like I was doing well as I was keeping it co-ordinated with my airspeed and altitude remaining steady during the maneuvering. The instructor seemed pleased as well considering my lack of experience. I also did some trimming practice and began a climb up to 3500ft where I practiced some more turning and learned about the standard rate turn at 3 degrees a second (2 mins for a full 360 degree turn). Then we did a descent on our way back to the airport, so I reduced power and pitched down, but I was few kts faster than the descent speed he wanted. On the way back to the airport he asked me to try and do a full 360 standard rate turn, which I did correctly while finishing at the entry speed and altitude too :)

Coming back to the airport there was a bit of traffic in front of us, and were slotted in to enter on the base leg. My instructor decided to give me a shot at a no flaps landing to give me a bit more control during it. I ended up coming in a bit high on base and overcompensated during the descending turn onto final and we saw all four red PAPI lights meaning I was too low, so adding some power brought us back up to seeing two white and two red lights meaning we were back on a good glideslope. Then a crosswind kicked in and I kept drifting left. I would drift left and I would hear (calmly) "Come back towards centerline" so I'd get back towards centerline, then again I drifted left..."Come back towards centerline." I was just too busy trying to just fly at the landing point to recognise the crosswind pushing me off!

The roundout and flare was very cool because I could just feel the pressure dissipate from the controls as the airspeed began dropping. I managed to bring it down in one piece without bouncing, and while the touchdown felt solid I really don't know how much is too much yet. In any case my instructor said he had seen much worse landings so that's a positive I suppose lol Overall he was happy with how I did as I was able to maintain constant speeds and altitudes as required during the different maneuvers, and he said that the sim experience definitely seemed to help my flying as I had a good feel for keeping the airplane co-ordinated during flight. After taxiing back to the parking area I finished up a bit sweaty but extremely excited and happy about the last hour and a bit in the air. As my friend recently told me, "I am starting to live the life I was meant to live," and that perfectly sums up how I feel about this opportunity I am so thankful to have.

- Requiem (Total Hours = 2.3)

Day 2

Tue, 06 Jan 2015 20:47:52, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

I probably went a bit overboard with the length of my post yesterday, plus I've done some study this evening and would like an earlier night, so I'll try to write this post quicker.

Today was a great day. I did well in the ground school portion before the flight and was able to answer most questions thrown at me which was good. The flying went well too. Started out with a short revision of yesterday's flying, so after taking off I did a couple of turns, climbs, and descents initially before moving on to the topic of the day. Power off stalls and slow flight.

The slow flight was interesting to do. I had to maintain a designated altitude while getting my airspeed to a few knots above stall speed with full flaps then keeping it there. With the constant buzzing sound of the stall horn in my ear I changed headings a few times then did a climb without departing as I kept the airspeed on target 987654321987654321 Then from this condition we went through some power off stalls which was fun. My first one the wings weren't quite level and I wasn't aggressive enough applying throttle, but I had the hang of it on the others.

We had some time left so my instructor asked if I was up for some landings, which of course I was 987654321987654321 So he took me through a pattern with an imaginary field then we went off to a nearby airport and joined the pattern there for some touch and go's. I think I did 5 or 6, and I got try a couple of new things like a forward slip and he also threw in an engine failure on me as I passed abeam the runway threshold. The approaches and touchdowns felt good but I still need to work on my right rudder pressure. After we finished those we went back to the home airport and I did the full stop landing which felt good too 987654321987654321

At the end he was said he was really happy with my flying and was impressed with the landings. He said I was hitting all the proper numbers and had very stable approaches. Also said I did awesome and that he couldn't believe it was my second flight which was nice to hear. Hopefully the trend continues, but I won't be surprised when the inevitable bad day of flying comes.

- Requiem (Total Hours = 4.3)

Day 3 (take 3)

Wed, 07 Jan 2015 20:42:35, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Sorry about that first and now second post. I give up typing these on the ipad...

Started out the day with groundschool. The outline assigned some readings from the FAA handbook covering traffic patterns and landings which I read, along with a video about visual scanning and collision avoidance. Then my Instructor Pilot (IP) reviewed some aerodynamics with me. The focus of the lesson today was about how to both determine the airworthiness of the airplane and the "weight and balance" to see where the center of gravity lies when all the different weights are accounted for. Basically, if the CoG lies outside safe limits (either forwards or backwards from a given point) it affects the plane's handling and it can't legally be flown. These two things are part of the checks I will need to do before each flight, so I'll probably start doing these from now on. This went on through the morning and into the afternoon before I took a break and got ready to fly.

Today was difficult flying for me. The winds were about 20kts (37km/hr) with gusts up to 30. This meant a lot of bumps with a lot of corrections from me needed to fly the airplane. After getting airborne and climbing to altitude my IP had me do some slow flight where I'm at the minimum controllable airspeed and the stall warning horn was buzzing away. I did some turns and climbs in the condition which my IP was very happy with, so we used the slow flight to do stalls again. My entries were fine, but in my recoveries I wasn't relaxing the forward pressure slow enough. I didn't do any secondary stalls, but the recoveries were a bit quick.

Then we went off and did some steep turns. My IP demoed one then I had a go and was a bit cautious with the bank angle to start with (should be 45 deg), but once I established it I maintained it really well. I maintained my speed and altitude throughout and he was happy with them. Then I did some more touch and gos at a nearby airport, but it was very difficult due to the wind. It was good though because I got to practice crosswind landing techniques. Managed to land on centerline each time before the 1000ft markers, but I had one landing where I bounced. Since the winds were so strong I really noticed how the aircraft was being pushed off track in the traffic pattern so I was trying to account for the drift accordingly.

Finished up those and went back to the home airport. IP was happy with how I did, but I wasn't really. I feel like I still have issues with the rudder so I'll try and change my positioning tomorrow to see if that helps.

- Requiem (Total Hours = 6.4)

I took a photo of my logbook to show. Time is building :)

[illegible]

Day 4 - Stall Recoveries, Steep Turns, Emergency descent, more landings

Thu, 08 Jan 2015 21:38:10, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

It was pretty cold today (-1°C) so what did I ask to go and do on a day like this? Why go and sit in the airplane to go practice the different checklists of course :) My briefing for the afternoon flight wasn't for a couple of hours so I thought it would be a good way to actively spend some time instead of just reading. I know it's only a couple of days into all of this, but I wanted to improve on the speed at which I was going through them. I was focused on the task at hand before being surprised by the door opening on my right. He didn't have to, but my IP decided to join me in the cold after a few minutes. He started asking me lots of questions as I went through the checklists, explained some finer points of the Garmin system (radios/GPS), and also acted as Air Traffic Control (ATC) for me to practice radio calls because I wanted to start being more active on the radios now. Literally froze my butt off in there, but it definitely helped and I was glad he came in to help out. I plan on doing that daily now to improve my flows further.

Ground school was more aerodynamics plus a review of previous material. The briefing for today was practicing some more stalls (power on and off), steep turns, and landings. Although it wasn't on the syllabus he wanted to give me a go at an emergency descent too. The weather was much calmer for today, and on the takeoff we extended out the departure leg slightly to fly towards my mum in-law's building where she works. I sent her a text before the preflight so she had a timeframe to look out the window, so on the departure I spotted her building and flew out towards it, gave a wing waggle to wave, and turned off to the east for a climb (she saw me :)).

We flew out towards a lake and did some more steep turns which he said were very good. Then we began some more slow flight, so with that stall horn buzzing away I maintained altitude, turned 180 degrees, and performed a 500ft climb without stalling. Stall speed in that configuration with the flaps out is about 45 kts and I was around the 49-50kt mark. Used that low speed condition to do a power off stall, so I cut the power and pull back on the yoke and recover. It's like going over the top of a rollercoaster, so it's fun for me and I like doing them :) After that was a power on stall, which was a bit harder to make happen.

Then we climbed up to 4000ft and he talked me through what's required for an emergency descent. Anything from a bird strike or a passenger vomiting, something that makes us want to get down fast. So I go into 30 degrees angle of bank and pitch down in a descending turn at about 120kts. The descent rate was somewhere near about 2000ft a minute...definitely saw that ground coming up pretty fast doing it.

My IP then decided to throw a curve ball at me and directed me towards an uncontrolled airfield with a narrow runway where the active end was sloping uphill with power lines in front of the displaced threshold. I was handling the radios up until this point, but here he took over the radio so he could report our position in the traffic pattern on the frequency so anyone in the area would know where we are. First landing was on centerline but not that great as I bounced three times before coming to a stop and exiting the runway for another takeoff. My IP mentioned there is some optical illusion where I'm higher than I think I am when the runway is sloping like that, so I can inadvertently come down harder than I expect because I may not flare properly.

Out of this airfield we then practiced short field takeoffs, short field landings, and soft field takeoffs. Each landing was a full stop then exit onto the taxiway before coming back around for another takeoff. The soft field takeoff is fun because as you come around to line up on the runway you don't stop (stopping could make you get stuck). You just give it full power and hold full back pressure to get airborne really early. Then once you get airborne you relax the back pressure and accelerate using ground effect (means less drag down that low), then climb up. Other than that bouncing one, the landings at this field got to be pretty soft as my IP was saying "hold it hold it hold it" as I had the right pitch attitude for the flare. A couple of my patterns weren't as square as I wanted them to be though. The flight back to the airport was straightforward and I took over the radios again talking to the regional approach controller, with my IP being very happy with how I sounded over the radio during the flight. I guess that sim pilot experience back in the Air Force is starting to come back to me as I spent a lot of time doing radio comms with ATC guys and the fighter ground controllers.

My IP said I'm very much ahead of things and I don't need to be so hard on myself. He has always been much happier about my performance during the flights than I am. During the flights I pick up what I'm doing wrong and sometimes get a bit annoyed with myself. I'm learning a ton though and looking to improve so that's a good thing.

- Requiem (Total Hours = 8.4)

Day 5 - More stall recoveries, steep turns, emergency descent, and cross wind landings

Fri, 09 Jan 2015 21:47:53, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

Today was pretty much a repeat of yesterday, so after the ground school of some aerodynamics I did more steep turns with slow flight and power off/on stalls. My Instructor Pilot (IP) was happy with my maneuvering and asked what I wanted to do, so I asked if we could get more landing practice in. We went out to an uncontrolled airfield he hadn't been to yet, and this one had a slightly different layout. There were two runways where one bisected the other at an angle, so I started out on the first runway with a headwind for a few landings and then moved on to the other one. Since the wind direction didn't really change, having the second one at the angle allowed me to practice crosswind landings for the remaining time. We approached the airfield at 5000ft, and my IP had me do an emergency descent down to 2000ft, which was fun :-)

My landings overall weren't very good today imo. My pattern work and final (to a point) seem to be good, but once I get below about 200ft I was having trouble using the correct aileron pressure to correct for the wind and opposite rudder to straighten my approach. All my landings were on centerline which was good, but I wasn't reducing power early enough so I came in with a bit too much speed and either floated in ground effect for too long or came down a bit hard without flaring properly. On some landings I was having problems trying to judge the pitch attitude and what height I was at for the flare so that didn't help. That's the bad stuff about today.

There were some good points. My IP said I'm doing fine though because for the first two weeks with most students he is on the controls when landings, and with me he hasn't had to do that. He said I just need to refine my technique a bit and it will get better. On one crosswind landing I flared nicely but I copped a big gust of wind which made me rise up a bit, but my IP said I reacted to it well by letting the plane settle back down. There were a couple of really nice landings out there too where the touchdown was very soft too which was nice to feel. My pattern work was good because I was applying the required wind correction without really thinking about it and keeping my eyes outside the whole time. Also with the strong winds out there today a couple of times I turned on to the base leg a bit late and final too early, so considering my overall landing performance it was a bit of mixed bag today. I'm about seven lessons away from the dedicated takeoff and landing lessons, so if I can make good progress in the next week it will make those lessons more effective.

I had a chance at redemption on my return to the home airport with ATC setting me up for a right downwind for the runway which had a strong headwind. The remaining pattern was good and my IP was really happy with the touchdown. I came down on centerline and after we touched down he said it was really good because he basically couldn't tell when we touched down it was that soft. The problem with the landing was I floated a little bit past the 1000ft markers, so again, good with the bad is the story of the day.

So yeah... a bit all over the place today with my landings, but my maneuvers were good and I worked the radios/GPS for the whole flight except for my IP doing the position calls over the common radio freq for the uncontrolled airfield. Those radio calls are definitely getting easier now I've been making the calls and frequency adjustments.

-Requiem (Total Hours = 10.5)

Day 6 - Airspace and Landings

Sat, 10 Jan 2015 17:54:08, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

As usual the day started out with some groundschool, but I had a different change of pace today though. My head exploded slightly as we went over the different types of airspace plus the various equipment and signage involved with airport operations. The airspace was really screwing with me for few minutes when my IP pulled out a sectional (basically a map of the area with airspace and lots of other information). I had some mental blocks trying to figure it out. Then after a bit I started translating it three dimensionally much better and I began visualizing the different airspace types fitting together like a 3d jigsaw puzzle. They all have their own rules so it's important to know where you are and when/if you need to start calling Air traffic control.

After the groundschool stuff my IP needed to help another student, so I did some reading until about 30 mins before my flight started. At that point I went out and verified airworthiness, did the weight and balance, then the preflight inspection by myself. The checks and my math was good so we took off.

Today was supposed to be more stalls, steep turns, and stalls, but my IP said I have those down so we went off to a new airfield for touch and go landings only. My patterns were good, but there was an instance where a helicopter student pilot didn't follow multiple ATC instructions to descend while I was on downwind at the same altitude and off the 12 to 1 o'clock position. Had him in sight the whole time so I adjusted off to the side as he still hadn't descended when he passed us, but then ATC in the tower told the heli's IP to give them a call. My IP was like uh oh, someone's gettin' in trouble for not listening.

Anyway, patterns were good but my flaring was off in that I wasn't pitching up enough. Judging the height to flare was much better today. Yesterday I felt like I wasn't quite judging height to flare properly, so I did some google searching and some people recommended ensuring you adjust the seat height so you have one fist width between your head and the roof. I did that before taking off and the sight picture was much better so my height judgement improved much more. However, the problem with the pitching up made my landings firmer than they should be. We were trying to figure

out what was going on then towards the end he noticed that when I tried to pitch up more than I normally was the yoke was sticking which made the flare more of a jerking motion than a smooth one.

So my IP took the controls as we slowed on the runway and applied lubrication to the shaft of the yoke. It became MUCH smoother, so much so on the next flare I overcompensated and ballooned before settling down. With one last landing before heading back it was great. Nice and soft down the centerline and we were both very happy with it. Then we headed back to the home airport, had a big American Airlines jet pass over us which was very cool to see, and received reports of icing from ATC near our home airport. Came in for a straight in approach to get down quickly and this landing was excellent. Centerline, really soft, and touched down right on the 1000ft markers where I should be. Nice way to finish the day. The main feedback from my IP is that I need to keep holding the crosswind correction as I drifted right of centerline a couple of times.

So, from now on I know where my seat height should be and to oil up that yoke if needed. Will have to see if it makes much difference on the next set of landings 987654321987654321

- Requiem (Total Hours = 12.5)

Day 7 - Grounded

Sun, 11 Jan 2015 21:13:47, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

The weather was bad today with the visibility too low for the Visual Flight Rules (VFR) that I need for my training at this stage. I did some ground school instead involving ground reference maneuvers and a publication called the FAR AIM.

Tomorrow I'll be doing some ground reference maneuvers where I turn around a point, fly a snaking path across a straight line like a road, and fly a rectangular shape (like during a circuit before landing). These maneuvers are all about being able to compensate for the wind direction and strength by varying my turn rate during the maneuver in order to fly the correct flightpath. This is needed because if I have the same turn rates when I am upwind and downwind then my shapes will look wonky. Simply put, this happens because when downwind the wind will make me go faster and being upwind will make me go slower. These maneuvers will be flown at a low altitude (600-1000ft) so I can see the effect wind has on a flightpath and if any corrections are working.

The FAR AIM is a very long publication which has all sorts of rules and regulations that I need to know or at least know where to find them quickly. Things like what I can do with a private pilot's license, what's required for an aircraft to be airworthy, how long a certain type of medical certificate lasts, etc...Although there is a lot of information in it, not all of it is relevant to the private pilot certificate I'm working towards at this stage of training, so I only need to study the bits I need to know for that right now (which is still a lot). Luckily the iPad apps I have will help with this aspect.

Tomorrow morning the weather is looking like it will have slightly low visibility but good enough for VFR flight, so I'll probably be doing these maneuvers tomorrow as the weather in the afternoon may not be suitable. I guess we will see in tomorrow's entry.

- Requiem (Total Hours = 12.5)

Day 8 - Ground Reference Maneuvers

Mon, 12 Jan 2015 22:01:10, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

Since yesterday involved my instructor pilot (IP) and I going over the ground reference maneuvers we didn't have much to discuss today before the flight. Instead I did some self-study and got into the iPad apps for the private pilot written and oral exam guides as well as doing some more reading of the FAR AIM. I do have the FAR AIM on the iPad but I'll probably get it in the paper form too so I can tab sections and highlight as needed for an easier reference. Just something about studying on paper that makes it a bit easier to digest.

Anyway, today we did the S-turns and circling around a point to get used to adjusting our turn rate based on ground speed. The visibility was about 9 statute miles and the cloud base was about 2000ft or so, but that was ok since for these maneuvers we needed to be between 600-1000ft. After taking off we flew out to an area I actually recognised pretty quickly since it has a massive movie theater. Off this area there was a highway that was suitable to practice S-turns because the wind was running perpendicular to it. If you imagine a snake slithering along a straight line that was what I aimed to do, but the wind complicates trying to make that happen. When I am downwind, the wind pushes me faster and increases my ground speed so I need to turn faster or else I end up too far away from the road in that portion. When I transition to upwind though, I decrease the rate of turn by decreasing the angle of bank of the wings because my ground speed is slower from the wind pushing against me. On my first S-turns the downwinds were good, but the upwind portion was a little off because I didn't decrease my rate of turn enough. This caused the upwind semi-circle to be smaller than the downwind one. A good one should look like this:

<https://dl.dropboxusercontent.com/u/32760020/s-turns.png>

The circling around a point was good, but my neck was hurting after a while because I must have orbited it about 15 times keeping my head staring at the point off the left hand side a lot. We flew off to a nearby town which had a large water tower, so I set up there and basically circled it using the same principle as the S-turns. Increase rate of turn downwind, then decrease it as I moved upwind, then increase it downwind, decrease it upwind, etc...Of course during these maneuvers you need to maintain speed, altitude, and a constant distance from the point you are circling too. Demo pic below:

<https://dl.dropboxusercontent.com/u/32760020/turnsaroundpoint.png>

The interesting thing about these was that I really had a sense of speed changes being down low. Since I was low I could really tell when I was downwind (even if I didn't know where the wind was blowing from) because that portion of the flightpath absolutely whizzes by in comparison to the upwind portion. Those upwind portions were quite difficult because the angle of bank is really shallow, so much so that because I was looking out the window the whole time it felt as if I was flying straight and level instead of in a bank.

Then we went off for my favourite, landings! It was again an uncontrolled airport with two runways so I did a few of the position calls heading in there and once I was in the pattern then had my IP take over. I did a few landings on the runway which had the headwind and those were good, but when I swapped to the other runway with the crosswind of about 10kts it was not as good. The first two landings were ok but the last two I ended up going around. Although my landings always have good stable approaches once I got below 200ft and transitioned to a slip I was having trouble keeping the crosswind correction in. My hamfistedness on those two made the plane feel a bit wonky to fly, hence the go arounds. I hadn't done any go arounds until this point, but it's just application of full power, getting a positive rate of climb, then retracting the flaps slowly. Doing those crosswind corrections seems to be an issue for me so I asked my IP on the next flight if he can do a crosswind landing for me to follow with him on the controls. He's not that worried about it right now though as I'll have about 10 hours of flights dedicated to takeoffs and landings later on. He said it's still only early days for me and he's pretty happy that I'm just landing the plane with stabilised approaches without needing his hands at the controls.

Strange as it may sound since I'm absolutely loving flying around the sky, but the landings are probably the favourite thing I've done so far as they are challenging and it feels so good when it all works out right. One day I will be much better at crosswind landings, but that day hasn't come yet :P

- Requiem (Total Hours = 14.6)

Day 9 - Grounded

Tue, 13 Jan 2015 19:25:05, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

Unfortunately the weather wasn't favourable for flying today, so I ended up asking to try out their simulator when the weather was still bad. The ground school stuff in the morning/afternoon was interesting but a bit mind bending at times. We covered the flight instruments, which weren't that hard as I could answer the FAA written questions covering the topic, but my IP went over the details of how they worked in-depth. Although that wasn't required he said it was a good idea since it will make it easier for me once I start training to be an instructor myself. The way instruments like the altimeter, airspeed indicator, and vertical speed indicator work are pretty straightforward by measuring pressure differences in the aircraft's pitot-static system, but I found it very cool (albeit hard to grasp initially) how gyroscopes are used in the movement of gauges like the attitude indicator and the turn and bank indicator. He even had a gyroscope out on the desk which he spun up to make visualisation easier.

When it was clear that I wouldn't be flying I asked to use the simulator to practice some crosswind landings. Although the controls felt a bit strange on the ground, once I was in the air it was ok. It has three screens and most of the switches and dials set up in a generic type of format on the instrument panel, but it was really strange for me to not be able to look around and locate the airfield. TrackIR would be great to use here...After takeoff I would start a traffic pattern, but since I couldn't actually look back to confirm visually where the runway was I had to reference the GPS screen to figure that out. Not a big deal as it was easy enough to adapt the traffic pattern that way, and once I was on final the approaches were stable and I landed the airplane ok. I basically just wanted to try the sim out to get a bit more muscle memory in to apply and keep the crosswind corrections properly.

My next two flights are to be reviews of the maneuvers I've done thus far, so hopefully I get to fly tomorrow. I seem to get withdrawals when a day goes by without flying :D

Anyway, back to some more reading!

- Requiem

Day 10 - Pre-flight Inspections are Important

Wed, 14 Jan 2015 22:10:53, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

I had an interesting day. As mentioned in the previous entry my flight today was a review of several maneuvers I have done... both ground reference maneuvers, power on/off stalls, and steep turns. I went through the performance numbers for the aircraft I was going to fly in, but my pre-flight inspection showed an irregularity. As I went through the inspection it was ok until I got to the front tire. I applied pressure to the tire and noticed that it felt a bit flat, then looking at it closer from the side I could definitely see it was flat to some degree. I called my instructor pilot (IP) over and showed him and he agreed that it was flat or punctured somewhere. He guessed that whoever flew it last must have done a hard landing, which he called "wheelbarrowing," where can occur if too much weight is transferred to the nosewheel on landing. I haven't been flying this aircraft over the last few days, and my landings have been pretty soft for the most part, so I know it wasn't me at least. Catching this made me glad I always take the pre-flight inspection seriously. As a result my IP called maintenance and we switched back to the aircraft I've normally been flying for the flight.

I took off and we stayed around 2000ft en route to a road that was perpendicular to the wind so I could practice the S-turns and circling around a point. There wasn't a great deal of wind today so changing my bank angles didn't have the extreme differences as they did when I first tried these maneuvers. That made them a lot easier to perform. After those my IP told me to climb up and over to a nearby lake so I could show him slow flight, which I did pretty well with the stall horn buzzing away as usual. From there he asked me to demo a power off and power on stall. The power off stall was good as I fully stalled the aircraft before recovering, but my power on stall wasn't quite right because I didn't apply enough right rudder and left me a bit uncoordinated during the stall which wasn't good as it could lead to a spin if severe enough. The right rudder is needed because of the tendency of the aircraft to want to turn left when at slow speed, high engine power, and nose high (high angle of attack). Using right rudder brings the aircraft back to flying straight instead of skewed to the left. After that I performed another power on stall correctly.

From there my IP threw a curve ball at me. He asked me to change fuel tanks, then while I was in the process of that he pulled the throttle back and said "Your engine is out, what do you do?" We were at 3000ft, so I pitched for best glide speed and chose a place where I would land. I trimmed the plane for the glide speed to make things easier and I was approaching the landing area I chose. I ended up easily made the glide to my chosen field with a lot of altitude to spare, so in my head I was thinking about doing S-turns to use up the excess altitude but I didn't do that. I just kept flying towards the general direction of the field as I didn't really know what he expected of me at the time as we hadn't discussed this scenario yet. I ended up changing from that field to another one and would have made it, so I applied power and climbed back up to about 2500ft to do some steep turns.

That practice emergency actually flustered me a bit to be honest and on my first steep turn attempt I just stopped doing it and leveled out after 90 degrees because I didn't even enter at the right speed and it wasn't good enough. I was annoyed at myself because I didn't perform what I was thinking during the emergency to make the field I chose. My IP must have noticed something changed as after I completed the next couple of steep turns just fine he asked if I was alright since it looked like I had a real game face on by looking so serious all of a sudden. I explained why and he understood.

Then we went out to a towered field to practice some touch and go landings which I enjoyed as usual, even though on my first attempt I chose to go around. I was a bit high and didn't want to feel like I was forcing it so I figured chalk it up to feeling a bit off right now and try again. The winds were light and my touchdowns were nice and soft with only two flares being a little bit flatter than usual, but overall they were good. It was very cool to hear the wheels touchdown so lightly and have the plane stick to the ground. Also the tower controller at this airport was pretty helpful as he was fitting me in between departing and landing aircraft as I remained in the pattern, so he was making useful calls for me pointing out other traffic around and giving me wind direction and speed calls. I don't think so far I had done this much talking to a tower controller and I appreciated it, so when we departed after the last landing I added a "thanks for your help today" as part of the readback when he approved my frequency change. The tower controller appreciated that and my IP thought that was a nice touch for me to add too. I remember when I used to sit behind the tower controllers in Darwin they liked it when an aircraft does that, so I wanted that tower controller to know I appreciated his help.

Then we headed back to the home airport straight onto the base leg and I brought it in nicely (low winds definitely helped). Tomorrow will be more of the same thing (maneuver review), so hopefully my IP pulls the engine out thing on me again as I know for sure what I should be doing now instead of wondering if I should do what I think I am supposed to or not.

- Requiem (Total Hours = 16.7)

Day 11 - Maneuver Review

Thu, 15 Jan 2015 21:00:17, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

Today I reviewed ground reference maneuvers, the power on and off stalls, steep turns, emergency descent, and did some more landings. My flying was a bit off today for some reason and I feel very tired so I want an early night tonight. My S-turns were good, but I didn't visualise the wind direction properly on my first attempt at circling around a point, so I did a few more of those and sorted that out. Then moved on to steep turns and did four of them, but on the first three I had a lot of trouble maintaining altitude and bank angle, plus I wasn't rolling out on headings accurately so they were all over the place. We did them over land and not a lake so it was a bit bumpier, but the funny thing was on the first three attempts I started the steep turn to the right for something different to my usual entering from the left. My IP said to go back to starting one from the left as that's how the book says to do it...and then it was perfect. Bank angle, speed, altitude, all remained constant and I rolled out of the left hand turn into the right hand turn on the correct heading and finished by rolling out on my initial heading and entry altitude.

After that my slow flight and stalls were good, but I wasn't quite aggressive enough with the back pressure on the power on stall to fully enter it. After that he asked me to perform an emergency descent which was spot on. Good descent rate, correct airspeed and bank angle and I leveled out right on the assigned altitude, so I was happy with that. Then we went off for more landings at an uncontrolled field, so this time my IP gave me the reins to do the radio calls here as well as everywhere else. I basically had to call out my position before I arrived, then at each point in the traffic pattern while doing touch and gos so nearby aircraft can visualise where I was. My landings were good and on centerline, then we switched runways for my IP to show the crosswind landing while I followed through on the controls. Following that my crosswind landing was good and we departed back to the home airport.

I had the radios for 99% of the time on the flight, so I'm getting more and more comfortable with that. However, there is this trend showing when I'm on the radios because on my initial call to any ATC they always seem to ask me to repeat my tailnumber. My IP joked when he saw me shaking my head at it happening again, and he said they will get used to my accent eventually. The landing at the home airport was good, but I felt a vibration in my pocket as I was on final. It is my younger brother's birthday today and he was returning a text message I sent him. Great timing Josh! :) I usually turn the phone off when I fly, but I forgot this time...I ended up feeling really tired at the end of this flight so I'm heading to bed early.

- Requiem (Total Hours = 18.9)

Day 12 - Emergencies!

Fri, 16 Jan 2015 21:13:49, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

Today's flight focused on emergencies, so while my IP was dealing with a solo student I was doing self-reading of the emergency checklist and some of the regulations of the FAR AIM. I need to know for the private pilot certificate tests. I took off and the first thing he wanted to show me were the magnetic compass errors we discussed the other day. Pretty simple but it was nice to see it actually happen. If you are flying east or west then increase power to accelerate the plane, the compass points towards North by a few degrees. If you pull the throttle back when flying east or west to decelerate, the magnetic compass points towards South by a few degrees. The other rule is that when turning North(ish) the compass will be ahead of your actual heading so you finish your turn a bit earlier, and if you are turning towards South(ish) then the compass will be behind your actual heading so you finish your turn a bit later. Like I said, simple right? :)

After that I was established up at about 3500ft and we did a couple of engine out emergencies one after the other. They were much better than the first time he did it to see how I would react. The second one was better once he questioned my original choice of landing site since there was a dirt/grass strip directly underneath us which I didn't see because I was focused on looking outside to find a place to land. This strip showed up on one of the glass cockpit displays, but since I didn't look at it I never saw it. Something to keep in mind for my future reference later though as part of these emergencies. I'm still learning this GPS setup and there was another function he showed me where I can actually bring up the closest airfields as well. Anyway, I maneuvered around to get into position and entered on a downwind portion of the traffic pattern. I turned base a little early but it was a nice approach and we would have made the strip. We discussed some other emergencies as well and the most important items to sort out first, like always pitching for the right airspeed first. If you're airspeed is fast or slow then you won't glide as far, so it's important to keep at the best gliding speed for the airplane you are flying.

Powering on we climbed up and went out to an uncontrolled airport I had landed on before. It was the one that is narrow, upsloping, and has power lines below the final approach glideslope. It turned out to also have a decent crosswind too, and my landings here were very good. So much so my IP lamented the fact we weren't going to spend a lot of time here lol. The landings here were full stop, so after landing we didn't take off again immediately but instead got off the runway and set up for a proper takeoff. Doing this I got to practice some short field and soft field takeoffs which were fun.

After that uncontrolled airport we flew off to a controlled airport (ie - has a control tower with ATC) and entered the traffic pattern there to do some more touch and gos. We also asked the ATC in the tower to give us some lightgun signals which they did. These are signals which are colour coded in the event of a communication failure or if the aircraft doesn't have a radio. Basically, the controller flashes green, red, or white lights steadily or in a sequence to tell us whether we can land or not. Again, this was another thing that was good to actually see instead of just reading about it. This airport had a decent crosswind component too so I got some good crosswind landing practice in today as well an engine off emergency in the pattern. The landings here were good too, so I can't ask for much more than that. Tomorrow will be the first time I get to wear 'foggles' which means I will learn to fly the airplane looking at the instruments only because the 'foggles' will block out the sunny sky.

- Requiem (Total Hours = 20.9)

Day 13 - Foggles Time

Sat, 17 Jan 2015 21:36:13, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

It was a beautiful day outside to fly, so what better way to spend it than practice flying by looking only at the instruments while wearing "Foggles" which cover up the blue sky. It was pretty interesting to fly this way because I have been flying with my head looking outside 99% of the time. Once that visual reference is taken away I had to rely on a few instruments which I would be scanning between so I could determine my airspeed, heading, altitude, and attitude in order to keep the plane straight and level.

The ground school portion basically covered how I should be scanning and why I shouldn't rely on my senses. After I took off and got away from the airfield I had to put the foggles on where my IP then got me to do some climbs, descents, and turns while only relying on the instruments. It was a bit weird for a few seconds but then I adjusted to the scanning and it was easier than I thought it would be. It was interesting to do, although the air was a bit bumpy at times so it was hard to ignore trying to chase the perfect numbers but I would just go along with it.

My IP then wanted to demo to me why I shouldn't rely on my senses, so he had me (with foggles on) close my eyes and tilt my head down at the floor while he maneuvered the aircraft around for a few mins. During the maneuvers he asked me to call out what he was doing and how we finished up at different points. He said I was freaking him out and asked if I was looking because I was calling out everything he was doing as he was doing it correctly (my eyes stayed shut and head remained down). I found that pretty funny, but I know that senses aren't to be trusted in these conditions and that you trust the instruments only, so that's what I'll be doing.

After that test my IP did the same thing (my eyes shut and all that) then left the plane in unusual attitudes. At any point he would say "your controls" and I had to open my eyes and look up at the instruments and quickly recover to straight and level flight. He repeated this process a few times so I had practice recovering from different nose high and nose low attitudes while banked left or right. This was pretty easy and I think this was an aspect where the sims I have used helped a lot because I'm used to seeing an attitude indicator and relating it to the aircraft's positioning and how to recover as needed.

The we simulated a scenario as if I accidentally entered bad conditions where I would need to figure out where I was, who to contact over the radio, and my actions to get out of these conditions. My IP acted as those I would call up, and gave me instructions I had to follow until I was out of the bad conditions. Since I did that stuff pretty well we had some extra time up our sleeve so I practiced a couple of steep turns, then did an emergency descent and emergency engine off practice, followed by an s-turn and circle round a point down low which were all good.

After those maneuvers we went to a nearby field where I got to practice some more crosswind landings. The wind was basically a pure crosswind so I needed a LOT of correction. My landings were on centerline and straight, but I kept relaxing the crosswind correction after touching down. I think this is happening when I have to reach down to retract the flaps (manual spring loaded flaps not electric), so holding that correction in after touching down is something I need to keep working on. My IP wants to start introducing weather to me now, so I've started working on that. Anyway, that pretty much covers today, lots of fun and as always I am still smiling at doing all this 987654321987654321

- Requiem (Total Hours = 23.1)

Day 14 - Emergencies Review

Sun, 18 Jan 2015 21:55:25, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

Today was a straightforward day. We did a review of emergencies and a bit of foggle work as well. I got to practice some responses to errors in the glass cockpit sensors as well as a couple of engine out emergencies at altitude. The first one was good and made it where I wanted to, and on the second one I chose a point by looking at the GPS which showed a small runway. However, I couldn't visually make out where it was as I got closer. I could point out the cleared area where it should have been, but since I couldn't point the runway out (my IP knew where it was though) he asked me to change my point. I did change it but then as I turned slightly towards the new one I saw the runway I was originally aiming for (it was a thin runway on the closest end of the cleared field alongside a tree line). That turn allowed for a transition into the base leg so I did that and went for the runway instead. I ended up being too high on that approach so would have ended up touching down towards the end of runway.

My foggle work was good, but there was a funny instance while wearing them. We were practicing a problem with the alternator and he asked me if I was looking inside the cockpit at all. It didn't make sense to me why he was asking that since I was wearing the foggles. He wanted to know what I should be seeing right in front of me...this still didn't make much sense. Turns out he wanted to know what the annunciator panel should be showing (it lights up if certain problems exist), but my foggles were covering that up. This was because of how they limit my view, and if they were high enough to see that panel then I would start seeing a fair bit of the ground too through peripheral vision. I was so focused on making the foggles block out as much ground/sky view as possible (ensuring my outside visual references were removed) without losing the glass cockpit display and primary instruments I ignored the annunciator panel at the top of the instrument panel. Oops.

We then went off to do some pattern work at a nearby field, but there ended up being an aircraft carrying up skydivers who were going to be jumping in a few minutes, so I did one touch and go there before heading off to a controlled airport for more touch and gos. It was pretty busy at this airport and I had to pay close attention on the radios to readback and follow a lot of ATC instructions, which I managed to do. Thankfully the runway here had a good crosswind so I got to practice landing in more of those and I feel like they are starting to click a lot more now. After a couple of average landings I had a perfect one where I kept the correction in after softly touching down on centerline, which felt really good :) After that one is when I felt like a lightbulb went off in my head so the ones after that were good too, at which point we went back home. We almost had to go around at the home airport because another aircraft was taking his time getting off the runway. It was funny hearing the controller almost tease to him "if you don't get off the runway and the guy behind doesn't make it then it's on youuuu" We had to slow down on final quite a bit, and this gave that guy enough time to get off the runway so we had no issues with the landing.

We've started weather theory for the ground school and on the first pass it makes my head hurt a bit. With enough reinforcement it should be fine though...it is just a large chunk of information. It links in to flying obviously, but it's like a different world compared to what I've been studying so far. I feel like weather won't be a strong point for me so I'll need to put some extra time into it. The next few days will be the same sort of stuff. I'm allocated about 10 hours of takeoffs and landings (five days), but my IP said it may be less than that so I have a few extra hours for practice if needed when it comes time for my private pilot checkride. Anyway, I really like doing takeoffs and landings so hopefully they go well :)

- Requiem (Total Hours = 25.1)

Day 15 - Takeoffs/Landings

Mon, 19 Jan 2015 21:00:32, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

Feeling pretty tired so this just a quick entry as there isn't much to cover.

Straightforward(ish) day today as the ground school was more weather content as well as some written exam review, with my flight involving only takeoffs and full stop landings at an uncontrolled airport. I had been here before as this was the airport with the up-sloping narrow runway with power lines below the final approach, but this one is probably my least preferred one to land on because of that. Each landing was a full stop with taxi back, so I got to practice a couple of short field landings and soft field landings. I also performed short field takeoffs where I pretend to climb over an obstacle and soft field takeoffs where I don't stop once you turn around for the takeoff (basically). My patterns were good and my approaches were stable but I wasn't flaring very well in general today. I think having those power lines makes me more cautious so I come in a bit higher and faster when losing that extra height than I really intend to. There were a couple of good ones here, but my flare at the home airport ballooned slightly so I didn't end on a good note. My radio talk and navigation using the glass cockpit was good and didn't need much direction with what to do, but a couple of times I wasn't really sure what ATC wanted so I got him to respond for me. I'm also spending less time on the ground before we depart so I'm getting faster with all the pre-flight, taxi, and runup checklist items.

I'll be doing the same thing again tomorrow at a different airport, so I'll see if I can sort out the flaring a bit better then. I've usually been flying in the afternoon, but tomorrow I'm flying at 9am so that's a change of pace.

- Requiem (Total Hours = 27.3)

Day 16 - More Takeoffs/Landings

Tue, 20 Jan 2015 21:05:48, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

Another day to help refine my landings with lots of touch and gos. We went out to a controlled airport which was quite busy with traffic at times, but I like this airport MUCH better than yesterday's one. The winds were variable and sky was clear so it was a nice day to do this. After approaching the field I was directed behind a Piper Cub and was following along with him in the pattern for a while. The first pattern felt a bit off to me as I was keeping the Cub in sight and ended up needing to do a circular base and final instead of squaring those legs off, so after that first landing I recognised the wind was pushing me towards the runway on downwind and I accounted for it from then onwards. All of these patterns were right hand ones too, so that makes it a bit more difficult since I need to look out the right side of the plane past my IP instead of simply out the left side (this was required because a certain runway is active). Then the tower controller (TC) needed to get some sequencing for inbound and taking off aircraft sorted out so they said they would call out my base turn. They called my turn a bit early and said I may end up needing to go around, so although I tried to slow down and give the Cub enough time, but we did need to abort that landing and go around. While doing so the TC gave out some calls for me to spot the other aircraft in the pattern which was handy, so at this point I offset slightly to the right side of the runway and saw the Cub down below starting to lift off and the other traffic passing behind me to my high right on the downwind. I rejoined the pattern on downwind and started back into the touch and gos.

My situational awareness was tested in the patterns today as there was a lot of traffic flying around, so I was really trying to pay attention to where these other aircraft were by spotting them and listening to the radio. It paid off when the TC cleared me for a touch and go as #2 (second aircraft in sequence), but I remembered (and had in sight) an aircraft who should have been #2 instead of me. I wasn't really sure what to say so instead of reading back I just asked the TC to confirm if I was supposed to be #2 or #3. TC corrected it and said I was supposed to be #3 and thanked me for the help as it was a nice catch for me to realise that. Not a big deal for an instructor to see of course, but my IP was happy I noticed it too.

Later on there was a cool sight for me as I was on downwind and was #1 to land after a DC-3 taking off. The TC warned me of possible wake turbulence from this, so we took this opportunity to practice a short field landing as he rotated a bit over halfway down the runway. Happy to say the short field landing was a good one. I plonked it down on the numbers at a nice slow speed and got airborne again way before any possible effects from wake turbulence if it was there. I had to follow a lot of instructions today such as when to turn certain legs of a pattern and to make patterns tighter or wider, so even though my patterns weren't always standardised I still kept stabilised approaches and landings which I was happy being able to do. Overall, I was focusing conscious efforts on my flaring today and the touchdowns were much better as a result. One time I was blown left slightly in ground effect just before flaring, but I brought it back on centerline. Good thing about variable winds I guess, it keeps you on your toes.

As the practice here came to a close I was given my transponder code (so other ATC can identify me) and I started flying away from the airport. I was waiting to hear the magic words from them that I could change frequencies and contact the regional approach ATC, but the TC was extremely busy and that call didn't come along. After a radio break of about 10 seconds I asked the ATC for permission and they gave it. I read it back and was about to change when they came back quickly and said that before I go they wanted to let me know I did an excellent job out there today. That was really unexpected to hear and made my day :) (plus my home airport landing was good too, so they are coming along nicely)

- Requiem (Total Hours = 29.3)

Day 17 - Crosswind landings

Wed, 21 Jan 2015 21:05:50, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

Didn't have a good a time of it in today's flight. I'm not dwelling on it really, just trying to explain what was happening in this entry. The weather started to shift and the winds picked up a bit so I got to practice landings in direct crosswind. I wasn't very consistent in landing it though. Unlike previous days I noticed I really had trouble applying the correct amount of rudder pressure in general, even in a climb or after rotation. On final approach I was crabbing fine and would transition to the wing low slip at 200ft fine, but coming in to flare is when things weren't working for me. Landed centerline most of the time, but I wasn't aligned longitudinally with the runway properly so I either had too much rudder pressure or too little. We were supposed to practice some short field and soft field landings, but we only did a couple of them since I wasn't really getting the normal landings right. IP thought it was my feet position so I tried placing my feet farther up, but it didn't make much difference and I was feeling a bit fatigued. All I know is I ended up finishing the flight feeling tired with a sore lower back and my left hand cramped up.

My IP noted that the rudder pedals felt stiffer when we got in as I flew the other aircraft today (same type different tailnumber), so I probably got too used to the aircraft I've been flying for the past week or so. After today he joked that we need to get back into that one.

Didn't feel comfortable today so not sure what was up really. Seat position, feet position, too tense on the controls due to the crosswind...Just one of those days I suppose. I'll be focusing solely on how to do 'nav logs' and navigation over Thursday and Friday (plus weather won't cooperate anyway making it a good time for it), so I won't be flying. On Saturday I'll have my first day off so I can spend it with my wife, meaning I won't fly again until Sunday. This will also give me some time to 'reset' and get back into it fresh. On a side note there is this scheduling system for the program (accounts for weather and other stuff) my IP showed me and I am about 20 days ahead of schedule right now. I feel like I'm progressing well overall so being ahead is a bonus. Off to bed now for an early night.

- Requiem (Total Hours = 31.3)

Day 18 - Ground School (Navigation)

Thu, 22 Jan 2015 17:52:29, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

Writing the entry earlier for a change. We had Instrument Meteorological Conditions today, otherwise known as IMC. This basically meant that outside the cloud were below 1000ft and visibility was less than 3 statute miles, so in my area aircraft could only fly using Instrument Flight Rules (IFR). Overall this entry will be simplified because there is a lot to it.

Today was about air navigation, so to start with my IP explained the E6-B flight computer. My briefing wasn't until 1030 so I did some practice earlier and already had a good idea about how to use this thing. It lets you do all sorts of conversions like feet to meters, US gallons to imperial gallons, etc...as well as solve aviation/navigation related problems like wind correction, fuel burn, distance/airspeed problems, among other things...It's a neat little tool I feel comfortable using now. He gave me some problems to work out and then he showed me how to create a navigation log (navlog) and use it when planning a cross country flight.

Example of E6-B.



We then pulled out my sectional (map of the area) and drew a simple direct route from the home airport to somewhere else. I then had to choose checkpoints along that route within 10-20nm of each other that I would use as different 'legs' of the overall route for references to make sure I would be where I expected to be. I had to calculate a few things like the heading I needed when accounting for

wind and magnetic variation+deviation using the E6-B which was good practice. We also calculated the different airspeeds and the distance of each leg to find how long each leg would take (and overall of course), ETAs at the checkpoints, then I would use those times to figure out how much fuel I would use up (burn) in the flight. The other interesting thing was choosing navigation aids called VORs along the route to again verify my position. Simply put, these VORs put out a sweeping signal on headings similar to what a compass looks like, and the aircraft picks this signal up and deciphers whereabouts the aircraft is relative to the VOR. So I chose those along the route and wrote down their frequencies and expected radials I would be on at the checkpoints.

After I had the theory down on how the VORs worked and what I should see on the instrumentation my IP booted up the simulator to test me out. I put in the frequency to listen to a certain VOR and my IP started moving the aircraft around in the world on his computer screen. This would make the aircraft's position change, and hence my position relative to the VOR would change, meaning the instrumentation direction for the VOR would change each time. I had to decipher it and say where I was and how to get back on course to fly towards the VOR, which I did correctly. The instrument works in a unique way (the whole TO/FROM thing), so it was taking some careful thinking initially to sort out where I was relative to the VOR, but I sped up on the process after a few goes :) Tomorrow will be reinforcing what we did today, so I'll be doing a navlog for some crosscountry flying across multiple points and not just using a direct route (plus general review). The cross country flying won't be until after my landing hours are complete, but I'm looking forward to planning the flight and flying it!

- Requiem (Total Hours = 33.3)

Day 19 - Landings

Fri, 23 Jan 2015 21:21:32, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

Although I wasn't expecting to fly today, the weather got better in the afternoon and my IP asked if I wanted to fly. Of course I said yes...987654321987654321
In the morning I was focusing on studying the FAA written exam I'll be taking soonish. I had some questions about a navigation aid called an ADF works. I was getting a bit mixed up between a fixed and rotating version, but once I got the visualisation in my head sorted it was all good.

After that review I did another navigation log, one that would be similar to the cross country flights I'll be doing soon. This one was a bit more in depth than my first one since I had multiple direction and altitude changes, plus the route itself was longer, but I completed it just fine. The only problem was that the flight is supposed to be 3.5 hours long, but my calculated actual transit time is about 70mins. I was meant to include time spent in the traffic pattern at certain airports along the way...oops.

With the practice nav log complete off I did the preflight inspection and paperwork, started the engine, and started taxiing to the active runway. I had to do a double take as I was moving along the taxiway...I saw a C-47 with the invasion stripes on it which looked great, but then right next to it I saw a Heinkel-111. It was very far down the taxiway and not near the flight museum so that left me wondering if it's airworthy.

They disappeared behind me and I took off to practice more landings again. There was another crosswind today, and I was doing better than the other day. There were a few landings where I did it all right, coming down soft on centerline and maintaining the crosswind correction, but a lot of them I was split between doing one thing and not the other. I was either holding the correction in and not flaring enough to a firmer touchdown, or I was NOT holding the crosswind correction and flaring nicely to a soft touchdown. I wasn't quite getting them both in sync at once. My IP noted that everything else is perfect. My pattern work, stabilized approaches, crabbing and transition into the slip...it's just that last part that I need to get working at the same time more often. When I think about it I guess I've been a bit worried at touching down in a wing low attitude, so I end up relieving that correction to get the wings level and flare. That is something I was working on today, so I made some progress on it at least.

I'm going in tomorrow because my IP wants me to go a FAA safety brief with him, so I'll be checking that out tomorrow and having Sunday off instead. On Monday I believe we are going to do the first of three dual cross country flights, so that should be fun! 987654321987654321

- Requiem (Total Hours = 35.3)

Day 20 - Final landings before Cross Country

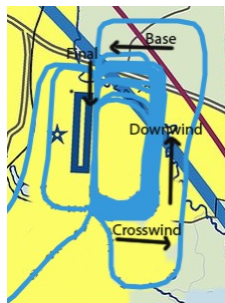
Mon, 26 Jan 2015 21:33:47, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

Today was a bit more landing practice before my cross country flight tomorrow. During my pre-flight inspection I found water in one of the wing tanks. Seeing water is very easy because it is clear (obviously) while the aviation fuel is blue, and the water is of heavier density compared to the fuel so they don't mix. The water can appear due to condensation on the inside of the fuel tank overnight, which then sinks to the bottom because water is heavier than aviation fuel. This means if you drain a fuel tank then water should come out first. So, if both water and fuel are present in a drain sample then you see a clear line between water and fuel...In this case though when I drained the tank there was no fuel at all, it was only clear water. After more draining the water was all gone and only fuel remained so we were good to go.

We flew out to the usual airport and did some pattern work with touch and gos. There was a Cessna 172 in front of us who seemed a bit unsure of what to do, although he was only in the pattern for a few minutes. He was basically asking permission to do things from the tower controller (TC) which he didn't need to, and I think it got a bit much for the TC because at one point he asked if he had an instructor, but this guy said he was a solo student. Then this Cessna asked if he could turn on the final approach to land. The TC promptly replied "Cessna callsign, Yes, but I'm not up there flying the airplane for you" This Cessna also had problems with a landing because he thought something happened to his landing gear on a previous landing...so at this point he took a REALLY wide pattern (look at the picture, it's very obvious) which bothered me because I was #2 behind him and couldn't overtake. The controller tried to slot me across in front of him on the crosswind, then changed his mind when the Cessna turned downwind. My problem with this was since I had to follow this guy on the pattern and he took it so wide, if we had an engine failure I wouldn't have been able to make the runway. I pointed this out to my instructor and suggested where I would land if we had a failure, and he was glad I noticed the issue.

The pic below shows the pattern work I did as I recorded on my iPad software called ForeFlight. You can see which pattern I'm talking about due to the Cessna. The ones where I turn base earlier are emergency engine out approaches while some others are where the TC was calling my base turn or asked me to lengthen/tighten the pattern as required:



Well the Cessna ended up landing to a full stop here instead of a touch and go, then came back around for a takeoff to go back to his home airport which I thought was kind of odd. If I thought my landing gear was a problem I might have asked to do a pass by the control tower or something and see if they could spot an issue visually before trying to land the plane. Anyway, he left and went home and I had the pattern to myself for the remainder of my flight. I practiced soft landings, short field landings, and regular landings. The landings were all pretty good and it felt like things were clicking. My IP noticed this as well. There were a couple of landings though where I got caught out by gusts of wind as I was nearing the flare. I could have accounted for them a bit better as I ended up off centerline as a result, but I recovered well enough for them to still turn out fine. Then headed back to the home airport where I did a nice short field landing for the first taxiway.

A nice day for flying overall and I think the day off did me some good. Tomorrow is the cross country flight that starts early in the morning, so I'm off to bed! :)

- Requiem (Total Hours = 37.3)

Day 21 - First Cross Country

Tue, 27 Jan 2015 20:34:10, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

Today was my first cross country flight. I planned out the basic route the other day on a nav log and did the wind adjustments, ETAs to waypoints, fuel burn, etc. this morning to finalize the nav log itself. Glad to say my calculations were accurate. I was hitting waypoints on time with my reference landmarks and was right on the headings required too.

Initially we went off to a nearby airport to do some "warm up" landings, so it was here I did a few touch and go's which were nice and soft. Then I did a full stop landing to ensure I had everything prepared for the planned route beginning from this airport. I had my nav log out plus the required radio and navigation aid frequencies were dialed in, so I departed for the first waypoint. Trying to keep the navlog in a good position for easy reference during the flight was difficult and I think this affected my workload.

The flight itself was straightforward but I found the cockpit workload higher than I expected. The thing I found hardest was referencing the navlog to quickly dial in the frequencies and the required radials for the navigation aids between each checkpoint. I had visual references for each checkpoint which I could locate on the map and outside, so additionally using two nav aids at once let me cross reference them to find where I was on the map accurately. This cross country was about pilotage and dead reckoning so the nav aids weren't a focus of the flight, more of an extra thing since the flight was going well.

Two of my checkpoints were airports. The first one I did a touch and go on and the second was a full stop short field landing where I ended up needing a progressive taxi since the airport was unfamiliar to me and the layout was a bit complicated. A progressive taxi is basically where the ATC gives me directions on where I need to go, and this helped a lot to get me oriented initially. Then we left for the final checkpoints where we hit them on time and located the visual references I noted in planning.

My IP also pulled the engine on me at one point for me to do an emergency landing in a field. This threw off my nav log timing obviously but it was a good diversion from the flight. Then instead of heading back to the original airport we diverted back to the home airport for a flight time of around three hours.

I wouldn't say my head was on fire for this flight, but I definitely felt pushed in terms of timing things and staying ahead of the airplane to keep up with the navigation side like radio frequencies and checkpoint times while still flying the airplane on course and altitude. It was a good experience though that overloaded me a bit, and this is something I needed so I can get my thought processes and actions working faster so I can have more free brain space while flying.

Looking forward to the next one tomorrow! 987654321987654321

- Requiem (Total Hours = 40.3)

Day 22 - No flying today

Wed, 28 Jan 2015 21:34:30, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

Just a short post as I didn't fly today. There is some bad weather coming up and my IP didn't want me doing a cross country flight today with a possible long break caused by that weather between those flights and the next ones (two more dual day cross countries and one at night). I still have two landing flights to do (4hrs worth) so I'll be doing one of those tomorrow since the winds will be picking up, meaning I can hopefully get more crosswind landing practice in. Doing a landings flight today wouldn't have been much benefit since the winds were pretty calm.

Instead, I did some ground school review today and studied for the FAA written exam. I actually did a practice version which uses the same type of questions and did very well on it so I'll probably take the exam this weekend. With that done I can focus on studying for the private pilot checkride, although there are crossovers between the two of course. In the afternoon a few of us sat in with a guy going for his flight instructor rating, so we were his students for the topics he was teaching us. Things like airspace and aeromedical factors, which I had already done with my IP, but it was a good refresher all the same.

Looking forward to flying tomorrow :)

- Requiem (Total Hours = 40.3)

Day 23 - Yet more landings 987654321987654321

Thu, 29 Jan 2015 20:40:54, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

It was a nice day for flying today and the winds were stronger as expected. They gave a good crosswind component for me to account for at times, but it wasn't a full on direct crosswind like what I've had before. Today was another day where I got to practice more power off emergency landings, short field landings, and soft field landings.

At one point I was number 2 in sequence for landing behind a Cessna. The TC cleared the Cessna in and then me in behind him. After I completed my touch and go the TC asked me if I had heard the Cessna acknowledge his touch and go clearance, which neither me or my IP remembered. Turns out the Cessna was still on the ground frequency and not the tower frequency, so that got sorted out quicksmart.

After that I had been flying a right hand pattern for a while, so I wanted to change things up a bit. There wasn't much activity, so when I had a moment I called over the radio to the tower controller (TC) that I had a request. He replies "now you're scaring me" and my IP and I burst out laughing. I wanted to fly a left hand pattern so I had different sight picture to work off before going back to the standard right hand pattern for this runway. He approved it which was good of him to do for me.

My landings were good today, and my IP remarked that he can't wait to unveil me to the designated pilot examiner (DPE) when my check ride comes around. Although hearing that gave me a good laugh I took it to mean that I'm still doing well 987654321987654321 I got a text message earlier and it looks like I'll be flying a cross country tomorrow morning. Unexpected, but I'm happy to be flying so it should be fun! 987654321987654321

- Requiem (Total Hours = 41.8)

Day 24 - Cross Country #2

Fri, 30 Jan 2015 22:12:20, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

As I wrote yesterday I wasn't expecting to fly today, but the weather turned out better than expected so up I went! These cross country flights are all very similar in the route taken, but since the winds always change that changes the calculations required to keep my flying accurate. All the calculations looked good to me so we took off and headed towards an airport nearby where I got in some "warm up" landings via touch and gos (just like last time) before requesting a "full stop taxi back." That meant I went in to land but no touch and go...I landed and exited the runway onto the taxiway, followed by taxiing to a position back towards the beginning of the runway while I sorted out the first leg of the cross country. I dialed in the frequencies of the nav aids for the cross referencing of my first checkpoint and also requested "VFR Flight Following" for the first time while I was on the ground. Basically, by asking for this ATC will keep an eye on me on the way to my destination as well as pointing out any other aircraft nearby if needed.

So after taking off for the first leg I started the timer when I was on my correct heading and the cross country began. As in the first flight my wind calculations were spot on so I was hitting my checkpoints at the time I was supposed to with the nav aid cross referencing confirming that. Before I reached the first airport my IP pulled the throttle on me and I had performed a simulated emergency landing. I did this well and chose a nearby field so I didn't need to glide very far and more or less just managed my altitude so I could make that field. Doing that made it easier as I didn't have to worry about wondering if my glide would make the distance or not.

The first airport on my route was one I would do a touch and go at before continuing, so once I had this airport in sight I spoke to the ATC watching me for flight following and asked for them to cease it since it was no longer required. Then I changed over to that airport's tower frequency and requested a touch and go with a departure to my next point. I did that touch and go and continued on to the next couple of checkpoints before coming up on the second airport where my IP gave me the option to do a touch and go or full stop taxi back. I preferred doing the full stop taxi so I could some more practice at taxiing around an unfamiliar airport. I also elected to make a soft field landing, which was a really nice one I have to say :) Once on the ground you can make the taxiing easier by using an application on the iPad which has the airport layout on it (plus a lot of other things). If I was ever unsure of where I was going once I was on the ground taxiing I could have asked for a "progressive taxi"

where the ATC tells me every step, but that wasn't needed and I found my way around just fine.

After holding short of the designated runway I sorted out the next checkpoint's details (like before I took off at the start) then departed for that checkpoint. My IP was talking to me a bit explaining some extra things with the GPS system, so while my initial heading to this checkpoint was spot on like the others I kept straying from the heading a bit here and there along the way. I wasn't drastically off track, but this point was supposed to be on the edge of a lake and I was just inside it so I drifted a bit since I didn't maintain a constant heading. I was still on time though.

There was no diversion in this flight back to the home airport, so I plugged in the extra navaid frequencies as needed and noted my times which were good. Then I did a single touch and go at the airport I began from and headed back to my home airport where it appeared to be pretty busy. Coming in to land I did a short field landing because where I park the plane is right off the first taxiway when this runway is active, so I came in much slower than normal, plonked it down, retracted flaps to get the weight on the wheels, pulled back on the yoke to have 'aerodynamic braking,' and applied brakes to come exit at the first taxiway. If I missed that I would have had to go to the next taxiway then go backwards to where the aircraft needs to be parked, so making that first taxiway is a sign that my short field landing was good.

A funny thing I noted on this flight was my aircraft spotting. I really felt like I was flying the aircraft without thinking about it much so I dedicated more time to spotting and actually spotted every aircraft first today before directing my IP's eyes onto them. On the first one of the day I had it at around 6 miles out and he asked how I beat him to it and I joked "too much time in combat flight simulators I suppose...in them I have to see and find the bad guys first, sneak up on them, then kill them." He had a great reply to that: "Ok then, so go kill that Cessna!" Later on in the flight we both saw a traffic advisory on the GPS and I said I had it in sight...followed with him laughing "Yes I know YOU have it in sight, let me find it." I really try to not mention the simming stuff I've done around here (let alone making videos) as they might find it a bit odd, but I simply couldn't resist joking about that spotting aspect :)

Weather is no good this weekend, so I have tomorrow off and will be going in on Sunday for my FAA written test. Next week will be my final dual daylight cross country, a night cross country, a final landings flight...then "drumroll" my solo evaluation flights. For those I'll go up with a different instructor to see if I'm approved for my first solo flight, hopefully they say yes :D

- Requiem (Total Hours = 44.8)

Day 24.5 -Written Exam

Sun, 01 Feb 2015 13:13:30, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

Short post today as I all I did was go in for the FAA written exam. A 'pass' is 70% and I got 92%. That's ok but I was hoping to do better considering my practice ones were high 90s. A couple of dumb mistakes and one case of mis-clicking the wrong answer after working out the correct one brought it down. It's still a good result though so I'm not going to beat myself up over it. With the written done I can now start focusing on the oral exam for when my private pilot checkride comes around.

Next week is going to be interesting...night cross country and solo evaluation, so I'm looking forward to those :)

- Requiem (Total Hours = 44.8)

Day 25 - Diversions / Lost Procedures + Tailwind landing

Mon, 02 Feb 2015 21:45:47, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

Today was my last dual cross country and we instead of flying the entire route I did a diversion followed up with practicing how to locate my position if I became lost. It was slightly colder today during the pre-flight inspection (-4 deg C)...yes...I can hear those of you out there laughing at how -4C is NOT that cold :P As usual though I flew out to the nearby airport and did some warm up touch and go's. There was a decent crosswind all my landings were pretty good, but the best one was easily the first landing I made. I barely felt the main wheels touching the runway and the nose wheel came down so soft I didn't even feel it at all. Feeling literally nothing like that when landing is so awesome...:)

As before, after my warmups I did the full stop taxi back and set up all my radios, initial heading/altitude, and nav aids before taking off to the first checkpoint. Almost immediately though my initial heading appeared to be incorrect since I was north of a highway I should have been south on, and after checking my numbers the "winds aloft" numbers for my timeframe of flight obviously weren't correct and this threw off my navigation calculations. This required using the GPS plus dead reckoning and pilotage, along with cross referencing with the navigation aids to properly nail down where I was on the map.

I flew off to the usual first airport on the route for a touch and go and set up everything needed to continue on to the next airport, but at this point my IP said we would be diverting. He simulated a storm front that forces this to occur, so with that in mind I used a navigation aid nearby the airport to divert there. He was asking some questions about how far away we were and how long it would take to get there (without using the GPS). He suggested a 'knuckle method' to measure distance, but I wasn't familiar with that so I used a different way where I used the length of a pencil to measure the flight distance on the map then comparing that length to the lines of longitude on the map. Each minute of longitude is equal to 1 nautical mile, so it was easy to compare the lengths by laying the pencil down on the map and figure out the distance. Divide that distance by approximate ground speed and you get the approximate time it takes to get there.

At this uncontrolled airport I listened to the automated weather and the wind was blowing from heading 280...The problem was that this airport's runway is aligned on the headings 010 and 190, so no matter which one I picked I would end up with a direct crosswind, or so I thought anyway. I chose to land 190 so I could practice the left hand pattern, but on the downwind we looked out at the windsock(s) and it wasn't blowing from 280 but it was actually more of a northerly wind. This meant that if I landed on 190 it would be with a slight tailwind. I hadn't landed with a tailwind yet but I have brought it up before with my IP and asked if I would get to do one as I read about them in the material. At that time he said probably not...but seeing as I was already set up he said I could if I wanted to. Although I knew what to do and expect from it in theory the feeling coming in to land was very different. With a tailwind the airplane approaches a lot faster and will use up more runway when landing, so it was just a strange sensation compared to what I was used to so far. I didn't feel uncomfortable at all and the landing was very good but it's hard to explain the feeling. After that I wanted to try another one but I turned base a bit early and was too high early on the final approach so I elected to go around. I'm happy to have done that tailwind landing so I at least got to experience what they are like. Then we left that airport to get back towards another airport where I would get a few more touch and go's in before heading back to the home airport.

During the flight back I practice locating my position using the navigation aids which went well. Sort of the same thing as cross referencing my position in a navigation log, but instead I find where I am in relation to the aids and draw lines out from them on the map. Where the lines intersect is my approximate position, so it's pretty straightforward. My IP was also trying hard to outdo me on the spotting today. He seemed pretty competitive about it and he spotted a few before me :)

- Requiem (Total Hours = 47.8)

Day 26 - Ground School

Tue, 03 Feb 2015 19:55:40, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

Today was focused on ground school so I didn't fly. Since my private pilot check ride will be coming up we are starting to focus on the oral exam and the guide used to help study for that.

The two chapters we went over covered certificates and documents, then weather. The chapters in this guide are all about review since I have already read over this material before, and the chapters are organized in a question and answer format to highlight the important concepts. So basically my IP was asking me the questions, plus other related ones, as we went through the chapters. I missed a couple in the weather section but overall I was answering the questions well. After that I spent my own time reading for a bit and my IP went flying with another student to help prepare him for a check ride. He was pretty busy today and had to deal with a couple of other guys too.

I go in late tomorrow because I'll be flying the nighttime cross country which I am really excited to do! I'm looking forward to seeing how the area looks at nighttime 987654321987654321 The day after will be another takeoffs and landing flight then my solo evaluation, so I should be soloing by next week if all goes well! Crazy to think how fast the last 4 weeks have gone by...Time flies when you are having fun and learning a lot to boot 987654321987654321 I'm going to be recording the night flight so keep an eye out for the next entry...which will likely be in the morning after because I'll be home late obviously.

- Requiem (Total Hours = 47.8)

Day 27 - Ground School

Wed, 04 Feb 2015 19:36:25, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

Sorry that I don't have much to write about since the weather didn't co-operate today and I was stuck inside :(It was just too cloudy for the night flight so it's been postponed until tomorrow night. Instead I did more ground school over the course of the entire day, plus I also asked to fly the simulator for some navigation aid practice. In the simulator I spent time practicing the input of navigation aid frequencies/radials to figure out my position as well as practicing intercepting certain radials in my local area. He would click on his screen and move my aircraft around the simulated world randomly, so then I would need to find out where I was and point to it on my sectional (map) followed by figuring out a course of how to get home or to another airport. I also practiced diversions too in case of bad weather at a destination airport. It was good to practice this on the ground so it will help me when I get back airborne.

Again for the ground school my IP was asking me questions from the chapters covering aerodynamics, aircraft instruments, and aircraft performance in the oral exam guide book. I was answering the questions pretty well overall and we ended up talking about many different aspects of these topics in a lot more depth, so he's still happy with how things are going. He said my knowledge is well above what I need at this stage of training and that he would be confident enough to put me on a checkride tomorrow if he could, but I still have to do the solo aspect and checkride reviews before that comes about.

Speaking of which...he told me today that I will probably be soloing either Sunday (if I wanted it to be moved to then) or early next week. Regardless, I still have to pass the solo evaluation which will be either Friday or Saturday I think. I guess it depends on how tired I feel after the night flight so I'll play it by ear...I also have a firm date for my private pilot checkride, the 1st of March. My IP wants me to take it with his DPE (designated pilot examiner) and I believe this was the earliest time he was available, so I have plenty of time to be fully prepared for the checkride. My program had it scheduled for March 11 anyway so I'll still be ahead of schedule if I pass it first time. If I can remain ahead of things in fast paced training like this I'll be doing well :)

So...hopefully the *next* entry will be detailing my first night flight experience!

- Requiem (Total Hours = 47.8)

Day 28 - First Night Flight

Sat, 07 Feb 2015 21:28:29, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

The weather didn't co-operate again so I ended up doing the night flying last night. Simply put the night flight was amazing! It is one thing to be a passenger staring out that small window at night, but actually doing the flying and having the freedom to look around for a much more encompassing view was just so cool. I was so used to seeing the airports and general area during the daytime everything took on a much more surreal look with it all lit up. It sounds silly, but I remarked to my IP that seeing the runway lit up at a distance when coming in on final almost made it look as if it were a video game :lol:

I did manage to record part of the flight. Initially I didn't hit the button correctly so it didn't start when I wanted, but I rectified this later at the second airport I flew to on my cross country route. Also, even though I charged the GoPro I think it lost some charge when I removed the previous flight from the SD card so it was probably a good thing I didn't get the recording started when I wanted to. Because of that slip-up I ended up being able to record most of my landings at a nearby airport near the end of the flight. If I had it recording from the start I would have missed those.

This was the usual cross country route I've been used to taking, but I also had to get in 10 takeoffs and landings (to a full stop) in addition to the 100nm distance away from the home airport. This meant that we were pushing it for time and it required us to speed up faster than I expected to on the navigation log on the way home. Up until that point I was on time though, and all of my wind/speed calculations were spot on too. After the first full stop landing I set up the radios and nav aids and set off for the first airport. At this time of night that first airport was uncontrolled (tower controllers were finished for the day) so I announced what I was doing over the advisory frequency and found there was another aircraft operating in the pattern doing touch and go's. He was really easy to see because of his lights and I came in behind him for a full stop landing before taxiing back and getting ready to takeoff again after he had landed and was off again back into the pattern. The cool thing about this was that because the airport was now uncontrolled I could turn on and control the intensity of the runway lighting. All it takes is 7, 5, or 3 microphone clicks in 5 seconds to make the light intensity either high, medium, or low. I preferred the low intensity so I set that when I was on final, but after I took off and departed for my next waypoint I heard the guy in the pattern do 7 clicks so he liked it at high intensity. That intensity just wasn't for me though...it was on high when I turned on final and it was too much so as I mentioned I turned it to low.

After leaving that airport and heading on to the next one (for another full stop taxi back) I noticed the controller was a bit mumbly with his speaking. It seemed like from the ATIS recording of weather conditions there that he was pretty bored or something, probably since there wasn't much going on there for him anyway. The winds were blowing hard here and I had a pretty strong crosswind to deal with. My IP said it was probably around 15kts or so. I wish I had that landing recorded as it was very good (soft and centerline) and my IP was really happy with how I handled it. After the full stop I had instructions from him to turn on multiple taxiways, then clearance across a runway, then on to another taxiway before arriving at the active runway again. He said it really fast and mumbly and I ended up reading back the last direction wrong. At this time I wanted to double check the GoPro was working (it wasn't) so I turned it on for the takeoff from here. After leaving that airport we had to put the power up and get flying back to the airport at a fast rate so I could do the remainder of my landings without going overtime.

Getting back to the airport I took off from was funny because as I called out to them to state my position/intentions I recognised the tower controller's (TC's) voice. This is because her voice is very distinct from many other controllers as she always sounds happy when talking over the radio and she was also the same controller from one of my earlier blog entries who wanted to let me know I did a good job when I flew in their pattern for takeoff/landing practice before handing me off to a different frequency. I entered on the downwind leg and notified the TC as I was doing that, so I ended up flying six takeoffs/landings in the pattern here total and my IP was happy with them. The interesting thing I found with these landings was the TC cleared me to do 180 degree turns on the runway with a taxi back to the start. This saved us good time because I didn't have to deal with the taxiway after landing. I would just whip the plane around and head back towards the threshold and taking off again. On one of my landings the TC advised me of traffic on a 4nm final as I was doing the 180 degree about face, so I acknowledged that and got airborne ASAP. I ended up getting back into the pattern quickly enough for the TC to ask me to extend my downwind a bit to allow for spacing for the guy coming in to land who would be a full stop. I got the spacing right and came in to land and went back to the routine of 180's and taking off again.

After the fifth landing here I mentioned to the TC that the sixth landing is the last one and I'll be departing afterwards. The TC already had my code ready so after my last landing she assigned it to me. I got an unexpected question from the TC though after I turned towards the departure heading. The TC asked how many hours I had (I mentioned I was a student pilot earlier). After my reply of about 44 hours she said she can tell I'll be a great pilot someday because I listened to and properly acted on all the instructions she gave, flew great patterns and landings, and finished by saying that I'm welcome back to fly at the airport any time. I wasn't expecting anything like that, but it was nice to hear as I felt pretty good about how I flew overall :-)

The flight back to the home airport was actually a bit bumpy and there was some traffic that wasn't with the regional controller nearby. This traffic was underneath us so he was blending into the lights on the ground below, but I spotted him as he crossed from my low 11 o'clock. At that point the regional controller terminated radar services and I lined up on the base leg for the home airport. By this time of night the airport is no longer tower controlled so I had to announce my intentions over the radio and control the runway lighting, which felt strange to do. Due to the turbulence I adjusted to come in a bit faster, but I ended up flaring a bit high on this landing so it wasn't perfect. Overall though I loved flying and landing at night! My IP was happy with everything too as he said my navlog and landings were good. Now I just have one more takeoff/landing flight then the solo evaluation to see if I'm allowed to fly by myself :D

- Requiem (Total Hours = 51.0)

Day 29 - Last Flight Before Solo Evaluation

Sun, 08 Feb 2015 20:25:06, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

Today's flight was my last takeoff and landings practice flight. As usual for these I flew out to the nearby airport and practiced some soft field, short field, power off, no flaps, and normal landings. It was pretty busy out that way today though. When I first contacted the tower controller I was met with the "aircraft calling, standby" response which meant that I wasn't allowed to enter the airspace around the field. I ended up making two orbits outside the airspace to see if the TC would remember I existed, but no transmissions were for me so I asked again and then was allowed to enter the traffic pattern.

As I mentioned, it was pretty busy here so I was altering my traffic pattern often in order to fit into the sequence. My landings were good overall and my IP was happy with them. Not much else of note to report on today's flight really. After going back to the home airport my IP and I went over some questions related to tomorrow's evaluation and I answered those correctly.

So tomorrow I will be flying with a different instructor for evaluation to see if I can solo or not. It will essentially be the sort of flying I have been doing for the cross country routes with a few landings and other aspects thrown in. My IP has confidence in me to not have any problems with the evaluation and I'm looking forward to it 987654321987654321

- Requiem (Total Hours = 52.6)

Day 30 - Solo Evaluation

Mon, 09 Feb 2015 21:06:05, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

Good news! I passed the solo evaluation flight987654321987654321 It consisted of an oral review where I was asked a bunch of questions about the airplane, the route, airspace, and other things. Following that was the flying of the usual cross country route with me in full control without advice / input from the instructor who was not my usual instructor. Sort of a second opinion if you will to see if I'm ready to solo.

The weather was pretty good, although it got a bit gusty down low so this made my landings a bit more challenging at times. They were pretty good with a couple of really nice soft ones. I never seemed to fly a normal pattern to start with though as I had to keep modifying it for traffic and spacing. Not a big deal but it just messes with the rhythm a bit. At one point a TC asked me if I could do a short approach in front of another aircraft which I had in sight. I didn't feel comfortable with that so I elected to just extend the downwind and come in as #2 for landing. For my first power off 180 I thought I was a bit high on final so I added then eat notch of flaps, but after a few seconds it felt like I would come up short. Of the 1000ft markers so I pulled that notch back in to extend the glide a bit more before re-adding that notch to fine tune my touchdown point back to the 1000ft markers.

The total flight time was 4 hours and I had to do a minimum of 6 landings with 3 full stops plus some more questions along the way. I ended up getting those done pretty quickly and by the last couple of legs we had about an hour left. So I did the other parts of the eval like intercepting nav aid radials, locating my position using an aids, a simulated diversion due to weather, and a simulated engine off emergency. The engine off emergency was interesting as there wasn't much around to aim for, so by maintaining the proper glide speed I made my chosen field easily. Along the way back we had the time to burn so we went out to an uncontrolled airport where I practiced a couple of touch and go's. It was the same airport I had the tailwind landing so it was somewhat familiar to me.

On the way back to the first airport, the IP was looking out the window and asked if I thought that seeing everything from up here would ever get old. I told him that I definitely don't see it ever getting old as I really love it up in the sky. I also mentioned that every day when I walk out to the plane to preflight I will smile to myself and take a moment when I sit in the cockpit to acknowledge just how lucky I am to actually be doing this thanks to the help and support of those around me. He knew what I meant as he felt the same way about himself getting to where he is.

After arriving at that first airport the time was running lower, so I did a couple of touch and go's with a power off 180 landing where I put it right on the 1000 ft markers which I was really happy with. After that we went back to the home airport, debriefed, signed some paperwork and I was done. The instructor was happy and said I did a great job, so I'll probably be soloing tomorrow or the day after provided the weather is suitable for solo flight. I'm very happy to have passed and am really looking forward to the solo! 987654321987654321

- Requiem (Total Hours = 56.6)

Day 31 - My First Solo Flight (video comes tomorrow)

Tue, 10 Feb 2015 22:02:08, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

Well today was my first solo flight and it went pretty well I think. To begin I flew off with my instructor to another airfield and did a few practice touch and go's to get a feel for the weather there. For the active runway it was a direct crosswind of 10+ knots with some gusting too, so this ended up making the landings the most challenging ones I've had to do thus far. Not just because I would be by myself, but in the warm up touch and go's I noticed that as I would come in to round out and flare the gusting winds required me to react quickly and adjust my inputs to get the landings right.

Initially the pattern was a bit busy after my second touch and go there was no more traffic in the pattern, so the TC came over (the same one from my night flight) and asked "it's just you and me you need anything special?" (probably because when it's quiet I've asked to do opposite traffic pattern directions for practice sometimes). I replied that I still had one more touch and go left then I needed a full stop because I'll be doing my first solo today :) to which I heard back "Sweet!"

So after I did the full stop landing I taxied over to the FBO (fixed base operator) area where they do refueling to drop my instructor pilot (IP) off. I reached the FBO area, turned off the engine and shut the plane down. My IP got out and asked if I had any questions. I said I didn't but asked if he anything for me...he just said "Yeah, just don't screw up" laughed and said I'd be fine. I didn't need to get out the airplane so after he got out and latched the door I went through the process of starting the aircraft. Once the engine was started I received my clearance to taxi and off I went to hold short of the active runway. I've never felt nervous during my training so far, but I actually felt nervous during the taxi. However, once I started my "run up" and was awaiting my takeoff clearance the butterflies were all gone. I was comfortable with all of my takeoffs and was adjusting to the wind gusts as best I could, but the landings are where it really counts.

Because the of the crosswind and gusts I was trying to come in on final a little faster than usual so I ended up going past the 1000ft markers (which are the really big white strips on the sides of the runway you see) each time, but I was still able to make the first taxiway for each landing so that was good. It's hard to describe so if you watch the video it makes more sense...as I would get ready to round out and flare near the ground I would be pushed around a bit so I needed to account for that with some really quick and sometimes subtle adjustments. The first and third landings were good but the second I feel was just ok because I bounced once then came back down a bit too firm for my liking. I have ballooned a few times before, but actually bouncing off the runway and then touching down was something I hadn't done yet in any of my landings up until this point. I'm not really sure what it was, but at the time it felt like I was flaring and ready to touch down when the stall warning horn goes off and the plane yawed left so I tried to correct for it. I ended up bouncing once due to touching down a bit hard I think which forced me back up so I held the attitude till I came back down...at which point I swore at myself :lol: In tomorrow's entry the video will be ready for viewing (still uploading) so I'll be interested to hear any thoughts about what you experienced guys think of it and how I could have improved on what I did.

I'm pretty critical of myself on my landings so I might be being too hard on myself, but that second landing was really the only problem I had today. My radios were good, I kept up with being aware of other aircraft as I had to modify my pattern to accommodate traffic in front of me which left me with pretty long final approaches. The Cessnas are slow in the patterns so I remember to give them more time. After my final landing the TC said I did a beautiful job before handing me off to the ground controller, but that second landing was still niggling at me a bit. I've read that pilots will say that the plane handles differently without the instructor in it, but I honestly didn't feel a difference. I don't know if that was due to the wind and gust factoring into it, so if anything the aircraft may have been blown round a bit more than normal, but like I said I couldn't really feel a difference.

After we got back to the airfield my IP asked for my shirt so he could cut it in half. We each kept one half of the shirt...The idea is that in earlier times of flight training the instructor sat behind the student, so when he needed to get the students attention he would pull on the student's shirt from behind. Cutting this away signifies the lack of need for shirt pulling since the student has been judged competent enough to solo. There is an interesting article about it here: http://flighttraining.aopa.org/magazine/2005/April/200504_Commentary_Preflight.html

I can't express how great it felt though when taxiing back about thinking that I actually flew the airplane by myself. It's something I had dreamed about all my life but had all but given up on before I started flight training. Today has been a real highlight of my life, so thank you to my family and friend/mentor who have helped make this achievement possible. The next step is to continue studying and improving in order to pass my private pilot checkride so I'll keep you posted on that and my training leading up to it of course :)

Hell...I flew all by myself today! :D

- Requiem (Total Hours = 59.9)

Day 32 - First Solo Flight Video

Wed, 11 Feb 2015 21:13:36, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

This is a short post as I wasn't scheduled to fly today, so I spent my time going over the FAR/AIM plus some oral review for my checkride. I really would have liked to have flown regardless, but I'm kind of glad I had today off because after the solo eval the other day (four hour flight), my pinky and ring fingers on my left hand have cramped up during the last two nights while I was asleep. Once they moved past a certain point they would basically cramp/curl up to the same position as if I were holding the control yoke in the plane :lol: I won't be flying tomorrow either due to something all the instructors are doing tomorrow, so my next flight (first solo cross country) will be on Friday morning. I'm really looking forward to that! :)

Anyway...without further ado here is my solo flight. I have a long and short version, but the long version with the Air Traffic Control audio included where you hear all the in flight radio calls is still uploading (it's a 4Gb video) so if you want to see that one send me a PM on the Battle of Stalingrad forums and I'll send it out. The one I've linked at the bottom of this entry though is the shortened version of the flight containing just the GoPro footage (start up/taxi/downwinds/bases/shutdown removed). I'm interested in hearing critiques because I am but a padawan while there are quite a few masters out there who read this blog :) I hope you enjoy the video because it was the most enjoyable flight I've had! :)

- Requiem (Total Hours = 59.9)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P6KMJJQYYSQ>

Day 33 - Grounded

Thu, 12 Feb 2015 20:23:19, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

Nothing much to report for today as I wasn't able to fly. I did some self study of aeronautical decision making plus more oral review in the morning then in the afternoon my IP and I went through the PTS (Practical Test Standards) published by the FAA. The PTS is what the examiner for my checkride uses as a guide for how to test me. Going through the PTS line by line answering each of the objectives with my IP is something I'll be doing a lot coming up to the checkride.

Tomorrow will be my first solo cross country and the winds should be calm so I'll be leaving first thing in the morning to return by lunchtime. I will fly off to a nearby airport for some warm up landings, kick the instructor out of the plane :P, then off I go. I return to pick him up in a couple of hours and fly back to the home airport. I'm *really* looking forward to flying by myself again tomorrow :D

- Requiem (Total Hours = 59.9)

Day 34 - First Solo Cross Country

Fri, 13 Feb 2015 21:23:36, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

Flying today was a bit "up in the air" for me. No pun intended...I thought I was going to be flying this morning, but another student needed a flight with my IP before his checkride (which was a little bit after he landed), and since my IP needed to be present at the briefing for that it didn't seem like I would have time to fly.

Luckily, there was enough time and the weather was within the limitations for me today, so I took off and dropped my IP at an airport then left on my cross country route by myself 987654321987654321 I basically flew the route I usually do with at least one full stop landing and taxi back required at the airports along the route. My nav log was good so I arrived at my checkpoints right on time. I just did the one full stop at the first airport, then two at the second airport. I was going to do a third but paying attention to the time I decided to just depart back to the airport where I dropped off my IP.

I climbed up to a higher altitude where the air was extremely stable to head back, and I spotted a lot of cessnas on the way. One in particular I spotted who was a few miles out at my 2 o'clock, 1500ft below, and passing from my right to left. I shifted course to the right so I could pass on his right and see him better, but once I was on his right side and overtaking he decided to turn right and come back across again...completely negating why I moved in the first place. He probably had trouble seeing me due to his high wing or didn't know I was there at all if he didn't have the right equipment for traffic advisories or something. Not a big deal though.

So I made it back at my IP's airport and did another couple of full stop taxi backs. I wanted to do a third, but after holding short on the taxiway I was #3 to take off, and there were two aircraft on final approach. So instead of going overtime I requested a taxi to the parking area and finished with six minutes to spare. If those two aircraft weren't on final I would have made the time, but it would have cut it too close if I waited to takeoff again so I just called it for the day, picked up my IP, and went back to the home airport.

When I finished up and got my IP he asked if I practiced any short field or soft field landings, but with the way the winds were I didn't feel comfortable making those kinds of approaches because they require full flaps. The winds today were crosswinds with gusts and I remembered reading somewhere (before I started the flight training) that full flaps shouldn't be used in those conditions to help the plane be more stable on the approach. I mentioned that to my IP and said I exercised good judgement so that's good 987654321987654321

I really enjoyed this flight today and will be doing the same thing again early tomorrow. It feels so natural and I wasn't nervous at all! It's awesome to be in full control of the airplane, and it is really peaceful up higher when the plane is trimmed out and it almost flies hands off...only because the turbulence wasn't there of course 987654321987654321

- Requiem (Total Hours = 59.9)

Day 35 - Second Solo Cross Country

Sun, 15 Feb 2015 10:08:33, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

I had my second cross country flight yesterday and the route itself went fine. My navlog was good and with the calmer winds I practiced full stop short and soft field landings along the way. When I got back to the home airport I had about 40 mins of time left to fly so instead of landing and picking up my instructor I remained in the pattern and practiced more full stop short field and soft field landings to use that time. During this pattern work I had my first stuff up though. The explanation that follows will probably only make sense to the pilots reading...

I was on a left downwind for RWY 18 cleared to land as #2 behind a guy on final. There is also a guy off to my right less than half a mile away who mentioned he was having some sort of engine problem earlier. I was about to start my flow to land (abeam the touchdown point) when the other guy comes over the radio and says he needs to land due to his problem. The TC responds to tell him to come straight in, but since I'm in his way at this point he tells me to climb to 2500ft and turn west. I do that no worries and am now out of that guy's way and he can land. As I pass over the final leg flying west the TC tells me to rejoin the pattern for a right downwind for RWY 18. I knew what I wanted to do to rejoin but it wasn't correct as the TC said he wasn't sure what I was doing. Instead of wasting time explaining what I intended I just said I was a solo student and asked him what he wanted me to do, so he directed how he wanted me to turn and descend back into the pattern for me to land. Once I landed and was waiting to takeoff I apologised to the TC for the confusion and said I had intended to enter from overhead the midfield portion of downwind, and the TC said no problem. Leaving the pattern then rejoining like this was something I never had to do before or covered so far in the training, so it was a good learning experience for me as after talking with my friend I know where I went wrong and what the TC expected me to do. I'll be keeping this scenario in mind as one for my students to practice when I eventually become a CFI.

As for future flights, due to the weather it looks like I won't be flying my next solo cross country until Tuesday or Wednesday. That will be my last solo cross country because after those I start the review flights for my private pilot checkride coming up in 2 weeks! :D

- Requiem (Total Hours = 63.6)

Day 36 - Grounded

Mon, 16 Feb 2015 20:35:22, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

Short update as not much to report on... As expected the weather wasn't good enough for flying, so the plan is for my last solo cross country to take place tomorrow afternoon as hopefully the clouds won't be as big a factor by then. Tomorrow morning could be possible, but I'd rather fly solo with a clearer sky later on instead of flying in what may be less ideal (although legal) VFR conditions in the morning. I did some checkride prep with my instructor today through the day which went well. I'm looking forward to flying the cross country tomorrow followed by getting back into practicing the maneuvers :)

- Requiem (Total Hours = 63.6)

Day 37 - Third Cross Country

Tue, 17 Feb 2015 21:07:54, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

I flew a different tail number today, and had a good window of weather today to finish up my solo flight in it. The first touch and go was perfect...just one of those landings where it was so soft it almost didn't seem like I was on the runway 987654321987654321 the next two warmups were good but not like that first one.

After my IP stepped out I got going and overall the cross country went well. The winds aloft weren't quite working for my navlog today as my first heading was off by a few degrees so I was doing more flying by pilotage and the nav aids rather than worrying about sticking to my calculated heading.

The flight went as expected but on one of my full stop landings I had to confirm I was cleared to land when on base because I didn't hear anything from the TC after being cleared to takeoff and enter the pattern. On one of the landings here it seemed like the plane floated forever in ground effect, which was weird since I came in for a soft field landing profile at 66kts (slower than standard) over the threshold and cut power. I was expecting to touchdown at the 1000footers but I ended up floating way past them which was odd 987654321987654321

On the way back I was at 4500ft and my groundspeed was slower than I expected due to a stronger headwind, so I dropped down to 3000ft to see if the winds were weaker. Which they were, so this let me regain that time I lost due to the increased headwind and get back on schedule to make it back in the to practice a few more full stop landings. The crosswind had picked up a fair bit since I left so that was good practice. The weather was starting to close in too and we could see a bunch of rain clouds moving towards the home airport. This meant we had to get going quickly and we got back to the home airport before it got too bad, but it was pretty neat flying through a little bit of light precipitation while the visibility remained high. Oh, also had the spotting game as usual with my IP and I won again 987654321987654321

So now that the solo flight is done I have seven review flights in 12 days or so before I have the checkride on March 1st. Time to go back to practicing maneuvers 987654321987654321

- Requiem (Total Hours = 67.1)

Day 38 - Checkride Review #1

Thu, 19 Feb 2015 20:58:47, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

Today was the first review flight (of seven) to help prepare me for the private pilot checkride coming up. During this flight I got to practice my S-turns along a road, turns around a point, steep turns, slow flight, power on stalls, power off stalls, and a few landings to finish up. Altogether my maneuvers were good, but I felt like my steep turns were a bit rusty. Sometimes I added trim to help make holding the turn easier and others I left it out to make it easier to prevent the nose rising when I rolled out of the turn. Not much to report on for this flight, but my instructor and I were having our usual game of who can spot the aircraft first. He's starting to call me eagle eyes now so I know who won today :)

These are review flights so there isn't much I can add unless something out of the ordinary happens, which it kind of did today. While I was in the pattern practicing landings there was another aircraft of the same type as us and I was towards the end of downwind abeam the touchdown point and the other guy was just turning crosswind. The tower controller (TC) came over the radio and said to the other aircraft "errr...callsign, cleared #1 for touch and go on RWY 18," and that aircraft confirms that he is cleared #1. I then gave my instructor a scrunched up face asking if the TC just said what I think he said... Immediately after that the TC tells me to follow the aircraft about to turn base and that I'm cleared for touch and go as #2. I asked the TC to confirm that I should be #1 since I'm the aircraft that is on the base leg. He came back with something like "Yeah...I had a 50/50 shot at it, callsign, cleared #1 touch and go RWY 18." When he said that I could hear the people in the tower laughing in the background, so I replied about being #1 and I'm sure the smile on my face came across over the radio.

As usual, before and after the flight I did ground review with my instructor as well. I'm starting to memorise the FAR numbers to go with the regulations since my instructor is basically a walking FAR. Anytime he asks me a question I can give the answer, but then he asks what regulation is it, so now when he does that I can start giving him the regulation as well. He said I'm going beyond what's needed by knowing those but it will come in handy for CFI later so it's good I'm getting started on them early.

I doubt I'll fly tomorrow or the weekend due to the incoming weather, so more ground review is planned :)

- Requiem (Total Hours = 69.2)

Day 39 - Grounded

Fri, 20 Feb 2015 20:37:47, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

No flying today as expected. I turned up to the airport and the rotating beacon was on, indicating IFR conditions, so that meant no flying for sure (as if the weather wasn't an obvious hint anyway). The other student of my instructor's who will be taking his checkride the same day as me was here as well, so we all spent a few hours together going over the oral review taking turns answering questions. That was good to do and I answered all of my questions (and knew the ones the other student was asked) so I was happy. We almost managed to go through the entire review book too in today's study session so it was a productive day. My IP believes I've been ready for the checkride for a while so this week is about perfecting things. I just hope that when the day comes for the checkride the winds don't mess around with me too much during the maneuvers.

I still have six review flights to get done and the weather isn't going to be great on Sunday or Monday...although tomorrow I am scheduled to fly so hopefully the weather holds up enough for that flight. With the weather possibly becoming a factor I may end up flying twice in a day at some point next week. Not that I'm against flying twice...I love flying ;-)...but I'm just hoping the weather is good enough next week so I can keep my flights evenly spaced towards my checkride. Hard to believe it has come up this fast as it almost feels like I just started, but I'm looking forward to it :)

- Requiem (Total Hours = 69.2)

Day 40 - Checkride Review #2

Sat, 21 Feb 2015 21:31:28, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

The weather started out as IFR today, but towards the afternoon the sky began clearing up so we took the opportunity and went flying. Same routine as the previous flight, so I started out with S-turns on a road and the circling around a point. I spent a bit longer on the circling round a point as I wasn't quite adjusting my bank angle right. The wind was around 18kts so it was a bit harder than usual to try and keep a constant radius as I could get blown outwards rather fast.

From that I climbed out to altitude and practiced some steep turns where I held the altitude and the 45 degree bank angle more accurately today which was good. Then did some more slow flight with power off and power on stalls which were good too. After that my instructor asked me to set up for cruise flight, so as I started to do that he reached over and pulled the throttle...engine out emergency...so I went through the process for that and chose my field to land in. I made the field and climbed back up to altitude because I wanted to practice another couple of steep turns. After those it was time for some landing practice so after a few minutes flying in the direction of the airport I checked in with the tower controller and entered the pattern. Did some soft field landings and a short field landing with the winds varying from a headwind to a strong crosswind at times.

The pattern itself was a bit busier than usual and on one of the landings the aircraft I was following was cleared in for a touch and go, but his downwind just kept going...and going...and going...so I was wondering if I was actually following the wrong aircraft. The tower controller ended up asking me to turn base which allowed me to cut in front of this guy. Not sure what he was doing really, maybe he just spaced out or something or was expecting the tower controller to call his base turn. Then went back to the home airport and there was a decent crosswind which I didn't apply enough aileron correction for so I drifted a little bit as I flared but it was all good in the end.

I have the day off tomorrow, but the weather is very likely to prevent flying anyway. Even Monday may be a bit iffy with a chance of sleet/snow. There is even a chance of snow on Thursday and/or Friday next week. I never thought I would say this...but I don't want to see snow! :lol: At the very least I hope the weather for my checkride is good.

- Requiem (Total Hours = 71.0)

Day 41 - Checkride Review #3

Tue, 24 Feb 2015 20:52:59, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

I didn't get to fly, or even go in yesterday, due to the weather here causing a lot of sleet/ice on the roads that made it unsafe to drive. Today though it wasn't as bad so after knocking off the ice from the windows I drove to the airport with no problems.

Starting out we remained low where I practiced an S-turn and circling around a point followed by an emergency engine out landing. I started climbing up to 3000ft to practice maneuvers (stalls/steep turns) since the weather was VFR but the clouds ended up being a bit lower than we needed. It would have been good to have the clouds above 3000ft but they were sitting just under that without much break in their cover anywhere. I'm not allowed to do my practice maneuvers below 3000ft so that prevented practicing them to happen and we headed to an airport to practice landings..until while en-route there was this hole in the cloud cover that suddenly appeared :) So in this gap of cloud coverage I climbed up to above 3000ft, transitioned into slow flight from the climb, practiced power off and power on stalls, and then did some steep turns. The surroundings around the same height as the clouds looked great when I poked into that hole. All I saw was clear sky above this layer while the clouds looked so soft and fluffy like pillows. Very cool sight!

After the steep turns I got below the cloud layer and performed an emergency descent, so basically I cut the throttle, bank 30 degrees and descend at 120kts to level off at 2000ft. Pretty fun to do but I needed to equalise my ears due to the rapid pressure change. From there we went out to the airport and practiced short field and soft field landings. Generally my patterns were good until about 400ft AGL when the plane would just sink faster and I needed to add power, which meant my approaches weren't stabilised. Not really sure what the deal was with that though. If I kept the power at 1500RPM as the book recommended I felt like I was coming in too fast or a bit high, so I'd drop the power a touch and would end up on glideslope until that 400ft mark with the resulting power adjustment. I think my problem was focusing on trying to stick to the PAPI glideslope instead of referencing my aiming point better and/or trying to stick to 70kts on final. I just felt like I was juggling my pitch and power too much compared to what I've been doing previously. It's not as if my landings were bad but my instructor said the plane may have helped be a contributor to the less than ideal final approaches (new tailnumber hadn't flown before). It didn't feel drastically different than the other tailnumber I've been flying lately (and will do my checkride in), at least compared to a couple of the other tailnumbers when I could *really* tell the difference in handling.

Instead of heading off immediately back home my instructor told me to do a short field landing with a full stop taxi back so he could ask for an IFR (Instrument Flight Rules) clearance back to our home airport. Man...IFR flying seems easier. I take off and maintain runway heading, get handed off to another controller, and he watches over us and tells us what to do. My instructor input the route for me to follow on the GPS so I flew checkpoint to checkpoint back home. He was hoping that the cloud base would engulf us for IFR flight but it didn't so I decided to grab the Foggles and put them on to practice flying by the instruments (Remember that the foggles block me seeing anything outside the cockpit). He also threw a couple of unusual attitudes at me on the way back which I handled easily. Having seen the artificial horizon so often in simulators pretty much makes it an instantaneous correction from me when I look up to see what unusual attitude he puts me in (simulators are good for at least one thing :)). So on the way back I flew each checkpoint, did the turns between the checkpoints at a standard rate (3 degrees/second), and maintained altitude until the controller directed otherwise due to traffic nearby.

The cool thing about coming back with the foggles on was that I got to fly an ILS approach (Instrument Landing System). This is basically me coming in on final approach wearing the foggles following a glideslope using the instruments which brings me straight in to land on the runway. At a certain altitude I heard a computer voice say "minimums" (?) at which point I took off the foggles and made a visual soft field landing that was very soft. That was pretty cool to fly the ILS so it gave me a little taste of instrument flying which I'll be looking forward to once I pass this private pilot checkride. The checkride is still scheduled to be on Sunday, but the weather isn't looking great for it...One possible scenario is that I may end up doing the oral and flight portions on separate days, in which case I'll probably have two flights up my sleeve to use before the flight portion. Not really sure what is going to happen though to be honest. Just got to try and be up to the task of the checkride when the time comes for it.

- Requiem (Total Hours = 73.1)

Day 42 - Grounded

Wed, 25 Feb 2015 19:59:34, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

No flying today and I just did self study so not much to write about for this entry. Driving on the way there was interesting though...the weather varied from snowing, ice pellets, and rain along the way. So the weather was IFR most of the day, and one of my IPs other students got to fly in the afternoon when it turned VFR since he has a commercial checkride tomorrow morning. Although I'll be flying tomorrow it doesn't look good for Sunday so it's very likely for me to do the oral and flying portions of my checkride separately. Two review flights will be kept in reserve to account for this so I can fly before the checkride's flight portion.

- Requiem (Total Hours = 73.1)

Day 43 - Checkride Review #4

Thu, 26 Feb 2015 21:28:44, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

The cloud ceilings were much higher so I got another review flight in today which went well. My ground reference maneuvers and stalls were good, but my steep turns became much better today which I was happy with. It's always good when I hit my own wake turbulence at the end of it :) You can tell this happens because the plane will be in smooth air then will hit a small bump in the air for a moment. That bump is due to the air I displaced earlier on so I basically finished the maneuver in the right spot.

The wind today was around 20kts gusting to 26kts so it was pretty strong, but it was relatively head on to the runways I was landing on so while there was a crosswind component it wasn't a direct one which made it manageable. My first landing was very nice and the others were good in general except for two. The first 'iffy one was a power off 180, which I don't do on a checkride as it's a commercial maneuver, where my instructor pulls the throttle on me and I have to gauge the glide and distance to land on the runway. I had about 20kts of headwind on this so I turned base earlier, but I thought it was too early so as I came in on final and added flaps it looked like I was really high so I said I'll go around. My instructor said it was fine and for me to do a forward slip with the last notch of flaps, but I wasn't comfortable with it so I just throttled up and went around. The second 'iffy landing was a short field where I copped a gust in the flare and the plane was pushed/angled sideways. I added a bit of throttle and was going to go around but changed my mind, so I brought the throttle back to idle and landed but it was an ugly one. I'd say that short field was my worst one so far (not mad about it, just saying :P). The landing back at the home airport was a soft field and I copped another big gust in the flare. However this one was much easier to correct for so I did that and held the pitch attitude and the plane came down on its own nicely, albeit a bit harder than a normal soft landing as a result.

After we landed my instructor asked how I thought the flight was. I was happy with it but I mentioned that gusty short field and pointed out a couple of minor things with my steep turns. I also emphasised that I wanted to make sure my flying is good enough for the checkride, hence why I point a lot of stuff out I do right/wrong. He said it's funny that I seem to hold myself to commercial pilot standards with my maneuvers, then also joked how it's a bit scary that I've been flying and have knowledge like one anyway by this stage. He's not worried about me passing my checkride though so that was nice to hear and gives me good confidence leading up to it. The weather doesn't look good over the next few days at all...so with three checkride reviews left we'll be playing it by ear as to what will happen next week. Tomorrow will be a ground school session with my instructor and his other student who is taking the checkride the same day as me, so that will be a good review session for us.

- Requiem (Total Hours = 75.2)

Day 44-45 - Grounded

Sun, 01 Mar 2015 10:17:57, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

I'd like to have more to write, but there isn't much to say about what's gone on over the last couple of review days. They've been going well and I seem to know my stuff so that's good. I'm at the point now where I also have the majority of FAR/AIM regulation numbers (that I need to know) memorised in addition to knowing the regulations themselves. That sort of thing is a bit over the top for the private checkride but I can only go over the stuff I already know so many times over before wanting to learn something else. Due to the weather there hasn't been any flying either so I've had my feet firmly planted on the ice/snow.

I was supposed to have my checkride today, but as has been the case lately the weather says no...My checkride has been postponed until next Friday (6 March) so I have the day off today. The bad weather will continue until about Tuesday/Wednesday next week, so I should get another flight or two in before Friday.

- Requiem (Total Hours = 75.2)

Day 46-49 - Grounded, Grounded, Grounded...Checkride Review #5

Thu, 05 Mar 2015 20:34:35, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

The weather over the last few days has been pretty bad so I haven't been flying. I've been stuck on the ground doing theory review until today where I finally got to fly after a week of no flying at all. I feel like I have a solid grasp on the theory so I've really wanted to fly. I was hoping to fly twice today but due to the planes being in a hangar they weren't ready until around 1230, and my instructor's other student needed to fly as well so he flew first and I flew afterwards. By the time I landed it was around 1700 so I wasn't going to get a second flight in.

My flight was pretty good. This was the only review I had which was a similar format to the checkride, so it started off with the first checkpoint of my cross country route. I had to point out landmarks, use the nav aids, note my time, etc. to show that I can fly the cross country then once I reach that first checkpoint on time the rest of the route is ignored so I climbed out and did the maneuvers. Steep turns, slow flight, power on/off stalls, engine out emergencies, S-turns, and turns around a point. After that was complete I went out to a nearby field and practiced mainly short field landings. Although I can do them I've found it hard to be really comfortable with those because of coming in so slow and aiming to land on the runway numbers, so they often feel like I'm going to fall short of the runway. I didn't get to practice with the Foggles on but I feel comfortable flying with those on anyway. Overall my flight performance was good today.

The other student and I both have our checkrides tomorrow. I thought I was going to be scheduled at 1200, but now mine is up first in the morning (I think the other guy is going to get a flight in while I'm doing my checkride). I would have liked to get at least another flight in to practice the actual checkride format again as well as to practice landing at a nearby uncontrolled airport that I've heard the examiner likes using (it is narrow, upsloping, and with power lines on final). The weather just hasn't been very co-operative this last week to let that happen... I felt like I flew well today though, especially since I had a week without flying, so I feel good about the checkride. I think I'm pretty solid on the theory too so hopefully I can show that, fly well, and can report back tomorrow that I passed. Big day but I'm ready for it.

- Requiem (Total Hours = 77.4)

PS - Happy Birthday Auntie Helen :)

Day 50 - Private Pilot Checkride

Fri, 06 Mar 2015 23:00:25, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

Today was the big day for my checkride. I went in early and got my navlog, airworthiness, and weight and balance sorted out so once my DPE arrived we could start. I had two portions, the first was the oral where he basically asked me a whole lot of questions covering different topics and also went over my navigation log where I explained the route to be flown, possible weather, airspace involved, etc... The second portion was all about the flying. I was a bit nervous to start with, but after I started answering questions the butterflies disappeared and I started feeling comfortable. The oral went *really* well. I didn't have any problems answering everything quickly and with good detail. After all the questions were done he asked if I was ready to fly, and of course the answer was yes :)

The pre-flight inspection was straightforward and there were no problems with the plane so it was all good to go. The sky was clear with a light wind so the conditions were perfect. There wouldn't be any excuses for poor flying except for any possible hamfistedness on my part. The engine didn't start first go, so he asked me what the problem could be considering what the conditions were like outside. Since it was so cold (denser air) I needed to prime (adding fuel to help engine start) for longer than usual, so I did that and the engine fired up nicely. It was interesting to think of it this way as usually I would just give it a bit more throttle to get that extra fuel instead of giving it more fuel via the primer.

After the engine started I input all my navlog information for the first waypoint, so once the nav aids, initial heading, and initial altitude were all put in I called up ground and got the taxi clearance. I did a normal takeoff and once I began climbing out it quickly became time to turn onto my initial heading I calculated from the winds aloft. I pointed out a couple of landmarks and my first waypoint, but I noted that there was a difference between my ground track and my expected track to the first waypoint. He asked why and I explained that the winds had increased so I was being pushed off my track and as a result I'll fly towards my expected waypoint as I could see it visually from my current position. I didn't even get to the first waypoint before he made me turn off it and put the Foggles on. With the Foggles on had to make a climbing turn up to 2500ft, then once I leveled out he took the controls and put the plane in an unusual attitude while I stared at the floor. I get told to recover so just like before I see the attitude and fix it instantly which was good.

From there we flew out further east where he had me do the steep turns. I entered the steep turn and nailed the 45 degree bank angle straight away, added the trim to relieve the back pressure on the yoke, and my altitude didn't budge more than 20ft throughout. As I rolled out on my initial heading and began reversing back to the right he told me to level out as that's more of a commercial checkride thing. I leveled out and did another steep turn to the right with the same result so the steep turns were good :) After that he had me transition into slow flight, so I kept the stall warning horn on and made turns and climbs as requested while explaining slow flight and region of reverse command. From slow flight he asked me to make a landing approach with the power off stall and that was good. Then from there he sort of threw a curve ball at me and asked me to set up the airplane as if I were doing a short field takeoff and pretend 2500ft was the ground. A bit different as I had never done power on stalls with any flaps out (as needed for short field), but I did that and the recovery good also.

Once that maneuvering was done he pulled the engine on me so I set up for the emergency landing in a field. I pitched for the airspeed and chose my spot quickly. It was a few miles away and he asked if we would make it, and I was pretty sure we would so I kept on for it. I had a tailwind at the time he pulled the engine and the field was a few miles off to my right, so I set myself so I would hit a right base leg approaching that field so I could turn right onto final to land with the headwind. As I got nearer and my altitude was dropping I could tell I had a nice excess of altitude to safely make the field, so I explained due to this I would be adding flaps and possibly a forward slip to ensure the landing along with the procedure for the soft field landing without an engine. He got me to recover early as it was evident I made that field so I was pretty happy I nailed that too :)

Now that I was at a lower altitude he asked me to do turns around a point (nearby water tower) and asked me to follow a road towards the tower. Around a mile out I checked the wind and explained what I would be doing since I would be entering on the downwind and he laughed and said "Yeah, damn those examiners always making things more difficult" The wind was about 14kts and my turns around the tower were good, so then we set off to do the landings. He asked how I would approach the field and I said it would be left traffic for the active runway, but he was looking for *where* I would enter so I clarified with the mid-downwind 45 degree entry. I ended up being put on a base leg by ATC anyway, and the first landing he wanted me to make was using a flapless approach (which I had to explain that needs to be faster and why). As I was making my approach I was descending on the base leg and he said that I was doing my approach perfectly, but asked me to keep some altitude so I can show him a forward slip on final. I leveled off and came onto final with the excess altitude so I could do the forward slip. As I was preparing to land he said "Ok, go around" and I went around, flying the plane first then talking to ATC at the end. He said he was really happy with my forward slip because he has had a lot of guys on their checkride forget about getting their nose down in that maneuver, and I didn't have that problem :)

My next approach was a normal landing with taxi back to takeoff again. This was a nice landing about 50ft past the 1000ft markers. After taxiing back he asked me to do a short field takeoff, which was good, followed by a short field landing. The short field landing is probably what I had the most trouble with recently, so I was hoping I would pull it off. He said that for this we needed to make the first taxiway for it to be good enough, and that I needed to make it over an imaginary 50ft obstacle on final approach. My short field landing was great! I landed right on the numbers and was at taxi speed well before the 1000ft markers, let alone the first taxiway :) While taxiing back I had to pretend it was a soft field so I held full back pressure and added flaps. He didn't direct me to do that but by asking me to explain the principles of how/why I need weight off the wheels for a soft field led me to the answers he was looking for. The soft field takeoff was nice as well. I hit ground effect and stayed in it to get to the best speed. That was our last activity in the pattern so we headed back to the home airport. On the way back he said I'd done a great job so far, so as long as I don't screw up the soft field landing I would be a private pilot. I had no worries about doing a soft field landing so I wasn't nervous at all with that. There were a lot of aircraft coming in to land (we were #9) and he set up the localiser for me in order for me to fly the ILS approach in to land which was cool to do. Certainly not what I expected to do on a checkride but I still did it :)

In the debrief he said I did an awesome job with the oral, my flying and situational awareness was great, and that he could tell I really came prepared for today. I think it helped that I was verbalising a lot of what I was planning to do, then reinforced that again by verbalising things while I was doing it. Before it started I was worried about feeling overloaded so I mentioned the sterile cockpit and if I could tell him to be quiet if needed. He said that was fine as he is there to deliberately distract me, but I was doing all the maneuvering and chatting at the same time with no problems so I didn't feel the need at any time to pull that card. The flight just went so fast...but even though it was an exam it was also fun. It helped that that flight was the best flying I've done so far which made it really fun, and time flies when having fun right? :)

I've just had a massive smile on my face all day at accomplishing this, but I know this wouldn't have been possible without those who have helped support me to make it possible and I'll be forever grateful for having this opportunity. I'm always smiling *anyway* because I am flying, but it was an extra big smile today as today a childhood dream of mine became a reality :) Up next I'll be doing some cross country flying then learning how to fly a multi-engine airplane. I was anxious to get started in the afternoon after the checkride actually...so I got my supplement and checklists for it and went out to the plane and sat in it to get acquainted with the new ride. I'm really looking forward to getting started in a faster, more complex airplane!

I can't believe that now I can actually say..."Yes, I am a pilot" :)

- Requiem (Total Hours = 78.8)

Day 51 - Grounded

Mon, 09 Mar 2015 20:23:06, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

Thanks for your thoughts and support after I posted about getting my private license :) With that done I'm scheduled to fly some cross country (XC) flights. I ended up with 2.5 hrs of training spare after getting the PPL, so those hours have been added on to the XC flights for a total required XC time of 22.5 hrs instead of 20hrs. The school I'm training with offered a XC flight where I would fly a Cessna 172 to Arizona. This flight would satisfy a few hours (8 or so) of my XC requirements, plus it is an airplane type I'm not assigned to fly at all during my training so I happily accepted this flight to try out something new. I don't know why this plane needs to go such a long way though as it's not maintenance related and there are Cessna 172s there already.

The flight itself was supposed to be today, but the weather didn't meet minimum requirements since I'll be the pilot-in-command for this flight, so it has been postponed until tomorrow. It's going to be a long flight with two fuel stops before arriving at the destination, and it will also be used for me to get some instrument flying in as well. I need at least 10 hours out of the 22.5 to be instrument flight, and with the way the weather is at the moment here I will at least get real instrument flying in (ie - within clouds) instead of needing to use the Foggles to simulate it. Once my instructor and I arrive at the destination we are staying the night at a hotel then flying back commercially. I don't *think* we need to fly an aircraft back, but it may be a possibility. After this XC flight I'll have a couple more before I satisfy the hours requirements...then I'll be flying the Piper Seminole (PA-44) to train for my multi-engine rating checkride which will be coming up on the 26th March I believe.

Since the flight wasn't on today I ended up doing some simulator time for the Seminole, learning some single-engine emergencies, went over the systems and V-speeds (critical speeds for the plane I need to know), and discussed some of the aerodynamics of multi-engine propeller aircraft and how they work. It was very interesting as I didn't know that much about multi-engine aerodynamics before starting the program, but by extending the theory which I did know it made sense.

I'm looking forward to flying a Cessna as I flew the Archer exclusively for my PPL. It should be a good trip to build time with, so my next entry will be from Arizona if the weather is good enough for me to takeoff!

- Requiem (Total hours = 78.8)

Day 52 - Grounded

Tue, 10 Mar 2015 22:13:57, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

Well, it turned out today that the cloud ceiling didn't lift early enough for my cross country flight to take place. My instructor has to do checkride preparation for other students tomorrow and we wouldn't have made it back in time tomorrow for him to do that. As a result I ended up staying at the home airport today and doing some self-study plus a bit of multi-engine simulator flying. The simulator flight was a bit overwhelming towards the end as I think my instructor thought I must have had everything memorised already and threw me in the deep end. He had me doing Vmc demos, engine outs, airtarts, and other things but I wasn't really on my game mentally in the afternoon so I cut the simulator flight short because I didn't feel like I was getting much learning benefit out of it. The combination of trying to fly what he was asking me to without feeling 100% on knowing it just wasn't working out (IMO, but he said I was doing fine), so I wanted to focus on finishing my flashcard study first so I can know all required information better to make the simulator flights a better learning experience for me before I jump in the real plane.

I was really looking forward to flying this trip because it looked like I was going to get proper instrument time, but that flight has now been postponed until Friday. Actually, I won't be flying at all until then so the next couple of days will be more simulator time and self-study. The good thing though is that spent my afternoon getting my flashcards sorted out for what I need to know to fly the multi-engine airplane. I've started memorising that information as well as the emergency checklist flows, so I should have those sorted out soon. To help with that I'll use my downtime over the next couple of days to sit in the multi-engine cockpit and go over those flows just like I did in the single engine plane to make the processes faster once I start flying the multi-engine plane. I need to get 8 hours flight time (4 flights) in it plus all of the simulator flights I want before I have to take the checkride on the 26th. Not much time compared to the single engine, but I'll get plenty of multi-engine time once the instrument phase rolls around.

- Requiem (Total hours = 78.8)

Day 53 - Imagination Day (Grounded)

Wed, 11 Mar 2015 22:09:19, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

Grounded again today as my instructor needed to do a solo eval for a student, but the weather didn't work out for THAT either so he and that student were stuck waiting around for a departure which never came. I didn't see him until the afternoon so I had a productive time of it. I checked my flashcards for required content, grabbed my checklist, and went out to the multi-engine aircraft to practice the checklist flows. I went over emergencies such as what to do when one of the engines goes out, how to troubleshoot it and secure it in-flight, propeller overspeeding, traffic patterns (plus short field), Vmc demos, as well as going over my flashcards for all things pertaining to multi-engine flight. Things like the special aerodynamics of multi-engine flight and how this becomes important when an engine goes out. I don't want to go into all that detail here as I'll keep that explaining once I get to actually write a blog post while flying the multi-engine plane.

As you probably guessed, during all of this practice I was using my imagination (hence this post title) to pretend I was airborne and physically going through all of the required responses to a given scenario I would present myself. So for example I would say to myself "So I'm flying along...right engine out with enough altitude to troubleshoot, or not enough altitude, or do a Vmc demo, or go through a traffic pattern from takeoff, 500' AGL, 1000' AGL, downwind, base, landing, etc... Essentially I was testing myself on what I had been going over to see how routine my responses were.

Fast forward over an hour and a half later...I decide it's time to get back inside, but it turns out the door was locked. I guess I was out there long enough they forgot where I was :) In the afternoon my instructor came back and he asked me a whole bunch of questions related to what I had been doing in the morning and I went through all of it correctly so the practice paid off. We also went on an exterior walk around to get acquainted with the pre-flight, so I'll be reinforcing that walk around plus what I already did today tomorrow morning though by going out in the cockpit and doing it all again. I only get 8 hours of actual flying so I want to make sure it goes as smoothly as possible to make the checkride easier! :)

- Requiem (Total hours = 78.8)

Day 54-55 - Cessna Cross Country (in progress)

Fri, 13 Mar 2015 21:14:39, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

Yesterday was a day of self study, but today I actually got to fly part of a cross country in the Cessna 172. I'll have a full write up when I get home tomorrow because I've been taking photos along the way I'll need to include. Just quickly though, we ended up leaving a little bit later due to weather so we couldn't complete the entire trip today. Tomorrow is the last leg so I leave for that in morning.

Oh...and flying in IFR conditions within and around clouds is bloody awesome! :)

- Requiem (Total hours = 78.8)

Day 56 - Cessna Cross Country (Complete Entry)

Mon, 16 Mar 2015 21:03:18, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

sorry for the delay in this entry, I didn't have time to finish it last night

Hi everyone,

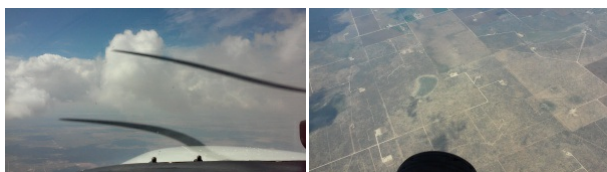
I completed the Cessna cross country and made it back home fine, but it was *very* late when I got home Sunday morning (0430) and I flew another cross country (Day 57 entry) that afternoon. Anyways...on to the cross country I just completed with the Cessna to complete this entry.

In the Cessna was a conventional instrument panel, so it had the "six pack" of analog gauges instead of the glass cockpit with a digitised display I've been training with up until this point. It wasn't a big deal though because I have the A2A Cessna 172 on FSX and that has the six pack, so my practice flying that in Flight Sim X came in handy. We weren't really sure if we would make it out of the airport for departure though because the weather was required to be marginal VFR in order to allow me to take off (training policy). Initially the weather was IFR so the rotating beacon on the air traffic control tower was on, then it changed to marginal VFR (beacon off), so we got clearance to leave. I then went out to the plane and did some of the pre-flight inspection while my instructor sorted out the key for the plane, then I finished the inspection off when he came back with it.

The plane was good to go and we hopped in, but immediately it felt like I was in a truck or something because in the Cessna I was sitting a lot higher off the ground than in the Pipers I trained in. My instructor received the IFR clearance and I taxied for takeoff. Thankfully the beacon remained off so when we got take off clearance I climbed out and officially began my first proper instrument flight into clouds/rain. It was scattered at 800 ft but then became overcast higher up, so as I entered the clouds I focused on the instruments and just saw the majority of my peripheral vision became washed over with grey/white. That was a very cool sensation! After I climbed through that cloud layer and was level for a few mins I handed controls to my instructor so could I take some photos...Looking down was really cool, but when looking straight ahead you can see we were in between cloud layers :)

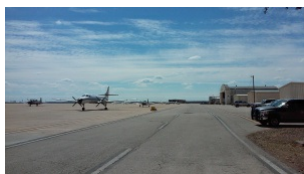


We left the bad weather behind us and after flying along for a while the new cloud base was a few thousand feet higher. We were cruising at around 8000ft, so to get more real instrument time we requested a climb up to 10,000ft. This way I could fly in and around the clouds again (and take some extra photos). It was funny taking the photos looking straight down because if I did this on a building I would get vertigo, but looking down out of the plane it feels completely normal. Except for the stupid grin on my face as I look down in amazement at actually flying. See that cloud in the first photo below? I flew through that...and many others of course :) The second photo is a ground shot from about 10,000ft.



Experiencing the change in weather was great along this leg. It had gone from rainy and dreary to clear skies by our first destination. The first landing was interesting because as I mentioned in the Cessna I was sitting a lot higher, yet I was used to doing my landings in the Piper where I sit lower...so the result of the landing ended up being a short field landing without much flare. I was about to set up for the roundout and my instructor said to start flaring "oops" I flared in time and didn't bounce but the landing was firm enough to make me realise why I had that problem. It was a bit of a "duh of course" moment for me. Since I was sitting higher my flare was being started too late because being used to my old sight picture in the Piper when landing made me think I had more distance to the runway than I actually had.

At this field we got out and stretched our legs, had the plane refueled, then went back out towards the plane. I took a photo on the way out to the plane as I noticed some USAF training aircraft (T-34 on left?) along with some USAF passenger styled jets.



After turning left and moving towards the plane I heard a very distinctive noise that was inbound, so I kept my phone ready to take another few pictures.



Turns out these were some inbound Chinooks, so I snapped the above photos and hopped in the plane. I wanted to watch them land and taxi, so I held off on the engine start to watch where they would go. Lo and behold they came right in front of us which was great to see!

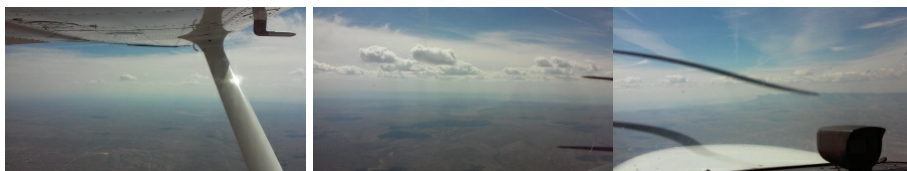


After that I started the engine and we got the clearance to go on the next leg of the cross country. I got some more instrument flight in around 10,000ft. I really couldn't get enough of flying through the clouds...it is a really incredible feeling to be punching through something that looks so solid yet once inside it is basically nothing. It's hard to explain the feeling really...I just know that after these legs I



found myself absolutely loving IFR flying!

We ended up flying along for a couple of hours on the way to our second destination without much cloud flying as they were above us. I could have requested 12,000ft but I didn't really feel like the Cessna would have liked climbing that high so I stayed at 10,000ft. As you can see though the sky was really nice out this way...



Coming in to this second airport was interesting. I made the adjustment on the flare, but the tower controller asked me to keep it in tight, so adding that with 16kt winds gusting to 24 left me with a nice balloon in the flare I had to deal with. The Cessna is such a floaty plane in comparison to the Piper... Since we couldn't make the third destination by sunset we ended up staying the night. After the landing I heard *another* very distinctive noise so I whipped out the phone...



Yeah you guessed it, a white fuel truck! Nah..I'm referring to one of my favourites, the Hornet. A few of these guys came in and parked nearby which I really enjoyed seeing too as I hadn't seen any flying since I left the RAAFA. I also thought the jet next to the white truck was a dual seater F-5... *smacks head* I'm told it is actually a T-38. I have a mental association with the T-38 and the NASA white scheme, so with that paintscheme I didn't even think twice about calling it a F-5 LOL.

The cool thing was that on the way to the hotel I could see white T-38s with the NASA logo on the them as well as some really weird NASA transport plane which had a massive front metal portion on it that looked like a fish. They went by too fast for me to get a photo, but I googled it to find out it is called the Super Guppy.



So we stayed the night here and got started on the outbound leg in the morning. Upon looking around I noticed that a few of the T-38s and the Hornets had left, but as you can see on the right it was a beautiful day for flying!

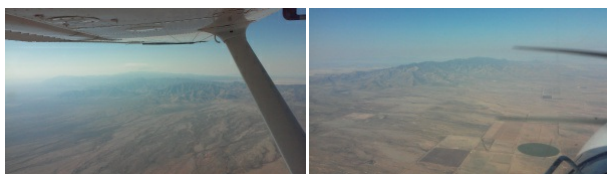


In addition to the jets being gone, a different aircraft nearby caught my eye. It struck me as being vintage, but I really don't know what it is...I'm interested in knowing if anyone reading it has any ideas. I

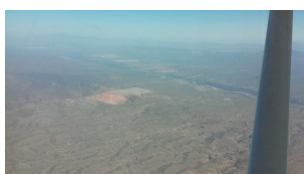


wanted to get closer, but I didn't want someone yelling at me or something if I wandered over for a more detailed look.

For the final leg we requested 8000ft outbound but were given 10,000ft by ATC. It was interesting flying out of this airport because after we flew over the nearby mountains, I was in a climbing attitude and airspeed doing climbing at 250-500ft per minute when suddenly (without changing anything) I noticed my climb rate changing to *negative* 500ft/min and staying there until I lowered the nose to increase airspeed then begin the climb again. Not really sure what caused that as I could only guess. I thought that because we had the tailwind over the mountains that caused us to sink once we passed over to the other side of mountain that was protected from the wind. Then once we got further away the effect was less pronounced that let me climb back up at the normal rate up to 10,000ft. Once up there I flew for a while before asking my instructor to take the controls again so I could take some more photos:



This photo below I found interesting because that large orange patch I believe was a mine of some sorts. Seeing things from the air is such a different perspective.



So after flying along flying along (intended) for a couple more hours we arrived at the destination. I got to land the Cessna and this time it was really nice and soft, so funnily enough on the last landing I got the hang of it. Also, as was the case at each destination so far, I got to see the military guys come in :) In this case it was a couple of Harriers. They came in nice and slow using their VTOL ability...



So that was the entire cross country trip completed. It was 7.2 hours worth of flying (with 2.9 hours actual instrument time) and I loved every minute of it. After landing here I was fortunate enough to meet a fellow flight simmer I know from Rise of Flight called "FourSpeed." He lived in the area and made the effort to come out and see us for some lunch. It capped off the trip really nicely being able to meet him and 'talk shop' about Rise of Flight and flight sims in general. Of course my instructor was probably a bit dazed hearing the two of us jabber on about things as he doesn't play flight simulators at all :) Afterwards we had a rather long wait until our commercial flight back home, so I ended up home in bed by 0430 followed by getting up early for a shorter cross country trip that afternoon as I mentioned. Overall I loved the trip and the chance to fly a different aircraft, but...flying the Cessna sort of screwed with me a bit as my landings in the Archer became unsatisfactory for me when I hopped back into it yesterday! I don't have time to write that entry (or today's) so I'll try and complete them tomorrow.

Hope you enjoyed this late, but long, entry!

- Requiem (Total hours = 86.0)

Day 57 - Short Cross Country

Tue, 17 Mar 2015 18:27:51, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

As I mentioned in the previous entry, after getting back from the long cross country it was 0430 so I was dead tired and went to sleep. I went in late and I did have another, shorter, cross country flight scheduled in the afternoon. The weather was cloudy and I got some good actual instrument time in again which I enjoyed :) The route was similar to one of the cross country flights I was flying as part of my solo training, so it was easy to do. Since I had been practicing IFR flying so far I wanted to incorporate other things that my instructor was doing for me. For this flight I asked if I could request/readback the IFR clearance, but I sucked at it LOL. The speed at which the controller said the clearance plus not really understanding what I was supposed to read back helped me get lost pretty fast. However, I was able to do a couple of new things. I expanded my use of the GPS on this flight by adding the departure and arrival components to the flight plan in the GPS, and I flew my first RNAV approaches :)

Luckily the altitude chosen for the flight was perfect for the cloud layer, so I was in that for a while before arriving at the airport. This flight was funny in that my landings were off. After just getting used to the sight picture in the Cessna I got back into my normal plane and I didn't really have the feel I had before the Cessna. I flared a bit high and landed a bit flat on both landings. The RNAV approach leading up to the first landing was really cool though. I basically input the route I needed in the GPS and flew it within the cloud but since the cloud layer was still a bit higher I put the Foggles on once they dissipated and I followed the instruments to the airport. It started out easy enough, but as I got closer to the runway and lower in altitude the sensitivity increased and it started getting more difficult to keep the right heading, glideslope, and airspeed as I had only done it once before. Then my instructor tells me "minimums" which means I take off the Foggles and land visually on the runway. I was skewed off to the side, so I sorted that out quickly and as I mentioned the landing felt a bit off but was still fine. Because this flight was a short one we didn't taxi to a full stop, but instead just did a taxi back to the runway, got our IFR clearance back home (which I messed up again), and made our way back. I got to do another approach on the way back which was better, but the landing was still not quite there yet at that point :-)

- Requiem (Total hours = 88.2)

PS I couldn't resist taking another quick photo on this flight for the IFR conditions...it just looks so cool!



Day 58 - Out of State Cross Country

Tue, 17 Mar 2015 18:56:50, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

This cross country was a bit longer and went out of state again. I was better rested today and got in early 0730 to fly out. I sorted out the IFR plan which my instructor checked out then submitted himself (You can't submit IFR plans without being IFR rated). I also wanted to have another go at doing the IFR clearances because after the flight yesterday and talking about those things (plus my multi-engine stuff) I felt like I was understanding them a bit better. Happy to say I got the IFR clearances correct today and the flight was good overall. Although the flight time was longer the cloud coverage was lower than our cruising altitude so I didn't get much IFR time. I did get to do an approach on the initial leg again within some clouds, and while I could have worn the Foggles I chose not to because there were multiple cloud layers at lower altitudes and I thought it would be better to not use them in this case. My landing was better and since it took us about two and a half hours to get there we got out and went into the FBO (Fixed Base Operator) to grab some snacks and stretch our legs a bit.

These FBOs supply snacks for visiting pilots which is nice of them, so I had a cookie, Coke, and an ice cream sandwich 8-). I did the IFR clearance/departure/arrival stuff again and got it correct which I was happy with, but I wasn't happy with how the ice cream sandwich started to melt now that I was in the plane! So I handed the controls to my instructor and wolfed it down while he taxied to the active runway. At that point, ice cream all gone, I took off and we made our way back home. As has been the case on all our cross country flights he asks me questions about the multi-engine aircraft. That theory has been going well (remember I haven't actually flown it yet), so I also ask him to explain some of the instrument flying. I haven't studied anything about instrument flight yet as my focus is on the multi-engine stuff, but it never hurts to at least have an appreciation for it before I get started on it.

The flight back was uneventful and didn't have any IFR time, but there was a very cool moment when we were approaching our home airport. We have a piece of equipment in the plane called TIS (Traffic Information Service), and basically when you have the right equipment on the plane and the right radar coverage, you have a little bubble around the plane where the system tells you if other aircraft are nearby. Well, there was a contact on the screen showing at our six o'clock position and about 1000ft below catching up to us. We couldn't see it obviously, but once ATC vectored us left I looked outside to check what it was. I only caught it for a moment as it passed right underneath us, but I believe it was a B-24 Liberator :-o That completely surprised me, so of course I get all excited and before I even rolled out on my heading I told my instructor to get his phone and try to grab a picture. I haven't been able to see that photo yet, but if it came out I'll add it to one of my posts later.

- Requiem (Total hours = 93.4)

Day 59 - Local Cross Country

Tue, 17 Mar 2015 19:53:06, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

I'm finally caught up with the blog after all these cross country flights I've been doing!

Today's cross country was supposed to be out of state again, but a plane needed to be ferried to an airport a couple of hours away so we did that instead. I was able to get some more IFR practice in again though which I'm really enjoying and makes me look forward to getting started on instrument training. It was about a two hour flight each way, and while flying IFR I actually experienced some spatial disorientation for the first time which was very strange. I was flying the approach coming in and made about a 70-90degree turn onto the next waypoint, and it was such a strange feeling. After I rolled out it felt like I was banked to the right, but since I was following my instruments I knew I was actually straight and level. My instructor even had it as well as he asked me if it felt like I was banked, so it was good to experience what that felt like. It's all about trusting the instruments when flying IFR. If I only followed what my body was telling me then I would have needed to bank left to feel like I was level, which would have caused a turn that leads to problems that have killed many pilots.

After landing at the destination we secured the plane and I snapped a photo of a chopper nearby. I believe it said "Marines" on the side...



Shortly after that we started pre-flying the plane to be taken back to our airport, had it refueled, got our clearance, and took off. After we were established at cruising altitude of 8000ft I decided to have my lunch and was reminded about what happened on previous flights... I always have a small bag of chips with me for lunch, so I pulled it out of my bag and laughed at forgetting what happened before. Because of the increase in altitude the air inside the bag had expanded to the point where it was really tight and looked like a little pillow. I had to be careful opening it though because I didn't want an exploding chip bag in the cockpit :lol:

We made it back by early afternoon and I spent the remainder of the day in the multi-engine aircraft chair flying it through the procedures and flows I need to do. I've had one proper sim session so far, but I haven't actually flown the aircraft yet...and probably won't be doing so until Saturday. Hopefully the weather cooperates through next week because I have the multi-engine checkride next Thursday. Tomorrow is my final cross country though, and this lets me have the simulator booked in the afternoon so I'll be able to start getting more time in that now. I feel solid on the theory...I just need to start flying the thing and see how I go :)

With that said, tomorrow's final cross country flight should have me breaking the 100hour total time flying mark! :-D

- Requiem (Total hours = 98.1)

Day 60 - Grounded

Wed, 18 Mar 2015 20:57:54, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

I didn't get to fly today because there was a thunderstorm in the area that disrupted those plans. Instead of flying I ended up doing some multi-engine simulator time in the morning, and then another one in the afternoon after lunch. These simulator sessions will basically be replicating what my checkride should be like. So I have to deal with engine out emergencies on takeoff/flying around, while also demonstrating similar things that I had to do for my private pilot checkride like slow flight/stalls/steep turns. The aircraft has retractable landing gear and a constant speed propeller too (unlike the single engine I trained on), so that means I have to manage those as well. Luckily I'm familiar with how those work already thanks to the flight simulators I've used :)

A new, and really important, thing to do in the checkride is called the "Vmc demo." Basically this involves me being at altitude and throttling back the left engine to pretend it is inoperative followed by pulling up and increasing throttle on the good engine to make the thrust asymmetrical (since the other engine is throttled down). The plane loses speed towards "Vmc" which is minimum speed where I still have control of the plane when the most important engine (usually the left one) has failed. Essentially, the reason the left engine is most important are because of aerodynamics...generally speaking when the left engine fails the plane's performance and handling is adversely affected the most compared to when the right engine goes out. So as the speed drops I need to use more and more rudder to counter the thrust that is pushing the plane sideways, but the speed gets to a point (Vmc) where control is lost and that is when I recover back to normal flight. Pretty straightforward and I have been doing it well in the simulator, and my instructor says it's easier to do in the plane so I'm keen on flying it to see what it's like.

I was glad to have flown the sessions in the simulator today because I'd been doing a lot of the chair flying without having sensory input to back it up. So today was good because I got to develop a bit more of a natural feel for the processes I need to do. Everything happens a lot faster in this aircraft because of the extra speed due to the second engine and the extra systems and checklist items I need to manage. My instructor decided to mess with me a little bit too. I was flying along and asked him to knock an engine out for me (he knocked out the right engine), so I correctly executed the procedure when that happens. He said it looked like I was just perfecting things at this point so he wanted to kick it up a notch. So after I secured the right engine (basically turned everything off for it) he asked me to prepare to restart the right engine while flying. I started doing that then he knocked out my left engine. So I'm gliding along with both engines out a bit dumbstruck, but once he said that my right engine was ok and the left is now being simulated as being out it made sense for me to restart the right engine and then secure the left engine. It was a real mind twister for me, but he said that is something I would come across when training to be a certified flight instructor (CFI).

Tomorrow I should be flying on my final cross country then another simulator session in the afternoon :)

- Requiem (Total hours = 98.1)

Day 61 - Grounded

Thu, 19 Mar 2015 21:14:47, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

No flying again today so not much to report on. There was just so much fog today and it didn't lift until late in the afternoon, so that prevented any flying. I ended up doing another couple of simulator sessions with some self-study and ground school with my instructor which all went pretty well. I picked up a new bit of gear today. Since the checklist for the ME plane is a ring booklet I got a tri-fold kneeboard so I can clip that onto it. After trying to use the checklist on my lap while flying the sim it just wasn't working out very well and would often fall off onto the floor. By being clipped on will stay in place and allow me to flip the pages without losing it. My instructor also gave me a stylus today so now I can write notes more legibly on my iPad.

Although the weather isn't looking very good over the next week I'm hoping I can knock out the ME flights and checkride so I can get into the instrument training. Maybe tomorrow I'll have a more interesting entry if I get to fly. Fingers crossed :)

- Requiem (Total hours = 98.1)

Day 62 - Grounded

Fri, 20 Mar 2015 21:45:33, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

Short post as there was no flying again today. Just some more simulator time, self study, and me staring out the window watching the rotating beacon on the tower. However, there were some thunderstorms in the area too so I wasn't expecting it to turn off.

I have the day off tomorrow, but the weather looks to be all IFR so it's good timing for that. I'll get back to it on Sunday so hopefully I should be able to fly then.

- Requiem (Total hours = 98.1)

Day 63 - Last Local Cross Country

Sun, 22 Mar 2015 21:29:30, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

Finally got to fly today, and with instrument time to boot :) I had 2.4 hours left so it was a shorter route to finish things off for the cross country portion. This was also my last flight in the single engine plane until the commercial single engine add on, so starting tomorrow I'll be flying the multi-engine (Piper Seminole).

The flight went well. I got to fly another approach using instruments which I enjoyed doing, and has a soft touchdown for the touch and go before re-contacting the regional controller to head to a nearby airport. At this airport I dropped off the plane I was flying and picked up another one (same type, different tailnumber) and took it back to my home airport. Seems like my cross country flying coincided with some required ferrying of different aircraft. Throughout the flight my instructor was playing the usual game of trying to spot contacts before me, and I was up 4-1 before we departed for home. Then he decided to spot one in the pattern while we were on the ground, which I had a good laugh at. I said he can add that one to his tally and joked he can think of it as a handicap you get when playing golf or something...he was about to mention the same thing so that was funny. His reaction when I beat him to spotting makes me laugh, but when he beats me to it it's even funnier! A bit of friendly competition is good to keep sharp looking out for the other planes. The final tally of aircraft spotted before it got all busy on us was 9-4 :-)

On the way back home it was pretty busy, so there were a few of the big guys flying around like Southwest and American Airlines. We ended up seeing MD-80s and B737s buzzing around close by which was really cool to see. I also spotted the B-24 I saw the other day flying around, and it actually passed across us while I was on final approach to land. There was also a P-51 on the radio, but I never saw that. Speaking of my final approach it was a bit tight. Because of the extra traffic in the area I flew a visual approach and was following a twin engine Cessna in. I was told I would be #2 to land and there would be a C172 waiting on the ground (for takeoff) until I was clear of the runway, and by this time I had slowed down to give some spacing between the Cessna and myself. As I got closer the controller changed his mind and got the C172 out on the runway with no delay, but the C172 took his sweet time so the controller asked me do S-turns. This meant that instead of flying at final I would fly an S pattern, so I snaked my way toward the runway and slowed down further. We were almost expecting to go around when the C172 finally got moving and took off. Then as we were closing in my instructor asked if I remembered being given clearance to land. Although it was pretty busy in the last couple of minutes for us I didn't remember that at all so I queried it and we got landing clearance from the controller (plus a thank you) before we touched down. As always I loved the flight, got some great time in the clouds and had a really nice view of the skyline :)

Very keen on my first flight in the multi-engine tomorrow! :-D

- Requiem (Total hours = 100.5)

Day 64 - First Multi-Engine Flight

Mon, 23 Mar 2015 21:27:27, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

I had a pretty good time of it today and really enjoyed myself. I got started on my multi-engine flying :) It was definitely different than flying the single engine...on takeoff there is a lot more acceleration, and once you rotate and get airborne the plane climbs so much faster. The plane is so much more responsive to in terms of controls because it just wants to go where I tell it to. The other big thing is that you really notice the deceleration when I change the RPM. As soon as I touch it the plane just slows right down. On those controls...the throttle isn't as sensitive as I thought it would be, but the RPM control is more sensitive than I thought. Hard to explain but I barely touch RPM and it drops a lot but I need to move the throttle a lot for a small drop. That's something I'll have to get used to...back to the flight though.

My instructor didn't want to say anything on the takeoff so he let me do my thing to see if I would keep up with the pace required. After I took off I climbed to 500ft then nosed over to speed up, still climbing up to 2000ft. Once I was 1000ft above the ground I did the after takeoff checklist and I was on my way. It all happened really quickly and I kept up so that was good. Once we were clear of the airspace I climbed up to 3500ft and did a couple of steep turns. My instructor said they were very good for my first attempt at them in this plane. I 'manhandled' it during the first steep turn maneuver (no trim), then on the second set of steep turns I used the elevator trim so I didn't have to maintain so much back pressure on the controls and that made it easier. Trying to hold a certain attitude in this plane can take a lot of effort without using trim because of the extra power from that second engine, so I'll be using trim more often. If I don't I might end up with a massive left forearm like some sort of left-handed professional arm wrestler.

After the steep turns he had me enter slow flight, so this was pretty much the same thing I had done with the single engine but I needed to lower the gear as well (since it's retractable). My slow flight was good. I did a turn and a climb of a few hundred feet while the stall horn was going off, then my instructor asked me to transition from slow flight into a power off stall. So I nosed over and accelerated for a descent at constant airspeed, then once I hit my altitude I cut throttle and act like I'm flaring to land. Recovery was good so I didn't need to do another one of those. Then I needed to do a power on stall, but I had a bit of trouble getting into it. I followed the technique on how to enter it but it wasn't really happening, so my instructor told me to pitch up more and more before hitting the stall then recovering.

Then I did a couple of Vmc demonstrations. This is where I throttle back on one engine and have the other one at full power, along with pitching the nose up in the air to bleed off speed down to Vmc (an important speed) which is the speed where I lose directional control of the plane. There are different aerodynamic factors that affect Vmc, which is what the Vmc demo is showing. Vmc is a speed which varies up and down depending on these factors plus atmospheric conditions, and the majority of the conditions when doing a Vmc demo are at their least favourable, so Vmc will be relatively high when doing the demo. I hope that made sense to my family reading! Anyway...After pitching up and having the speed decay to Vmc and I feel like I'm losing directional control I pull back on the throttle and lower the nose which does two things. Diving increases airspeed, taking the airplane away from Vmc...and reducing the throttle alters Vmc so now it is at a lower airspeed. Doing both of these helps me quickly regain full control, so when that happens I increase power back on the right engine, then the left engine, then bring the power together so it is equal on both engines. This is a pretty important thing to do right so I practiced it twice, and my instructor was happy with how I did them.

After the Vmc demo my instructor had me do an emergency descent, so from about 4500ft I lower the gear and bank 30 degrees to dive at 120kts down to 2500ft. From there I headed over towards a nearby airport to try out some landings. I joined on the left base and set myself up, so I had the gear down, flaps out, power set, and fuel pumps on with correct airspeed. My instructor didn't want to say anything so he just let me land the plane to see how I would do. It was a decent landing but I landed it like it was the single engine plane by trying to hold it off the ground in the flare, which resulted in me landing a little long so I didn't make the first taxiway. My instructor explained that I shouldn't try and hold it off like that so much as it doesn't like to float. I kept that in mind and the second landing was fine and I made the first taxiway easily. This landing was funny though as the tower controller here (the one who always sounds happy) said she was impressed as she gave me the directions back to the runway. She must have guessed this was my first multi-engine flight since I hadn't been to this airport in a while since I was doing my cross country flights. It's nice to hear feedback like that though since from the tower they get to see the landing from the outside. I did some more pattern work and practiced short field landings and takeoffs. The short field landings were good, but I always seem to have the tendency to leave in power a bit longer than I should. Hearing how this plane sinks when the power is taken out made me feel a bit awkward pulling power out before I felt certain on making the runway. After that initial landing all of my landings made the first taxiway so I was pleased with how they turned out.

After practicing those landings we departed back for home and the challenge was on to make the first taxiway there which requires a good short field landing to make. My approach was a bit low as I forgot about the displaced threshold initially so my aiming point was wrong, but I fixed that and with my instructor guiding me as to when to cut power I hit the runway numbers without much flaring so I ended up being able to make the first taxiway which made my instructor happy. He said I did really good and gave me a couple of pointers on my maneuvers, but he said he was just being picky doing that. He finished by saying that if I had my checkride tomorrow he would sign me off which was nice to hear. Considering my checkride is on Thursday anyway it's probably a good thing he said that... :-P

I really loved today's flight and am looking forward to flying this airplane a lot more! However, it's going to be funny how slow things will feel like once I get back into the single engine :lol:

- Requiem

Day 65 - Multi-Engine Flight #2

Tue, 24 Mar 2015 22:10:36, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

Flew the second of my three flights before the ME checkride today, and boy was it windy. At its lightest the winds were something like 16kts gusting to 23kts so it definitely made the landings challenging. I did the same flight as yesterday, but I forgot to mention a couple of parts from the flight which I did again today. After the Vmc demo I had a practice engine failure using the mixture, followed by using the checklist and feathering it in-flight (so the propeller stops moving and I'm flying on one engine basically). Then I go through the motions to troubleshoot it, secure it, and turn it back on then get on with the rest of the flight. Not a big deal since there is plenty of altitude and the plane can still climb/maintain altitude on the one engine (up to a certain altitude anyway). The other thing I forgot to mention is that I practice an engine out situation just after takeoff, but that is simulated when my instructor pulls back the throttle instead of the mixture control for safety reasons, so I sort that emergency out, fly the pattern, and land using the power from one engine which was actually quite easy today considering the winds.

I flew to a different airport today as it might be one of several possibilities I might fly to on my checkride and I hadn't been there in a while. It had a tower, but no radar, so I needed to call out when I was a few miles out so the tower controller could see me. I mainly practiced short field landings here and they were pretty good. The only thing that was a bit surprising, was that every time I landed the tower controller handed had me change frequencies to the ground controller, who then gave me taxi instructions to the active runway. Not that strange for the first landing, but since I was the only one in the pattern for a long time and made known my intentions for multiple full stop landings with taxi backs I thought the tower controller would just direct me and keep me on his frequency. That's been my

experience with other much busier airports so my guess is the ground controller was being trained or needed practice directing an aircraft. It wasn't a problem of course, just surprising to have done that for every landing given what I've experienced elsewhere.

The landing at home was interesting. There were reports of wind shear up to 10kts on final approach, so I came in a bit faster than usual for the short field landing and made the first taxiway which was good. On the previous short field landing before heading home my instructor made a comment to me that even though I was making the first taxiway at the other airport, I'll need to be more obvious in my attempts to brake on the checkride. So...keeping that in mind I ended up applying the brakes a little too hard after landing at home and I heard a short screech before I relaxed the brake pressure. Oops. The flight overall was good though and my maneuvers weren't affected that much by the gusty winds. It did make my slow flight demonstration interesting though. I pointed the plane into the wind during slow flight and we had a ground speed of about 25kts, which is equal to 28mph or 46km/hr. Pretty funny to know that cars driving on the ground were moving faster than we were in the air :)

- Requiem

Day 66 - Multi-Engine Flight #3

Wed, 25 Mar 2015 20:28:01, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

It was very windy today just like it was yesterday so that made the flight challenging again. It was the same flight but I had the order of things switched up a bit, and I did well (even without considering the winds) which was good. So, the maneuvers were straightforward enough but when it started getting tricky was the landings. It was a bit bumpy in the pattern and when coming on final I encountered wind shear a few times. Wind shear is basically where wind can change to suddenly being in any direction and airspeed, and this affects the plane but more so when on final approach and your expected headwind turns into a tailwind which makes the plane lose lift and sink at a higher rate than you want.

The most severe example of this today was when I was on final approach about 300ft above the ground. One second I checked I was holding about 90kts with a constant attitude then a couple of seconds later the plane sunk so I quickly glanced at the speed (was below 80kts) and increased power to halt the sink, increased my airspeed and got back on the glidepath to land. This all happened really fast and I lost probably 50-100ft, but I reacted quickly and my instructor just said 'good call' as I came in to land. It was definitely a strange feeling to just go from being stabilised on final approach to instantly knowing that I was going to come up short. I did more practice landings for normal and short field landings, and I'm definitely more comfortable with the short field landings now. Although the winds were high the crosswind component wasn't that bad so doing the short field landings with full flaps wasn't a problem. The main adjustment I had to make was to turn onto base earlier because of the strong headwind that would make me approach the runway slower on final. I was also on guard for gusts as I was nearing my roundout (leveling out as I'm over the runway) because I also had a few hit the plane and make me roll around a bit which I had to rectify before flaring and touching down. The good thing is that none of my landings were unsatisfactory. I was happy that I came down nicely with no bouncing and I made the first taxiway whether it was a normal or short field. On my short fields I was even able to stop before the 1000ft markers :)

After getting back to the home airport (and practicing another short field) I had to make a "Go" or "No go" decision as to whether or not I should take my multi-engine checkride tomorrow. I didn't feel out of my comfort zone flying and landing today, but looking at the forecast for tomorrow the winds will be even stronger with gusts up to 40kts. Even though the crosswind component may be small, all it takes is a swing of a few degrees and suddenly that small crosswind becomes a massive one that may exceed my capabilities and the airplane's. Also considering the several instances of wind shear I've experienced over the last couple of days, plus the fact I really haven't flown this plane very much (6 hours now) or in conditions like those forecast for tomorrow I wasn't really keen on doing a checkride (which is an exam after all) in them.

I don't expect to fly a checkride in perfect conditions of course, but I just didn't feel comfortable going ahead tomorrow considering everything, so I called my friend/mentor for his advice about this and he also looked over the conditions and also thought that I should reschedule the flight. His input really helped me make the difficult "No go" decision with more confidence because I trust his opinion and experience, thanks again mate ;-) I don't know when it's going to be rescheduled to, but in the meantime it looks like I'll be doing a lot of instrument flying in the simulator and learning about that now. I'll find out more tomorrow.

- Requiem (Total hours = 106.9)

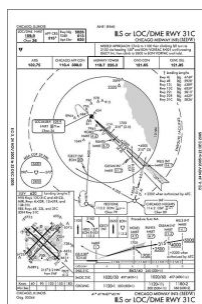
Day 67 - No ME Checkride Today

Thu, 26 Mar 2015 21:12:44, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

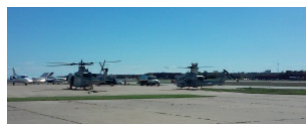
As I mentioned in the yesterday's entry I wouldn't be doing the multi-engine (ME) checkride today due to expected strong winds, which continued being strong well into the afternoon. I didn't learn when my checkride is going to be rescheduled to, but I'm guessing it is going to be at *least* a week or more. Unfortunately, I found that since I haven't done the ME checkride I'll be limited to practicing IFR flying using the simulator because to fly the aircraft IFR I need to have completed the ME checkride in order for me to build the pilot-in-command (PIC) time at the same time as building instrument time. My instructor said this isn't a problem because I'll still be on schedule by doing the required simulator time anyway. It's just the flying that will be a little later, but when I start the actual flying I should be able to do it pretty well.

So today I started on the material for the "instrument" phase where after I complete it I'm allowed to fly IFR and not just limited to VFR. I started reading an Instrument Flight Manual given to me and also watched some videos about IFR communications. I was already a little bit familiar with IFR comms thanks to being exposed to that on my cross country flights. After I had done some of that I hopped in the simulator and my instructor had me go through some of the basics like standard rate turns then climbs/descents at fixed airspeeds/climb rates/descent rates. Plus working the radios, getting the clearance, etc... There is a certain way to scan the instruments when flying IFR, and this scan changes depending on what you are doing, so it was interesting to really try and focus on getting the scan right. I did pretty good at flying by the instruments, so my instructor asked if I wanted to shoot an approach to an airfield. So we went over the approach "plate" which is basically an overview of how to approach an airfield when flying IFR. The below plate isn't for my airport, just an example. I understand the basics of how to interpret this, but it is still a bit of a mystery to me. Because I was focused on the ME stuff my instructor didn't want to distract me by going into these with detail during my cross country flights. With practice though I know reading them will become easier.



After going over the approach plate I input the route into the GPS like I had been doing in the actual plane on my cross country flights. Then I flew an ILS approach which was a bit wonky the first time (descent rate wasn't constant enough), but the second time it was really good and I barely had to make any corrections as the approach was nice and stable. After that I was done in the sim for the day, and we did more than what was required because I was doing the basic IFR flying well. I finished off by doing some more reading before hearing a noise. There was some company landing outside and I got excited to see it as it was right by where our aircraft are parked. I thought it was very cool, so enjoy the picture! :)

- Requiem



Day 68 - Simulated Instrument #2

Fri, 27 Mar 2015 20:24:53, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

Today was another simulated instrument flight, so we started off with a review of yesterday's sim flight of climbs/descents/turns. My instructor also put me in some unusual attitudes and got me to recover, but to make things harder he decided to cover up the attitude indicator so when I looked up to see what attitude the plane was in I needed to figure that out based on the remaining instruments. So for example if the plane was diving to the left, my airspeed would be increasing, my altitude would be decreasing, and the heading indicator would show my heading changing to the left. I recognised and recovered from those unusual attitudes correctly so that was good.

He was reading over the book I have on instrument flying and was using some of the exercises from it to make the session more challenging, so he covered up various instruments and then had me perform maneuvers. He covered up the heading indicator and made me do standard rate turns, which I did relying on the turn coordinator combined with a stopwatch. A standard rate turn is 3 degrees per second, so if I turn a full 360 degree circle then that will take two minutes. If I did the standard rate turn correctly then I would finish the turn on my original or expected heading. I got it within 5-10 degrees so I did ok there. Then he combined me doing standard rate turns along with climbs and descents at a constant airspeed or climb/descent with the heading indicator still covered, so I was working hard on the scan to make sure I did that correctly.

Towards the end of the simulator session we paused the flight and one of my instructor's students, who is working on his CFII (flight instructor for instruments), went over the approach plate in more detail with me explaining a lot of new things. Afterwards I briefed him on the approach I would use based off that plate, followed by flying the ILS approach which was pretty good. He then set me up for another just using the localiser so I could brief that approach and fly it to see the differences between a precision and non precision approach.

Then in the afternoon we went over the regulations pertaining to IFR flight. Not as many as what I have memorised for the private pilot section because there are a lot of overlapping ones, so I'm glad I worked on knowing the FAR/AIM book with all those regulations in it since I won't have that many to memorise. I have gone over a lot of material in the last two days though. My instructor said that the first three IFR simulator flights are supposed to be the basics of flying instruments like turns, climbs, and descents, but I've got a grasp on that so he's been having me fly and learn about approaches as well since the first flight so I'm doing well :) No word on when my ME checkride is being rescheduled though, so although there is plenty of simulator time in my immediate future these sessions are part of the program anyway. It should work out pretty well because I believe it will make the instrument flying that much easier for me when I start the actual flight lessons for the instrument phase.

- Requiem

Day 69-70 - Simulator Flight #3 (Instrument Patterns)

Mon, 30 Mar 2015 21:30:07, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

On Saturday I just did some self-study so there wasn't much to write about, and on Sunday I had the day off. I did manage to get some combat flight simulator time in with my friend though where I was pointing out (or whinging about it :lol:) about how I find spotting enemy planes harder in the game than in real life. He was saying "Welcome to my world" with what I know was a big smile on his face. It certainly made me smile more as I'm so grateful to actually be a part of that world doing everything for real :)

Today though I flew the simulator again so my instructor went through some instrument flight pattern maneuvering and an introduction to "holds" with me. The maneuvering included a racetrack pattern, procedure turns plus the teardrop pattern, and circling approaches. A "hold" is basically where a plane isn't landing immediately so it flies out to a nearby patch of airspace as shown on an approach plate where it waits until it gets a chance to land. I've included pictures from the FAA Instrument Flying Handbook to illustrate what I did today as textual descriptions simply won't cut it :-)

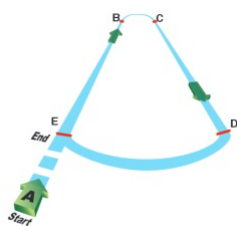


Figure 7-41. Racetrack pattern (entire pattern in level flight). The racetrack pattern is pretty much what it sounds like. The idea is that I fly the inbound and outbound legs so they are equal length, so for example I get my airspeed constant then fly North for one minute, then I do a standard rate turn (3 degrees per second) to the right or left for a 180 degree turn back South (takes 60 seconds/1 minute), then fly straight for another minute, do a standard rate turn to turn 180 degrees back North, etc...repeating as long as needed to hold in position. This is in conditions without wind though...if you have wind then this needs to be accounted for as you would fly a faster downwind and slower upwind, or even needing to crab into the wind to stop it blowing you away from where you are supposed to be.

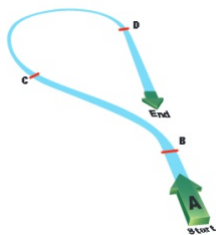


Figure 7-42. Standard procedure turn (entire pattern in level flight).

The procedure turns and teardrop pattern are a way to enter a holding position that enable you to go about flying a racetrack type pattern (pretend it goes North to South) until you can rejoin an approach and come in for landing. In the standard procedure turn on the right it shows entering a hold (racetrack pattern) this way using a 45 degree entry to turn around 180 degrees. So if the plane was heading North (360) it would turn left 45 degrees to heading 315 then after flying straight for one minute it turns 225 degrees right onto the heading of South (180).

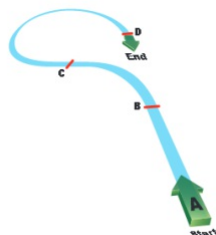


Figure 7-43. 80/260 procedure turn (entire pattern in level flight).

An "80/260" procedure turn is similar in execution to the 45 degree turn above, but the initial turn is 80 degrees and the final turn is 260 degrees to achieve the same result. Again, entering a racetrack pattern that flies North to South in this case.

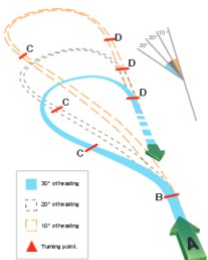


Figure 7-44. Teardrop pattern (evasive pattern in level flight).

The teardrop pattern is similar again but you turn away at headings of either 10, 20, or 30 degrees depending on if you need to spend more time holding or not. The shallower the turn the more time you spend flying before entering the racetrack pattern. Initially I was having a brain fart trying to visualise this one for some reason, but once the mental block went away it made sense.

The key thing with these entries is that their initial turn is always towards the inside of the racetrack pattern and not to the outside of it, so regardless of where you enter from you know where you should be flying with any one of these procedure turns. It's just the matter of the degrees used depending on what your needs are.

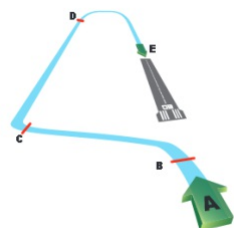


Figure 7-45. Circling approach pattern I (imaginary runway). After practicing these entries a few times I flew an ILS (Instrument Landing System) approach and a couple of VOR-DME approaches in order to practice some "Circling Approaches" for landing. Normally an ILS approach has you lined up with the runway and lets you land straight in, but runways have two sides to land from depending on the wind, so if one runway has the ILS (or another instrument approach) and the other runway doesn't have any of them then you can use the ILS (or another instrument approach) on the *inactive* runway to come in close to see the airfield. However, in this case since the runway with ILS isn't the one you need to land on you need to transition to landing on the opposite end, and this is where the circling approach comes in. Once you come in on the ILS and are visual with the runway you can make the transition and land using a visual circling approach as seen in the picture.

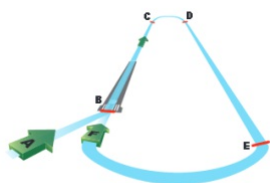


Figure 7-46. Circling approach pattern II (imaginary runway). The other option for the circling approach is the one on the right, and the one I practiced involved me coming in using a VOR-DME approach which didn't bring me in straight in towards the runway, but more off to the side like what you see in the green "A" arrow. Since this approach brought me in on this sharper angle (greater than 30 degrees) I couldn't come in to land, but once I had the runway in sight I lined up on it and flew the runway heading before entering the pattern and coming in to land visually (the green "F" arrow).

As usual I hope that what I did today made some sense to my family out there who reads these entries :)

My multiengine checkride date is still uncertain and may be on the 2nd of April or the 7th. I don't really know because my examiner is having his own checkride going on around now for his aircraft, but hopefully I get a more concrete date soon. I'd really like to do the ME checkride and start flying the instrument phase.

- Requiem

P.S. As I was writing this entry I got something pretty damn cool in the mail...I now have an *actual* pilot's license to put in my wallet now! :-D :-D

Day 71 - Simulator Flight #4 (Holding Procedures)

Tue, 31 Mar 2015 20:54:14, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

My instructor was working with a student of his who was taking his final checkride for the program, so I did self-study this morning. I was reviewing yesterday's material as well as going through the FAR (book of regulations) and finished up highlighting the regulations I need to know as an instrument pilot for memorisation.

After lunch we went over the entries and holding patterns (standard and non-standard) again where he drew examples on the board and I walked him through what I would need to do to enter the pattern and hold there. Once that was done we hit the simulator which involved practicing holds and entries I learned yesterday while my instructor acted as the ATC. I set up and flew a departure from my airfield, changed radio frequencies, and hit the various waypoints without a problem. Then at certain points towards the destination my instructor (being ATC) instructed me to hold for periods of time. Based on my position I had to do certain entries like what I wrote last night, and I ended up practicing a direct entry and a teardrop entry. Although I didn't practice a parallel entry I verbalised what position I would need to be in and what way I would need to go.

After the holds were complete he had me divert to an airfield nearby and this is where he tried to task saturate me to cause an overload and breakdown in my flying. I was inputting the changes to go direct to the airfield as instructed when he said to scratch that and instead use the VOR-DME for a circling approach with the additional instruction that I go direct to this other waypoint that was an extra point or two down the approach and begin a descent to 3000ft. It was a fair bit to take in for a moment as I was just focused on getting direct to the airfield when he switched it all up on me, but I made the changes quickly without fumbling around with the GPS while also inputting the required VOR frequency and radial. I was really happy about doing that as right then I realised how much more comfortable I am now when manipulating the GPS since I multi-tasked all of what he requested pretty well. I even had the presence of mind while doing it to ask him if he was trying to overload me :)

I began following the approach then he asked me to make another hold at the final approach fix, so I did that then continued on the approach for landing. Since it was a VOR-DME it was a circling approach so I went visual near the runway and entered the pattern to land. As I came in to land he then surprised me by telling me to go-around, so I did that and went to re-enter the pattern and land again. Instead of doing that though he told me to go to the missed approach waypoint (we hadn't covered those yet). I questioned him about doing this because I said that since I was on the circling approach it meant I was visual and wouldn't need to go do the missed approach. He didn't expect me to pick up on that and said that I was right, but I should just fly out to the missed waypoint so I can see how the GPS handles it. On the GPS it shows the missed approach holding pattern on the map, but when I do a hold manually I need to pause the route where I am and this removes the holding pattern. He said that when I go "missed" I need to press the expensive button on the GPS so it activates the missed approach waypoint/holding pattern. I asked why it's called that and he said that it's because a lot of people going for the instrument checkride have not pressed that button when they go missed, and this can cause them to fail the checkride, costing them money. That button is firmly in my mind now so I hope it won't happen on my checkride!

As for my ME checkride, it seems that it is possibly going to be on the 7th April. If however that isn't going to happen then I'll be taking it with another examiner who comes in here.

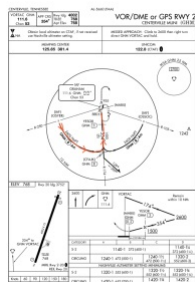
- Requiem

Day 72 - Simulator Flight #5 (DME Arcs)

Wed, 01 Apr 2015 21:08:00, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

Today was not the best day for me. Not sure if I was just a bit tired by the time I got into the simulator, but I was feeling off today. I did my usual self-study with reading, got a bit lost with a whole bunch of acronyms at one point, and watched a video in the morning before my instructor went over DME arcs with me after lunch.



A DME arc is another way to approach the airfield for landing. The approach plate on the right has two of them (I've coloured one of them red with arrows showing direction of travel). With this I use the navigation equipment on the plane to fly this curved path (arc) to maintain a distance of 8 miles from the navigation aid on the ground. To follow this you don't actually fly a curved path, it's more like a bunch of straight lines. In this plate after turning onto the arc about 8 miles out of heading 140 degrees (90 degrees left of the inbound heading 250), then you fly for a bit, then angle left 10 degrees, fly straight for a bit, angle 10 degrees, maintaining 8 miles distance, fly for a bit...etc...until you intercept the path leading to the airport on heading 354. That's basically it, I won't go into the details of the equipment and what's involved to keep it simple :)

The DME arcs I flew were fine. The theory of what headings I needed to follow is easy, but it was harder flying it than thinking about it because of having to manipulate the equipment in the sim to make it happen. My problems today were with the entries to hold patterns. I had one teardrop entry where I turned left instead of right after my initial 30 degree offset, then when I checked the GPS after I finished it I knew I messed up. I've been deliberately avoiding looking at the GPS to not make it easier since if I was watching the GPS the second I turned I would have seen the problem. Then my other mess up was doing a missed approach. I flew the missed approach out to the holding area, but I kept the radial on the one required for the inbound to the runway and didn't change it to the one needed for the holding pattern (it was about 7 degrees different), so after I did my parallel entry to the pattern I checked the GPS and thought it looked a bit skewed then realised my mistake.

Other than those my sim flight was good. My instructor said I was beating myself up a bit about my mistakes but I was acknowledging I had an off day.

- Requiem

Day 73 - Ground School

Thu, 02 Apr 2015 21:36:51, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

Ground school and self-study was the focus today. I did start the morning in the simulator but after my departure I stuffed up a hold entry and ended up confusing myself trying to figure out why it was wrong. My instructor tried explaining entries using the HSI but I was thinking of it in terms of the map and plane position, so there was added confusion on both our ends. He asked me to hold West of a position on the 090 radial but I ended up holding East with my outbound leg on the 090 radial. We stopped the simulator and went back over hold entries. It was really weird because at the time I could describe what was required of the different entries and entering them, but when I tried thinking about a holding entry not displayed on the map I was almost drawing it backwards to the instructions. After a few minutes of back and forth on the whiteboard I realised what my problem was this morning. I interpreted the holding instructions as being compass headings instead of being off the radials of the navaid (which are reciprocals of each other), and I wasn't thinking about the inbound leg always being towards the position you hold off. The moment I realised those were the issues I had no problems drawing holds or deciding what entry to take based off random instructions, but I felt pretty silly for screwing it up like that. After lunch we went over the regulations for IFR flight as well as getting into the Aeronautical Information Manual (AIM).

Good news though is that my ME checkride is on the 12th April. The original examiner is backlogged with re-tests/discontinuance checkrides so the possibility of the 7th April is gone, meaning my checkride on the 12th is with a different examiner now. Shouldn't be a big deal as this is an add-on to my private pilot license, but the extra time to wait for it is unfortunate. I really hope the weather turns out good enough so I can get it done. Most of my IFR simulator flights will probably be done by then, so I need to get the ME add-on and start flying in this instrument phase.

- Requiem

Day 74 - Simulator Flight #6

Fri, 03 Apr 2015 21:02:44, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

I had ground school through the morning and the simulator flight was in the afternoon. In the ground school we went over a few regulations and covered approaches using the navigation aids like the localiser, ILS, GPS, and WAAS. The ILS and localiser approaches made sense but the different GPS approaches are where things started getting a bit confusing for me in terms of what their differences are with all the similar acronyms for them. Generally speaking it's been hard to try and keep some of this instrument information perfectly straight in my head over the last couple of days.

Today's simulator flight involved flying the usual departure and legs outbound with a couple of holds thrown in before getting into a couple of different approaches. My first hold entry was a teardrop which I flew correctly and my other entry was a parallel entry which was fine as well. The first approach I was meant to make into the airfield was an ILS, so I set myself up according to the approach plate, but then once I reached the final approach fix to intercept the glideslope I accidentally started following the non-precision approach instead of the ILS. I noticed it during my descent, shook my head, and asked myself why was I following the localiser and not the ILS. My instructor heard me as he said to just said to go with it and I can do another approach with the glideslope when I'm done. On this first approach I couldn't see anything that was part of the runway to allow me to land since all I was seeing was grey inside the clouds. I did the go-around procedure, called out the missed approach, and worked my way over there and entered the hold with a parallel entry which was good. It would have been better if I remembered to hit the "expensive" button on the GPS to activate the missed approach holding waypoint instead of my instructor telling me to press it though. After that hold I came back towards the runway and then flew the ILS correctly with the landing to finish up the flight.

Tomorrow we'll be getting into the big chapter covering ATC procedures in the AIM.

- Requiem

Day 75 - Simulator Flight #7 (Backcourse)

Sat, 04 Apr 2015 22:00:00, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

I did more ground school today with an informal quiz over the IFR enroute low chart and me explaining how to perform various approaches on the approach plates which went well. The IFR enroute low chart covers IFR flying below 18,000ft is the equivalent of the VFR sectional chart for navigation, but it's for IFR obviously (above 18,000ft is the enroute high chart). The symbols are *generally* similar, but there are new ones to remember and some of the colouring is different as well. Since IFR involves flying between navigation aids, these aids and the routes between them are what feature predominately on the low enroute chart without worrying so much about showing all the visual references you see on the VFR sectional charts.

After the ground school we hopped into the simulator and I did the departure as normal then entered a couple of different holds before being diverted to an airport I hadn't flown approaches to in the sim before. For this airport he had me brief the ILS approach and then fly it. I did this correctly as well but once I reached the minimum "decision height," where after following the glideslope down I hope to see the runway, I saw nothing so I initiated the "missed approach" procedure. Full power, retract the flaps, retract the gear when I start climbing, tell ATC I'm going missed, hit that expensive button, then follow the route to get to the missed approach point. After approaching that I had to enter another hold pattern which was good as well before flying a non-precision localiser approach.



My instructor then teleported my plane to a position where I could then fly an instrument approach called the "backcourse." For that to make sense though I have to mention how things work normally (as simple as I can try to make it)...The ILS has two components, a localiser (horizontal guidance) and a glideslope (vertical guidance), so when you fly an ILS you use the HSI instrument (in the picture) to show how well you are aligned with those two components. You aim to keep the yellow vertical lines together and the yellow arrows on the side next to the white lines near East and West. Following the localiser and keeping the vertical lines together means you are flying straight towards the runway, but in that picture the middle yellow line is off to the right, so that means the plane is shifted off to the left and I would need to turn right to bring the plane back on course. Following glideslope involves managing your descent rate so the yellow lines match up with the white horizontal lines. The yellow arrows are the glideslope and the white lines are the plane, so if the yellow arrows are below the white lines then the plane is above the glideslope and needs to descend more to bring the yellow arrows back up.

Anyway...so when flying a backcourse it basically uses the ILS but on the opposite runway, but when doing this you don't have the glideslope anymore *and* the localiser ends up being back the front. This means you need to reverse your inputs to stay on course...so in that picture if I was flying a backcourse then I would need to turn left, not right like before, in order to get the plane back on course. Having to do this mental reversal isn't always needed though because a lot of planes have equipment that recognise this and automatically reverse the instrumentation for you so you can make the same input to correct the course regardless of what side of the localiser you are flying on. I flew the backcourse well and performed another missed approach, entered the hold, then finished the flight there.

Things definitely went a lot better today which I'm happy about because the last couple of days I felt like I should have been flying things better. I flew the route/holds/approaches well, but the one thing I neglected a bit was calling out to ATC when I was entering and leaving the holds. I just focused a lot on trying to improve my flying today I think. I have the day off tomorrow then getting back into it next week along with some preparation for my ME checkride next Sunday at some point.

- Requiem

Day 76 - Simulator Flight #8 (GPS Approach)

Mon, 06 Apr 2015 22:30:36, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

Today I did some ground school with my instructor before getting into the simulator. We did some review of the enroute chart, practiced reading approach plates and briefing them accordingly, and also did a few IFR quizzes off a website whose name escapes me right now. We also did a review of some questions for my ME checkride for this Sunday which I answered well. I wanted to fly a checkride practice but I had a dental appointment in the morning so I didn't get there until about lunch and we didn't have enough time. We should be doing one tomorrow though.

The sim flight was good overall. It was a usual departure and flying a hold before being diverted for an ILS approach, which resulted in me going "missed" followed by entering another hold where I then set up a GPS approach. I did get caught out on my ILS approach as my instructor was distracting me with questions and I let my path along the glideslope suffer. The GPS approach was something which I hadn't tried before. It's similar to using the nav aids but with the GPS unit on the instrument panel I need to change it from a "VLOC" mode to "GPS" mode so the instrumentation can display the GPS information correctly on the HSI otherwise the HSI will still be providing information based off the nav aids. I have a little overlay on the GPS that shows my aircraft and where it is tracking to (since it's GPS obviously) but by switching modes it lets me use either that screen or the HSI to follow the approach. Flying the GPS approach really was no different to flying the ILS so it was straightforward enough.

This weekend's weather isn't looking great for my checkride...thunderstorms are pretty likely :(

- Requiem

Day 77 - Self Study

Tue, 07 Apr 2015 20:05:33, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

Not much to report on today. My instructor was working with one of his other students who was taking his final flight instructor checkride, so I was left to my own devices. I did some IFR reading and added to my flash card pile before setting myself up for an IFR simulator flight. I ended up inadvertently making this sim flight more difficult than usual. I just set the weather to IFR with minimums just above those required for the ILS at my intended destination and left it at that. However, by default the sim uses cumulonimbus clouds for IFR, which are quite turbulent, so during my sim flight I was fighting that to maintain a steady attitude and altitude. For the flight I flew a departure and a hold before setting up an ILS approach, but because of the turbulence it was difficult to fly the glideslope. I got it down to the minimums and saw the airfield so I landed and finished there. After checking the flight on the PC I could see what my flight path was like, and they all looked as they should have.

After lunch I did some chair flying out in the actual plane and went through the checklist flows and maneuvering required of me for the ME checkride since that is coming up. The weather probably won't be that big of a problem for me because if I can't do it Sunday then it is pretty likely that I can do it on Monday when the weather is supposed to be much better. We'll see how things go closer to the date though.

- Requiem

Day 78 - Simulator Flight #9 (DME Arcs)

Wed, 08 Apr 2015 20:42:34, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

Today started out with self study in the morning where I read more about ATC procedures in the AIM and worked on my IFR written exam by doing some quizzes using an app on the iPad. I've been doing well on those quizzes so far, but they definitely ask some confusing questions on there where you need to be extremely precise when interpreting pictures.

I saw something interesting today. An all black (and unmarked) Blackhawk helicopter came in to land while I was eating lunch. I've seen black Blackhawks before around here but those were marked as Customs and Border protection. Pretty cool to see one that was simply black.

After lunch I had another sim session and I elected to practice a DME arc as part of the flight which I did well. I was doing a non precision approach, so I closed in to the runway and completed a circling approach to set up on downwind to land, but my instructor quickly reduced visibility and asked what will I do now I lost sight of the runway. I followed the missed approach and hit the expensive button so that was good.

The weather isn't looking good at all for any checkrides this weekend or even into next week. It's just all thunderstorms... 987654321987654321 I've been loving the flying, so I'm simply not a fan of having my feet firmly planted on the ground for this long at a time... At least I will *really* have my IFR and multi-engine knowledge up to a good standard by the time I actually get to fly.

-Requiem

Day 79-80 - Multi-Engine Checkride Reviews

Fri, 10 Apr 2015 21:35:27, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

Over the last two days I've been reviewing material for the Multi-Engine checkride I am supposed to have on Sunday. It's been fine so far, but I'll be going in tomorrow as well to study more and see if anything needs fine tuning. It's still unclear if the checkride will go ahead or if it will get delayed again. There are thunderstorms predicted to happen on Sunday, but hopefully they aren't near my area and I can get this checkride complete. My review has been over the oral material and I've been sitting out in the plane doing a lot of chair flying through the various maneuvers/takeoffs/landings. I feel good about doing the multi-engine checkride, but it's just a matter of hopefully getting the weather to co-operate this time around. I really hope it isn't rescheduled again due to weather.

One thing of note today: Before I went out and chair flew this morning I was reading inside and I heard a familiar engine sound so I went outside to look for it. I didn't see anything so I went back inside. Then I heard it again and went outside...didn't see it. After that I decided I'd go outside and chair fly the airplane for a bit so if I heard it again I would be in a position to see it. Sure enough it came around again overflying the runway.. It was a P-51D flying the pattern. I couldn't see it earlier because it was doing a right-hand traffic pattern and kept disappearing from view. It did a few more laps and I got to see it land which was nice, but it was even better than it got off the runway right at the taxiway next to me, so I hopped out of the plane and took a picture as it taxied right past me! :-D



Fingers crossed the weather forecast gets better for Sunday.

- Requiem

Day 81 - No Checkride Today

Sun, 12 Apr 2015 18:47:05, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

Just a short post to let you know that my checkride was cancelled this morning. The cloud ceilings were too low and the forecast said they weren't looking to be high enough over the course of the day. I'll find out what happens next when I go in tomorrow. Having such a long delay for this checkride is extremely frustrating because it's holding me back due to factors out of my control. Hopefully I get to do it next weekend when the weather clears up because next week the weather looks pretty bad in general.

- Requiem

Day 82 - Simulator Flight #10 (Partial Panel Emergencies)

Mon, 13 Apr 2015 21:27:41, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

Today I did self-study in the morning going over some questions for the Instrument written exam followed by a simulator flight in the afternoon that focused on emergencies when some instruments break. Having instruments break when flying solely by instruments is obviously a problem...

I flew the IFR departure using a different procedure then practiced several holds while outbound. While flying along I noticed that my altimeter (tells me altitude) and vertical speed indicator (tells how fast I'm climbing or descending) 'broke' so I identified and rectified that quickly. It became more interesting when my instructor 'broke' my attitude indicator. Losing that didn't make a great deal of difference since the other instruments make up for it, but that is a critical instrument where if I lose it I need to report it to Air Traffic Control, so I did that (spoke to instructor) and said I wanted to land at a nearby airport. I diverted there and was cleared to fly the ILS approach, so I set up that approach and briefed it, but a few miles out my instructor also broke the glide slope indicator. This meant I was now unable to use the ILS and had to use the localiser instead. Not that much different really, it just required a slight change in my approach and minimum altitudes. Now I'm following the localiser to the airport when my instructor breaks my left engine...so now I need to go through the emergency checklist I memorised to sort that out. Flying on the one engine was easy in visual conditions but this was a first by flying on one engine by reference to only instruments (the ones I had left anyway) while trying to stay on the localiser to land, and this caused me to be overloaded trying to keep up with everything. I moved away from the localiser and ended up not being close enough to the runway (vertically or horizontally) to complete the approach as I was too busy trying to fly the aircraft in this new situation. He reset to where I started from and I went through it again. I managed to land it and remain on the localiser at least, although it was still pretty hard to do.

That was it for today so I did some more self-study afterwards. As for my ME checkride I'm currently waiting on the examiners response to see what date is available. Hopefully sooner rather than later...but the weather this week is really not helping my cause right now.

- Requiem

Day 83-84 - Simulator Flights #11, #12

Wed, 15 Apr 2015 21:44:11, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

The last couple of days have been pretty standard. I'm doing the usual study for my instrument written exam with a simulator flight each day. I've been focusing on navigation questions primarily, so it involves a lot of mental twisting of figures of the instruments to determine locations or fix a problem.

The sim flight yesterday was more partial panel emergency practice, so it was similar in style to the one I described in the previous entry, but in this one my instructor broke the HSI *and* the attitude indicator (plus an engine out) right before I was about to start the ILS approach. With both of those instruments gone the approaches in that scenario were very difficult, but I brought it down to the runway pretty well which my instructor was happy with since he said it usually takes a few tries before that happens.

The sim flight today was a bit different. Up until today I had only been flying departures and approaches though. Today's sim flight involved flying a Standard Terminal Arrival Route or STAR. STARs basically add an extra step to help airplanes transition into the instrument approach an airport uses to make things easier for the pilots and air traffic controllers. It is an extra plate to look at before I look at the instrument approach plate, so I fly the route on the STAR plate then it's waypoints transition onto the instrument approach plate which I then follow according to whatever procedure I'm flying in order to land. While flying the STAR my instructor put the sim into 4X time acceleration, so everything happened four times faster, allowing me to fly the entire STAR before getting into the instrument approach. It was a bit hectic but I kept up with it. In general though today I felt kind of lethargic in the simulator. I seemed to be thinking in slow motion sometimes (like when my engine went out), not keeping ahead of the airplane enough, and wasn't verbalising enough. While my instructor said I was fine I was still disappointed in how I flew in the sim today.

I do have some news for my multi-engine checkride though. It is going to be on April 26th. One of the other students remarked to me today that it sucks for me that I'll have been waiting four weeks by the next checkride date (he has had weather delays as well). I simply replied that yeah it does but I never thought I would here learning to fly, so while I'm really missing the flying...to whinge about waiting 11 more days wouldn't make sense given the big picture of things. I just hope the weather is going to be better *this* time around...Third time is the charm right? :)

- Requiem

Day 85 - Simulator Scenario #1

Thu, 16 Apr 2015 20:53:35, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

I did my usual self-study in the morning, a simulator flight about lunchtime, then some chair flying by myself outside to finish the day. The answers to the written questions are starting to come to mind a lot faster which is good. At least I'll be ready for the instrument written by the time my instrument flying rolls around :)

Today's simulator flight was a 'scenario' of pre-set circumstances, so this basically combined all of the things I had been doing in the previous sim flights I've written about. The plan was to fly from one airport to another under IFR, so in total I flew a departure, arrival, and two ILS approaches. After departing the airport and getting updated weather information for my destination I had to decide whether to make the approach or divert. I chose to make the ILS approach since the weather may allow me to see things when I get there so I can land, otherwise I could just shoot the missed approach and wait longer or divert if needed. Well, during the approach one of my engines stopped, so I sorted that emergency and continued the approach but never saw anything at my minimum altitude so I had to go missed. At that point I chose to divert instead of stick around on one engine hoping for the weather to improve because the other airport's cloud ceiling was higher and it wasn't too far away. I made the ILS approach in to the other airport and landed safely, but flying on the single engine by the instruments is pretty challenging.

Overall it went fine but I was having trouble with keeping the proper altitude and following the glideslope nicely. It's usually difficult to do that in the sim anyway since trying to trim for straight and level flight is a pain, but the difficulty was a bit more pronounced in today's flight. Plus I forgot to do my call to ATC when I entered a hold, so forgetting that annoyed me as I've been trying to focus on remembering that.

- Requiem

Day 86 - Simulator Scenario #2

Fri, 17 Apr 2015 22:08:45, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

Had another scenario in the simulator today. In this one I was out west near some mountains as my departing airport. This airport had no departure and I left at a time when the tower wasn't manned, so I pretended to get the clearance to depart the airport via phone. As part of the clearance I had a "clearance void time" where if I didn't take off by a certain time then that clearance I received over the phone would be void. Pretty self explanatory. After taking off I had to follow the Obstacle Departure Procedure (ODP) for the airport, which involved flying a route of certain headings and altitudes before going on my way. Following the ODP ensures that I clear any obstacles around the airport on my way out in the IFR conditions where I can't see outside the plane. After I was on my way I performed a hold then I continued climbing up to 8000ft and broke through the cloud layer. Even though it was in the sim it did look pretty neat because in this area the cloud layer was actually lower than the terrain, so you see a blanket of white with the mountains sticking out of the top. I just kept thinking about how cool it must be to see that in real life. Maybe on my cross country flights I'll be lucky enough to see something like that...

Anyway, after that I was instructed to go back to the initial airport I departed from, so I set the GPS for that airport and followed directions from my instructor that were vectors by ATC. I was cleared for an ILS approach and set that up, but I never saw the runway once at my decision height so I went to the alternate airport nearby. This airport had a much higher cloud base so seeing it during the approach wouldn't be a problem. This airport required a VOR approach which I flew and came down through the cloud layers at about 1000ft with the airport out in front of me. At this point my instructor tried to mess with me and asked me if I could see the airfield, which I could, so he gave me the visual approach. I asked him to cancel the IFR flight plan in that case and went towards the runway which was a few miles out. There was another airport a mile closer to me than my intended runway and he asked me why am I headed to the runway further out. He was just trying to make me second guess myself as the closer airport wasn't the right one. As I was nearing the runway to land he started adding in a ridiculous amount of wind shear but I went in to land anyway and had the propellers hit the ground as a result. He mentioned afterwards that I was supposed to have gone around because of the windshear, but in previous sims he has added wind shear just to screw with my landing at the end of a sim flight so I didn't take what he did there seriously. The flight itself was still good though. I much prefer these scenario based flights compared to the previous ones since they feel as if they have a more logical flow to them that makes more sense :)

- Requiem

Day 87 - Simulator Scenario #3

Sat, 18 Apr 2015 21:41:41, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

Although I had my usual sim flight and self study today I decided to try something different. I've been memorising the regulations related to IFR flight (about 15-20), so I decided to test myself out and write them on the whiteboard. These are numbered with their own definitions, so I was pretty happy to have remembered all of those clearly enough to write them out from memory and cover the whiteboard :)

Today's simulator flight was another scenario based off in the western US to practice some obstacle departure procedures (ODP) on takeoff again. The cloud ceiling was very low so I had no real clue about what the surrounding terrain looked like visually, but I must have flown the departure correctly since I didn't end up becoming a part of the surrounding terrain. After I made it out of there and flew a holding pattern as instructed, then my instructor placed my airplane back down on the airport (but a different runway) to practice the second ODP.

I input all the waypoints for my route of flight in the GPS and dialed in my navigation aids, and of course read up on how I was supposed to fly this ODP. I flew the departure correctly, climbed up to about 11,000ft, and was visualising the route as I was flying it on my iPad. Normally when I fly the airplane in real life the GPS in my iPad shows where the plane is, so I was following my progress using the nav aids (VORs) in the simulator and imagining it on the iPad's map I use when flying. This was going pretty well when my instructor broke my left engine and I needed to declare an emergency once I went through the motions of troubleshooting and securing it while maintaining my altitude above the clouds. The interesting point here for me was that I needed to decide what airport to divert to. To figure this out quickly I rotate a knob on the GPS panel to bring up a list of the nearest airports, but since anything nearby is likely going to be in IFR conditions I needed to pick one with instrument approaches. There was only one that had an instrument approach and all the others did not. It's also evident on the IFR low enroute chart since airports without instrument approaches are coloured brown while those that have them are blue or green. It's still faster to use the GPS panel though.

So I'm flying along with one engine out and my instructor said I was cleared to descend down to 9000ft. I had a rough idea of where I was on the map, so when he cleared me to 9000ft it set off a red flag in my head because he told me to descend below the OROCA of 9700ft (Off Route Clearance Altitude). An OROCA is the minimum height you should be to safely avoid obstacles when not flying IFR along standard routes between navigation aids, so by being told to descend below that is a safety issue for me. I questioned that and my instructor told me to maintain my current height, so noticing that was good. The approach I made into my diversionary airport was an RNAV GPS approach. I flew that very well, which I put down to the fact that I decided to not use flaps on the approach. The last few precision approaches I tried in the sim (not always single engine emergencies) had my descent rate going all over the place once I put the flaps out, so I decided to try the approach without them and oddly enough it made more stable. It was easy to trim the plane out and let it follow the glideslope down to the ground. My instructor was happy with the flight as I didn't do anything wrong which was good. I have tomorrow off, so on Monday I'll be getting back into the multi-engine checkride review mode :)

- Requiem

Day 88 - Multi-Engine Flight #4

Mon, 20 Apr 2015 20:51:53, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

Turns out I'll be having my Multi-Engine checkride tomorrow morning and not on Sunday as originally planned, so today I actually got to fly! :-D It was such a good feeling to be up in the air again!

When contacting the ground controller I was feeling a bit rusty on the radios but I got back to my usual self pretty quick. We left the airport and went out eastwards up to 2000ft where I set the aircraft up in a cruising configuration (certain power setting + fuel pumps off basically) and got ready for some steep turns after climbing to 3500ft. I entered the first steep turn to the left but I dropped a bit in altitude, corrected it, dropped a few knots airspeed when turning upwind, corrected it, then when I swapped from the left to the right turn I hit my target heading on the swap but climbed a bit, corrected it, and finished up on my original altitude, airspeed, and heading. Nothing was out of the tolerances given for the maneuver and my instructor was happy and asked what I thought of it as he thought I was flying as if I never had a long break. I said it felt a bit sloppy to me and I wanted to do another one. Cue an incredulous "What!?" from him and he let me do the second one I wanted. I thought the second steep turn maneuver was really good and he asked "You don't want another one right because it doesn't get any better than that."

I was fine with moving on so I went into slow flight then did a power off stall which were both fine. Then for the power on stall he had me do it while banked as that's a preference which the examiner I have tomorrow likes to do. It felt a bit different so I did two of those. The Vmc demo was next. If you remember this is the maneuver where I pull power on the left engine back to idle and push power to max on the right engine followed by pitching the nose upwards to make my speed fall. Once the speed drops to a certain point I recover from it by reducing power on the right engine and pitching the nose down at the same time. I did two of those as well for extra practice as on my first one I was a bit tentative with going to full power on the right engine initially, so I corrected that for the second Vmc

demo.

By now we were about 4500ft and my instructor pulled the throttle to idle on my left engine, which simulates it breaking. I have to go through a well versed mantra when this happens in a few seconds:

- 1) Maintain directional control
- 2) Mixtures, Propellers, Throttles fully forward
- 3) Flaps Up, Gear Up
- 4) Identify the dead engine (it's related to which foot is not on a rudder pedal)
- 5) Verify dead engine by closing its throttle

Then since I was at a high enough altitude I go through the troubleshooting checklist to see if it resolves itself. Since it did not I had to then feather the propeller and set mixture to idle. This causes the propeller to stop completely and the engine to cease running, so looking out you see one engine running and the other doing nothing. By doing this it makes the control issues caused by the bad engine to go away basically, making the plane easier to fly. With the engine stopped I pretended to secure it then call air traffic control for help (plus squawk 7700). Then I started the engine in the air which is easy. It just involves getting fuel back to the engine, diving for a bit of speed, increasing propeller RPM, and it comes back to life.

After the engine out emergency my instructor asked me to do an emergency descent, so starting from 4500ft I dropped down to 2500ft (on the dot) in about a minute which he said was very good. Now that I was established at 2500ft I called in to an airport nearby to do some landings. The first landing was good, although it was probably about 100ft of the 1000ft markers. I think the tolerance is +/- 400ft so not a big deal. The second landing was the most memorable since my instructor got very excited because of how good the landing was. It was a short field landing and he told me to put it down on the 1000ft markers and not at the runway threshold (beginning) because this examiner will tell me to do it this way. I came in and put it right in the center of the 1000ft markers and braked to easily make the first taxiway. It was funny because right as I touched down on the spot he let out something that sounded like "wow-uieee, that's what I'm talkin' about!" I practiced another short field after this one along with a couple of normal ones before heading back home.

I did see an interesting event while waiting for my turn to takeoff. I was #2 behind a Cessna who was about to takeoff and there was another plane on final approach. The controller cleared the Cessna to takeoff with no delay. I looked out at the inbound plane, then at the Cessna, back to the inbound plane, and remarked to my instructor "yeesh, this is going to be a bit tight, dunno if I would done that." The Cessna then went out onto the runway, applied power as if to takeoff, but then did a 180 degree turn and taxied back off the runway and onto the taxiway where he just was. Simultaneously to this action by the Cessna the inbound plane called a go-around. I didn't anticipate the Cessna doing this at all, but I only rolled forward a few feet then came to a stop once I saw him start his loop around to come back onto the taxiway. The controller sounded a bit pissed over the radio... "Cessna XXX, I really didn't appreciate you doing that."

Once back at the airport I had a good oral review session in the afternoon with my instructor and another guy going for his Multi-Engine commercial rating. Let's hope my checkride tomorrow goes off without a hitch! I feel good about it :)

- Requiem (Total Hours = 109.1)

PS - Here is a picture of the simulator all my entries have been about lately



Day 89 - No Checkride Today

Tue, 21 Apr 2015 20:27:53, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

It really looked like the weather was going to be great today, but there ended up being a convective SIGMET in the area with accompanying rain and lightning. It wasn't moving through the area fast enough, so when the examiner turned up he decided to not go through with the checkrides today as a result. I'm rescheduled for the 28th April...but so far I've had strong winds, rain, and lightning delay this multi-engine checkride...so maybe on my next one we might get to see some snow! :) (joking of course) Since I didn't get to fly I did self-study for the instrument phase and my instructor took me through a quick IFR simulator flight.

Over the next week though it will be more IFR simulator sessions, self-study, and of course a bit of multi-engine review.

- Requiem

Day 90-91 - More Scenarios

Thu, 23 Apr 2015 21:12:15, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

Over the last couple of days it has been more scenarios in the simulator since I need to wait until Tuesday for my checkride. There wasn't anything drastically different about yesterday's. It was similar to previous ones where I fly a departure, enroute, and arrival, but this one was at night time. The hard thing about it though was the approach. I was flying the ILS when my instructor came over and put sticky notes on the HSI and Attitude indicator instruments. I had to report this since they are critical instruments for IFR flight, and flying the approach without them was pretty difficult but I made it down fine. I'd like to get more practice doing this.

Today's scenario was something different focusing on high altitude single engine performance. I flew a route where I had a high altitude (MEA - Minimum enroute altitude) I needed to be at between waypoints. I was 12,000ft high for the flight and I experienced a couple of engine problems (propeller overspeed and roughness) which eventually culminated in my instructor killing an engine near one of the final waypoints. Now since I had only one engine the plane performance should have suffered enough to force me to drift down to the absolute ceiling on a single engine (the highest altitude I can be when only one engine is running), but for some reason I was able to maintain 12,000ft. Something with the flight model I guess since the plane in the simulator is a turbo version of the one I fly in real life. The engine remained broken so I declared the emergency and figured out which airfield I wanted to divert to. I made a "circling approach" in towards the airfield, so as I descended on the route to the airfield I broke through the cloud layer and had to land on the correct runway (Runway 13 Right) since there were two of them (RWY 13L and 13R). Additionally, on the way down I had a communications failure. I think I messed up a bit with that because the airport was uncontrolled (meaning I have to make calls on a common frequency) but I didn't do any since my instructor said I had that communications failure. My bad.

After all the study I've been doing for the IFR written exam I figured I would give a practice exam a go. I've taken it twice over these last two days (results of 87% then 95%) so I should be fine for this exam. I'm still practicing the questions though as occasionally I find one that slips through the cracks I get wrong. It would be kind of funny for me to pass the exam before I fly my first IFR flight, but I want to try and get 100% on it so I'll take it later on during the IFR phase :)

- Requiem

Day 92 - Final Simulated IFR Scenario

Fri, 24 Apr 2015 21:07:10, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

Today was the last scheduled simulator scenario for the IFR phase. Normally all of these sim flights would have been done with actual flying following it, but that hasn't happened since I've been unable to fly any IFR due to waiting for my multi-engine checkride. Getting to the end of these required sim flights doesn't prohibit me from using the sim though as that is available any time I want.

The sim scenario today focused on failures and was pretty straightforward over the two events. On the first I flew an obstacle departure procedure and suffered an attitude indicator failure after takeoff, so I had to declare an emergency followed by air traffic control vectoring me around for the ILS approach. I flew the approach well and landed safely. The second scenario involved me taking off again for an obstacle departure, but on this one I suffered the attitude indicator failure *and* a HSI failure which meant I had to fly an approach using the GPS. Losing the extra instrument makes the approach more difficult because it really messes with the instrument scan, but I brought that down safely as well.

I'll be taking tomorrow off instead of Sunday so I can get a couple of days of multi-engine review to refresh myself before I have the checkride on Tuesday. Right now the weather looks like it is going to be rainy on Tuesday, but we'll see how it goes closer to the day. I hope it improves so I'm not delayed yet again. It's almost as if scheduling my checkrides makes for bad weather!

- Requiem

Day 93 - Half a Multi-Engine Checkride

Sun, 26 Apr 2015 20:43:46, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

I went in today and someone ended up cancelling their checkride so I took that spot. I ended up only doing the oral portion though because after we finished the weather was closing in and I chose to discontinue the exam. There were some thunderstorms moving up towards the airport, so while it was clear at the time we finished I could not only see the cumulonimbus clouds outside but on weather radar there was a lot of rain coming with it. We could have taken off and gone through the flight, but I thought that we would have ended up being stuck and not able to land back at the home airport because we have to adhere to visual flight rules.

The oral itself was straightforward. I thought I answered his questions pretty well and before he left he said I did very good on it and knew my stuff. My instructor said the oral seemed a bit short so that's usually a good sign for me knowing what's needed. I didn't always get to finish my explanations before he moved on to another topic since he knew I knew what I was talking about. I was a bit nervous though because I wasn't expecting to go today and had been practicing IFR predominately this week. Since I didn't fly today, I will be finishing the other half of this checkride on the 28th since he issued a "letter of discontinuance" due to the weather conditions, so fingers crossed the storms finish up before I fly Tuesday :)

Tomorrow will be practicing the maneuvers for the flight. Although I've only flown once in the last month I felt comfortable when I flew it last after the three week break so I should be fine on Tuesday.

- Requiem

Day 94 - Multi-Engine Review

Mon, 27 Apr 2015 20:02:32, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

Today was simply a review in anticipation of taking my ME checkride tomorrow, but since it is supposed to happen we all know what means based off past experience! Yep, bad weather...rain is supposed to be coming down all day tomorrow while the days afterwards are sunny. There is a possibility of doing my flight Wednesday when the weather clears but I won't know until tomorrow. It actually started storming here at the house a few minutes ago.

For my review I spent the morning outside in the plane's cockpit and chair flying it by going through the entire checkride in my head from startup to finish. After I came back in another student was with my instructor so I joined in there for some weather and IFR review. Then I booted up the simulator and flew the complete checkride in the simulator which went well. I just need to fly it for real! How this weather keeps interfering with my checkride is unreal.

- Requiem

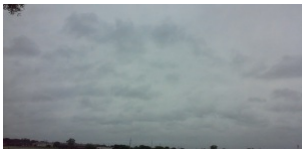
Day 95 - No Checkride Today

Tue, 28 Apr 2015 21:31:34, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

No checkride today since the weather was no good as you can see in the picture I took today. It didn't seem to rain very much, but the cloud ceilings were just so low all day. I ended up doing some IFR written exam review plus oral review for the instrument checkride instead. There is a possibility of the examiner coming tomorrow, so we'll have to wait and see for that. Otherwise it is definitely on for this Sunday...and the weather is actually forecast to be SUNNY for the rest of the week! :-D So whether I get to do it tomorrow or Sunday...at least I'm finally getting the chance to be out of the woods with this multi-engine checkride so I can start working on instrument flying. This weight is soon to be lifted.

- Requiem (Total Hours = 109.1)



Day 96 - IFR Review Day

Wed, 29 Apr 2015 21:34:47, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

I did some IFR written exam practice today and barely missed any questions which was good. My instructor has suggested for me to take the IFR written exam by the end of the week. I'll probably do that as well as taking the flight instructor written exam for IFR as well because the questions are all from the same test bank, but it is just a smaller pool apparently. Knocking both of these IFR exams when the knowledge/practice is fresh is the best way to go.

After my own study in the morning I sat in with my instructor and another student who has his instrument checkride soon for oral review. The review was meant for him so I was content to sit and listen while the questions were asked, answering them in my head, but when questions came up that he couldn't answer I would explain what the correct one was. Occasionally I would be asked a question, but those were harder than normal. At this point my instructor feels like my knowledge is pretty good so it's a matter of refining things and knowing more "fun facts" (random indepth knowledge of a topic). In the afternoon there was a different style of IFR review with another instructor and his students so I sat in on that as well which was interesting. We went over some approach plates and the low enroute IFR chart (map) via a TV on the wall hooked up to the instructor's computer and answered questions posed by him. It was good going over this information with a different instructor and his approach, but I was well prepared by my instructor to answer everything.

Once I get the multi-engine checkride done this weekend, I start flying the multi-engine plane on my instrument flights so I can get an IFR rating that allows me to fly when the conditions are bad. IFR conditions exist when the cloud ceilings are below 1000ft (300m) and/or the visibility outside is less than 3 statute miles (4.8km). Once those limits are reached I can longer fly VFR (Visual Flight Rules) and need to fly IFR (Instrument Flight Rules) unless I have a special clearance to fly VFR where I need to avoid clouds and have visibility of 1 statute mile.

The first couple of IFR flights will be cross country flights longer than 100 nautical miles to practice creating and filing a cross country IFR flight plan. For this there will be one flight during the day and another at night, so I'm looking forward to flying at night again :) Then the following flights are going to focus on navigation, so it's about practicing the use of GPS and navigation aids like VORs to get where I need to go. Then there are flights where I practice holds and the DME arcs, followed with practicing non-precision approaches (like a localiser approach) and precision approaches (like an ILS). Then there is a flight dedicated to IFR emergency procedures (broken instruments/engine out, etc) and then more cross country flying with a couple of flights of checkride preparation. The cross country flying at the end involves one IFR flight of more than 250nm in length, a night time VFR flight more than 300nm in length, and a night time cross country where I need to do 10 takeoffs and landings. By this time I should be pretty proficient so there are a couple more flights where I plan out a cross country greater than 50nm to practice IFR procedures.

So all up I'll have 15 flights (34 hours flight time) to put into practice what I have learned in the 36 hours of simulator flight so far (36 hours is the officially logged time in the simulator, but I've spent more time in it than that). Once these IFR flights are done I'll be taking my checkride, which my instructor estimates will be around mid-May. I guess it depends on how fast I move through the flights and good/bad I'm actually implementing the procedures while flying, so we'll see what happens when I start flying IFR. I feel pretty comfortable with what I need to know for IFR flying, so it's a matter of getting to the flying and seeing how it goes :)

- Requiem (Total hours = 109.1)

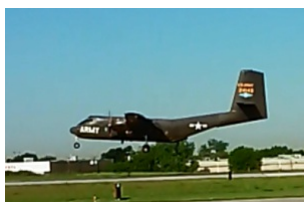
Day 97-98 - Quiet Review Days

Fri, 01 May 2015 21:03:38, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

Not much has been happening for me the last couple of days. It's basically me doing my own usual self study for IFR and sitting in on oral review again. My instructor says I'll be fine to pass the oral portion for the IFR checkride so it's a matter of me getting the flying done.

When I was driving to the school this morning I came down the road leading up to it and I saw a whole lot of smoke. The other day I saw a Caribou taxi, but not takeoff, so when I saw this smoke it made me think that it must be sitting nearby with engines running. I wasn't disappointed since I spotted it as I drove past and parked the car. I figured it would be out soon so I waited outside on the ramp near our planes where it came past and went down to the runup area to do the engine check before takeoff. It was great to watch and listen to it takeoff, plus I recorded it on my camera so I've added a screengrab of it below. I remember seeing these fly when I was in the air force back home :)



Then I went back inside and did some oral review before having lunch and heading out to the airplane to chair fly it through the entire multi-engine checkride again. Later in the afternoon after more review inside one of the other students left to go home, but a minute later he came back in and said that he knew I liked military aircraft so he came back to tell me there were some F-22s outside I could look at. I was pretty surprised to hear that so I went outside and became excited. Not because they were F-22s though...



Turns out there were some Navy Super Hornets here for some reason which I gawked at for a few minutes :P As I was leaving for the day they were starting their engines getting ready to depart, so I hung around for the engine start and then left. As I was driving home along the road all three of them flew over the top of me at low altitude in trail of each other. I always loved seeing that sight. In the air force I used to sit and eat lunch to catch them during taking off and landing. I can only imagine what it must be like to fly something like that for real :)

One other interesting thing I noticed today was that there were multiple TFRs that will be active soon. These are Temporary Flight Restrictions which are airspace restrictions put in place for important events. They are essentially no-fly zones unless you are authorised to be there and are often used for sporting events, but the TFRs out this weekend show that the US Vice President Joe Biden is flying around. Hopefully no one busts inside those TFRs and gets in trouble.

The weather is going to be *great* next week after I get the multi-engine checkride done (no sarcasm). The forecast is for lots of rain and clouds through most of next week, so this means it is going to be excellent practice for me to fly in actual IFR conditions instead of wearing the Foggles and pretending IFR conditions exist. I just need to move past the checkride on Sunday! :)

- Requiem (Total hours = 109.1)

Day 99-100 - Multi Engine Checkride

Sun, 03 May 2015 19:28:27, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

Today was my multi-engine checkride. I know, about time right? Since I had already done the oral I only had to fly, so I turned up about 30 minutes early and calculated my weight and balance and performance for the flight before heading out to the airplane. The pre-flight inspection was fine, he asked me a few questions about what different parts of the airplane were which was no problem. Then we got in the airplane and got it ready to start up. I was being very conscious of my checklist items so it was a bit slower than I usually do to make sure I didn't miss anything. I was just a bit paranoid about doing things right since I haven't flown much at all.

There are certain situations I need to demonstrate competency in to pass this checkride, and I knew what these items were, but the timing of the first two was very unexpected. (Item #1) On the initial takeoff out of my home airport my instructor wanted a short field takeoff, so I started on that and then he cut the mixture (cut off fuel) to one of my engines. That meant I had to close the throttles, apply brakes, and abort the takeoff as per my pre-takeoff brief. The thing is as I applied brakes he told me not to apply brakes which threw me off a bit mentally as I'm steering on the runway, but he quickly restored the mixture and told me to resume taking off. (Item #2) So I completed the short field takeoff (climbing out at 82kts) when at 500ft above the ground he cuts the throttle on my left engine, so I go through the memorised emergency checklist for engine failure, or the 'jingle' as I call it, to control the airplane and get it stable at 88kts. So this required me to lower the nose to accelerate to 88kts in addition to the jingle. I really wasn't expecting these to happen initially leaving the airport, but I acted correctly so it was a good start even though I felt like it put me off a bit to begin the flight.

Then we went off to go do the maneuvers. I cruised the airplane out at 2000ft and flew along for a while when he started asking me why my hand was always on the throttle. I explained that was how I'd been taught, so he told me to only keep my hands on the throttle in critical phases of flight (takeoff/landing/emergencies, etc) and use both hands when flying otherwise. After that I started climbing up to 3000ft to fly steep turns. I was flying North and he wanted me to do a clearing turn to the West, so I queried it and he asked me which way I wanted to do it. I pointed at a contact on the traffic advisory service (TIS) in the plane which showed an aircraft 1000ft above and to the West a few miles. He said that since the airport we would be working with was off to the east we should do it west, but he understood where I was coming from by preferring to do a clearing turn to the East. I went through the steep turn and I lost a few kts of airspeed upon entry so I had to fix that by adding some power and maintaining altitude. I did the same mistake I made in the private pilot checkride...I rolled out on my initial heading and rolled through it to start a steep turn to the right. Que the examiner telling me to stop the roll and that this isn't a commercial checkride.

He then asked me to set up for slow flight, which I did, but that didn't last very long before he asked me to transition into the power off stall. Now this examiner had repeated to me several times he wanted to see a full stall and not just recover at the onset of the aircraft buffeting. So I did the power off stall with full back pressure and the aircraft buffeting, but it didn't seem to want to break, so I kept holding it then recovered. He told me in the debrief that I held it at the buffet for a bit too long but he knew that I was trying to get what he wanted out of the stall. After that I did the power on stall, but he wanted it in a bank which was different than what I was used to. It wasn't an issue though. He then had me do the Vmc demo, which was fine, but he said I gained a bit too much airspeed in the recovery and that I wasn't supposed to apply power on the inoperative engine after completing the recovery itself (I had to wait for him to tell me I guess). Then he had me do an emergency descent to 2500ft, but after I set it up and banked left ready to descend he stopped me and told me to go to the right, then once I rolled right and barely dropped a hundred feet he told me to stop the maneuver and roll out level. That threw me off a lot and I ended up flying along for a few seconds with the gear down until he asked me why we were flying so slow...I fixed that immediately but at this point I was just thinking man I can't seem to get in a rhythm at all in my maneuvering and I was concerned about failing the flight.

Then he proposed a situation where the left engine was on fire and asked what would I do. I verbalised what needed to be done and he said "well, ok, go ahead and do it" so I pretended to cut off the fuel selectors, and actually pulled back on the throttle, propeller, and mixture controls to shut down the engine. Then I went through the secure engine checklist and he had me airstart the engine. The engine airstarted and he had me fly towards a nearby airport where I would practice a couple of landings. We were about 25 miles out and he asked me when I would contact the tower. I said that I usually contact them about 12 miles out, but he asked why won't I do it earlier? I brought up that this tower's radar coverage doesn't go out this far so they wouldn't see us. He then made a point to me that I should do it earlier because we are talking to let other aircraft know we are in the area since we aren't going to possibly collide with the control tower. It was a valid point so I'll carry that with me for the future, but I clarified why I mentioned the radar coverage in the debrief because I've heard the tower controller there tell a pilot who called in one day that he shouldn't have bothered calling in that far out since they can't see him anyway.

So, I contacted the tower at 12 miles out and was told to report when at 5 miles on a straight in final for the runway. As I got to about 6 miles out the examiner killed an engine again, so I went through the jingle and got myself stabilised, reported at 5 miles, and landed the airplane on the 1000ft markers. It was a really good landing since I came down very softly on centerline. I wouldn't say it was quite a 'greased' landing because I've barely flown recently, but it was very close to it. Every time I've landed this airplane it has always been to a full stop with a taxi back before taking off again, but the examiner wanted me to do touch and go's, so I was very smooth (and careful) with the throttles as I powered on and climbed back into the pattern. He then asked me to do a short field landing, which was another good landing on the 1000ft markers followed with the touch and go and departure back home. I contacted the approach controller and he asked me to squawk ident, which I did, but since I didn't reply immediately before hitting ident the examiner got onto me a little bit that I should acknowledge it first over the radio then hit the button instead of tying up the radio while the approach controller waits for my reply. While coming in to the home airport I was configured for final approach at about 800ft above the ground when he cut an engine again, so I went through the jingle again, but without raising the gear and flaps, and landed softly on the runway centerline with the remaining engine.

I taxied off the runway, parked, and shut down the airplane when he shook my hand and said congratulations for passing the checkride. The flight lasted only 1.2 hours but it definitely felt longer. It was quite a relief for me because I wasn't very impressed with how I flew today since I didn't seem to complete answers to questions or maneuvers before feeling like I was being cut off while doing so. Also, the last time I flew was on the 20th April, and the last time before that was the 25th March...so I flew only once in about 5 weeks leading up to this checkride. During the flight it just felt like I was being thrown off my rhythm a lot, and this made it a very different experience to the examiner I had for my private pilot checkride. In the debrief the examiner surprised me though and said it was an excellent checkride, so he had nothing to really critique me on, but he joked to me that the best pilots are humble so don't get a big head over it. There is no chance of that though since I was very critical of my flying today but kept it to myself to avoid sounding like I was whinging. He mentioned that my landings and communications were excellent. On my landings he was very pleased with the attitude of the airplane and how I kept the nose up, and added that my flying is a good reflection on my instructor. One funny thing he said towards the end was that there are four types of pilots who you can tell by their voice on the radio: Student pilots, private pilots, commercial pilots, and scared pilots. He said I was at the commercial pilot level 95% of the time which is very good to see (I'm guessing the 5% is the 'ident' moment and not contacting ATC early enough to his liking).

That was a long write up so I'll finish up by saying that I'm just relieved I finally got the multi-engine rating done. Having such a long break between my four flights for this checkride was on my mind a bit, but I came through and I can't complain about that. The weather next week is all rain and storms so it's going to be awesome flying the instrument phase! :D

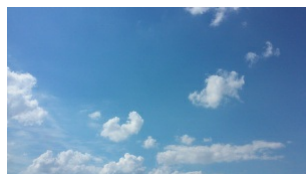
- Requiem (Total hours - 110.3)

Day 101 - Day & Night Cross Country

Tue, 05 May 2015 20:44:14, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

Yesterday afternoon I began my flying for the instrument phase in the multi-engine airplane with a "six pack" of analog instruments instead of the fancy glass cockpit one. The first flight was a cross country that took about 2 hours each way. I arrived at the destination before sunset and departed later on to fly the way home at night time. Just like the day before on my checkride, it was really nice to see a sky that was not grey and overcast for a change before we departed:



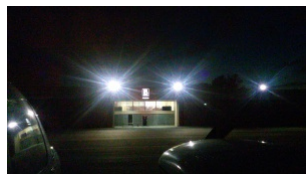
This flight, like future ones in this phase, involved an IFR flight plan so I had to get my IFR clearance after I started the engines and turned the radios on. This clearance gives me the information/permission I need to take off using the IFR flight plan plus it begins my communication with Air Traffic Control. When flying IFR you are always in contact with ATC, and as you fly along your route you are passed along to other controllers on different radio frequencies as you enter their area of responsibility. The flight to our destination was uneventful. As we neared the destination though there was an aircraft flying VFR (visually) in the area as I was descending down for a visual approach to the airport. ATC pointed it out, and as after I finished transmitting that I was looking for the traffic I spotted off my 11 o'clock...queue my instructor saying "damnit" since I beat him to the punch again :-)) I kept my eye on it as it looked like he was doing steep turn practice, but then he rolled out of it and it looked as if he remained stationary while I was looking at him. Since he was getting bigger it meant that he was heading directly towards us a couple of miles away. ATC asked if we still had him in sight, which I did, so I steepened my descent a little bit to maintain visual separation. He ended up turning away from us and flying off so he was no longer a factor.

I could see the airport as we approached because it was a large cleared area compared to the surroundings, but I had trouble seeing the runway I was supposed to land on due to it's angle. I knew where it was supposed to be and my instructor asked me how I was approaching it. From my position I was aiming to basically come in at a 45 degree for the final turn. As I came in closer to the airport the runway became more visible and I was set up nicely for that turn, so I flew in and touched down softly on the main wheels but I let the nosewheel down a bit early for my liking.

After we got out and secured the airplane the plan was to go to this place my instructor likes where the make "Po' boys" which are a type of sandwich. The airport gave us a car to drive so we took that and went off to find the shop but when we got there it was closed, so we went back to the airport and asked the front desk if anywhere else near by made them. With a new address in we left for it and picked up a Po' boy. I only had this once before over Christmas when my mum was out visiting and really liked it, and this one didn't disappoint either (the gravy was real nice with the chips). I never normally take photos of food but figured I would in this case to post in this entry. (I got in trouble off my wife for getting a Po' Boy when she didn't! :-P)



After we finished eating we went back to the airport and got a move on because there was a small storm cell moving towards the airport. I was out to the airplane first and had a second before my instructor came out so I grabbed a quick photo. Night photos don't turn out very well though:



We quickly started up the airplane and my instructor received the IFR clearance while I was inputting all of the details into the systems onboard. Then I took off and headed to the first waypoint on the departure and changed frequencies to a different controller. The departure we were flying would be taking us a little bit inside of the area where rain was occurring, and the controller told us that another plane who departed before us on the same route and altitude reported it was a smooth ride. We entered the clouds and I started flying by the instruments while climbing up to 8000ft and it was pretty smooth on the way. There was the occasional turbulence but it was very light, and while I wasn't looking outside I could definitely hear the rain on the windscreen which was pretty cool. It was interesting flying in this because there were different stages of darkness as we were flying along. Sometimes it was a light grey as the landing lights shone in front of us, but other times it would become a dark grey/black colour. After the climb we leveled out at 8000ft and continued along for a while without much turbulence and then it picked up a little bit followed by the airplane entering an updraft. When this happened the vertical speed indicator increased and the airplane started climbing quickly. I reduced power, kept the plane's wings level, and rode it out to about 8600ft, but then the plane dropped sharply causing me to slide backwards in my seat then upwards. The top of my headset (over my head) hit the roof of the plane so the headset was then pushed off my head and into my lap. My instructor immediately took over so I could sort that out. I checked my lap belt and it wasn't tight enough so I tightened it up a lot more, put my headset back on, and let my instructor manage the airplane through this turbulence. My instructor had me ask ATC how far out we were from exiting this weather. We were about 2-3 miles out at this point, and when the turbulence calmed down a bit I took the controls back. My instructor was laughing at me being launched during the turbulence because he's noted to me about how I always do the lap belt tight even in conditions where turbulence

wouldn't be a factor. I think it was just a matter of being in the dark and in a rush to get airborne. While he was laughing ATC asked us if the ride was smooth, and my instructor managed to choke out "yeah for the most part, except for that last minute or so.."

The rest of the flight was uneventful, apart from seeing everything lit up at night...which is a simply *awesome* sight! On the way back my instructor was wondering where an airport nearby was as he couldn't see it. I pointed out the rotating beacon flashing a white and green light but he couldn't see it, so he said here's another way to find it. He tuned in the frequency for the airport and hit the transmit button several times. As the pilot's reading this would know, the airport's lighting system came on and it was easy to see now ;-) Our home airport's tower was unmanned though by the time we got home (about 11pm) so I had to make the calls of my positions on the advisory frequency before coming in for the landing. I landed softly again but I let the nosewheel down too early again. My instructor said it was a great landing except for that last bit.

Flying both at night in instrument and visual conditions was a great experience... :)

- Requiem (Total hours = 114.4)

Day 102-103 - Instrument Flights #1 & #2

Wed, 06 May 2015 21:57:06, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

I'm an entry behind due to getting back late due to the previous flight, but I should be able to catch up tonight.

Flight #1 (5 May) - This flight yesterday was in the glass cockpit multi engine airplane and was the first instrument instructional flight (it also counted as a cross country). The clouds weren't quite low enough to make the full approaches in actual instrument conditions, so I wore the Foggles for the majority of the flight.

The first leg involved flying out to an airport just over the border for an instrument approach using the GPS. It was an "LPV RNAV GPS" so it is considered a precision approach similar to an ILS, which is only possible because it uses the GPS on the plane combined with other stations on the ground that supplement the GPS signal to make it a lot more accurate. On this approach the controller talking to us lost radar coverage, so as we came inbound to land we had to let him know. I didn't actually land at this airport though and ended up making the missed approach, and thankfully I remembered to hit the "expensive button" (remember: the one that can fail checkrides if you forget to press it) to change the approach in the system to become the missed approach.

To continue on the second leg we cancelled our IFR flight plan and picked up another one so we could continue flying under IFR towards an airport near home for another approach using the ILS there. On these approaches I had trouble keeping on/above the glideslope because I just couldn't find a sweet spot for the trim and power settings once I extended the landing gear and flaps. My goal on these precision approaches is to fly the glideslope with a descent rate of about 500ft/min, but I was fluctuating between 200-700 while falling below the glideslope then catching it again. I just wish I could have had more stable approaches. There was some turbulence too which added to the problem but I made a nice landing in the end. It ended up being a full stop landing so I could receive the IFR clearance on the ground before taking off and heading home. The flight home was another ILS and this one was much better. There was a bit less turbulence though so it seemed to make it a bit easier to remain on or above the glideslope consistently.

Flight #2 (6 May) - Today's flight was in the six pack (analog instruments) multi-engine airplane and involved performing non-precision approaches with the weather being about the same as it was yesterday, so I would be wearing the Foggles. There was turbulence again and the clouds were scattered/broken about 3000-4000ft so we took off under VFR and not IFR so we could fly without needing directions from ATC everywhere.

The first approach I made was a DME Arc. If you remember from my simulator entry about DME Arcs it is basically a long circular arc at a constant radius from the airport to let you make the approach to land. I hadn't thought about these for a while but I did brief the approach and begin flying it correctly. The arc itself was a left turning arc from West to South (roughly) and the winds were blowing from the South, so initially I started being pushed away from the 20nm radius I was trying to maintain (out to 20.4) but as I continued turning on the arc I accounted for the wind and brought the radius back in to 20nm. After completing the arc I was inbound to complete a circling approach, but unlike the precision approaches there is no glideslope to follow so I dropped down in altitude and tried to maintain it until the missed approach point. Just like yesterday though I had problems maintaining the constant altitude and descent rate once the gear came down and went below the minimum by 100ft on my descent before recovering. I took off the Foggles when instructed and completed the circling approach, only extending the flaps once I was ready to descend for landing. I didn't do a landing here though and instead completed a missed approach before heading to an airport nearby for another non-precision approach with the Foggles on.

This second approach wasn't a DME arc...it was a VOR/DME approach. This VOR/DME approach doesn't need the circling approach at the end because it brings you within 30 degrees of the runway to let you land straight in, and on this approach I flew much better. My instructor gave me a holding instruction at the final approach fix which I completed correctly, then once I was flying inbound from that fix (waypoint) I reported doing so to ATC. I did maintain altitude accurately on the step down fixes for this approach, but I was a bit slow in initiating my descent to the first drop in altitude due to answering a question my instructor asked me (distracted). It didn't adversely affect my approach and landing but I always try to get things right so I was a bit frustrated with myself overall today. My instructor said my flight was fine but I wanted to have flown a lot better. I'm still glad to be practicing approaches in the bad weather because it makes them harder and more reflective on times when I'll be flying them for real. It should also make them easier to perform on the checkride day since that requires relatively good VFR weather.

My first impressions is that flying these approaches in the plane is more difficult than in the sim. Having flown so many sims without actual flights has had one drawback since I feel like what has happened is that the sim made me expect a massive climb rate increase when I extend the flaps. I think this might be why I've pre-emptively reduced power too much when configuring for landing and had trouble with my descent instead of keeping it higher, so I'm going to keep this in mind for my next flights to see if that helps alleviate the problem. We'll see how tomorrow's flight goes :-)

As for my instrument checkride...there is a possibility it may be on the 15th May, but the worst case means it could be on the 27th May. The examiners don't seem to have much availability right now so I don't know exactly when it will be yet. Depending on what happens will determine how my flying schedule will be because I don't want to be waiting 2 weeks with no flying before the instrument checkride. I do plan on taking my IFR written and my flight instructor instrument written exam on Friday though, so I should have a couple of test results to report on soon.

- Requiem (Total hours = 118.4)

Day 104 - Instrument Flight #3

Thu, 07 May 2015 20:17:35, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

Today was a much better flying performance from me on the approaches. The clouds were a mix of broken and overcast between 1000-6000ft with some light rain, so it made it a perfect flight for me to have some actual instrument time. It is a lot easier to fly in the clouds than with the Foggles on because I am able to sit more naturally instead of a bit hunched over trying to hide the outside world from view.

The neat thing about taking off in the rain is that the rain initially beads on the windscreen, which obscures the view a little bit because we don't have a windscreen wiper. After throttling up and increasing speed to take off though the airflow acts as a wiper and the view clears up nicely. After taking off and turning onto the initial heading I entered IMC pretty quickly, so the airplane was enveloped in the clouds and I started flying solely by the instruments. I was flying a departure route which I followed well, but as we were flying along and handed off to a different controller they cleared us direct to the destination. We wanted to practice flying the entire route leading up to the approach though so I asked the controller if we could fly all of it instead and he cleared us to do that.

Along the way in the clouds my instructor randomly pulled back a throttle to simulate an engine failure on me. That caught me by surprise and although I went through the jingle correctly I said I would feather the propeller and cut off the mixture instead of troubleshooting since we were above 3000ft AGL. My bad. He killed an engine again later on and this time I caught it with the whole troubleshooting thing so I learned from that mistake at least. On the way in to the airport for our landing for the ILS approach, the glideslope was now active and was lowering for me to intercept it. As it comes down I start the gear down before landing checklist, so I extend the landing gear, wait for three green lights to show the gear is down, then I move my hands back to the fuel selectors to check they are in the ON position...my instructor kills an engine again, so I go through the jingle but I do the right thing and keep the gear down instead of bringing it back up (as per the jingle) because I am coming in to land. I also elected to not put in flaps yet due to having the engine out at this point, but I did extend them closer to the airport in order to increase drag and bring my speed down to the recommended approach speed closer to the airport. I don't know if it was because I kept in mind what I did wrong yesterday or if it's because I was in the glass cockpit airplane, but something was different. I stuck to the glideslope and localiser perfectly all the way down until we broke through the clouds. (the landing was very nice too :))

This was a full stop taxi back so after landing I picked up the clearance and input the required information into the airplane systems while my instructor taxied back to the runway. We took off again and back we went into the clouds for the return leg back home. The weather was looking good to make an ILS approach with back home because the clouds were lower now with rain again. Coming back to the home airport we were flying an arrival route for a little bit before being vectored by ATC to set us up on the ILS approach. Again, while doing the gear down before landing checklist my instructor killed an engine again while in the clouds. I reacted properly and flew bang on the glideslope and localiser again on the remaining engine to make a nice stable approach. Unfortunately on the approach we broke through the cloud layer about 1000ft above the minimum altitude for it so I had to put the Foggles back on for the remainder until my instructor told me to go visual. There was a direct crosswind on this landing and I kept the crab in until I was over the threshold. Right then I transitioned into the slip, flared, and touched down perfectly. My instructor commented that I saved it in just in time, but to me it feels more natural to transition like that towards the end of final rather than up above 200ft AGL :)

Like I mentioned before, this flight was way better than yesterday's effort and I was very happy by the end :) I also have a confirmed day for my instrument checkride. The earliest possible date ended up being the 26th May. I still have 11 flights left to fly for the instrument phase so that should work out well enough to make me good for the checkride provided the weather on the day is up to scratch

and I pass the checkride. I don't want to be stuck due to bad weather when the 26th comes around with no flights remaining. As I mentioned before I'll be taking two instrument written exams tomorrow, so let's hope I have good scores to post in the next entry :-)

- Requiem (Total hours = 120.4)

Day 105 - IFR Exams

Fri, 08 May 2015 21:02:06, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

Today was a quiet day, so I don't have much to write about...but I managed to get both of my IFR written exams done. I took the "Instrument Rating Airplane" (IRA) test first, which is the test I need to pass to take my instrument checkride. I did pretty well with a 95%, but I missed three questions due to silly mistakes.

The second test I took was the "Certified Flight Instructor Instrument" (CFII) test which is the test I need to take my final checkride of the program to be an instructor for instruments. On this test I did better with 98% and missed just the one question, which I would have had correct if I didn't change my answer right at the end. Doh! The reason I took the CFII test at the same time as the IRA is because the questions are essentially from the same test bank but the CFII had 50 questions and the IRA had 60.

With those out of the way I can concentrate on the instrument checkride oral until the 26th. I'll be taking Saturday *and* Sunday off this weekend because with only limited flights remaining until the 26th I don't want to burn through them all and have nothing left. The plan is to space them out accordingly and follow the weather pattern to see how it progresses leading up to my checkride. If it's looking good I could continue flying as normal but if it's not looking good then I can keep a couple of flights in reserve in case this checkride is delayed.

- Requiem (Total hours = 120.4)

Day 106 - Instrument Flight #4

Mon, 11 May 2015 19:35:17, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

Today's flight involved another flight where the destination was greater than 50nm (so it's a cross country). Although I was cleared for a full departure I was pretty much vectored outbound by ATC then on towards the initial approach fix (waypoint) for the GPS approach to the airport. It was a nice day for instrument flying because the clouds were low, so I spent a lot of time in the clouds today :)

About 15 minutes out from the initial approach fix my instructor simulated the failure of my digitised instruments displayed on the primary screens in front of me. I was in the clouds by this point so I changed my instrument scanning to use the backup analog instruments since the primary screens were dimmed down. It wasn't that much different but I did get a little bit of spatial disorientation at one point where I felt as if banking to the left made me think the plane was level. It's a strange sensation but by focusing on the instruments it goes away after a bit.

As I mentioned, it was a GPS in to the airport and I flew it pretty well. It was slightly modified though because I was expecting to land on one runway, but ATC said there was a large flock of birds on the runway so they instructed me to do a circling approach to the adjacent runway as I approached the runway I was flying the GPS approach for. That was pretty easy since the other runway intersected 50 degrees apart and I put it down pretty nicely. As we were taxiing off the runway and back towards the active runway to take off again back home a C-130 Hercules came in low over the airport on what a circling approach of his own. It looked very cool :)

Leaving this airport I was in the clouds again thankfully for a good portion of the flight back. I was expecting to fly the arrival, but ATC vectored me to intercept the localiser for the ILS approach nearly 30 miles out. I intercepted it and just before I was about to do my gear down before landing checklist my instructor pulled an engine on me. I handled that and flew the single engine approach under the Foggles. I could have flown this approach a bit better as I drifted left and flew faster than I wanted to initially. Since I was a bit fast I levelled out a couple of times to bleed off airspeed which made me go high on the glideslope. The last portion of my approach was stable though so I sorted it out in the end. After we landed my instructor said my landing was really great, but the landing doesn't make up for the approach lol He said I flew fine overall though. I'm getting to be a bit more fluid in doing things now when flying IFR, so I'm seeing good progress :)

Later on in the day we did some IFR ground with another student along with some online quizzes. I think the next flight will be on emergency procedures.

- Requiem (Total hours = 122.7)

Day 106 - No Flight Today

Tue, 12 May 2015 20:57:12, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

Just a short post to let you know I didn't fly today. My instructor flew a cross country with a student in the morning and although I was scheduled to fly at 1200 he went with another student (also studying instruments) since there is a chance the weather may be good enough on Thursday for his checkride. Not a problem for me since I have more days left until my checkride than I do flights. I just did some self-study today reading through the regulations and aeronautical handbook (FAR/AIM). I will be flying tomorrow though, so if I get another emergency on that flight I'll be sure to explain the checklist 'jingle' I go through for an engine out procedure :-)

- Requiem (Total hours = 122.7)

Day 107 - Instrument Flight #5

Wed, 13 May 2015 20:06:18, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

I flew another couple of approaches today with a routine flight. It was basically a straight shot out to the destination and then back again. There is about 2 hours allowed for these flights and we completed it in 1.7 so it went by pretty fast. The time taken doesn't matter in the long term as I will be flying all the allocated hours regardless so it will even out. The weather was a lot better than we thought it would be today, but there was still plenty of cloud to hide in so I logged about half my time today as actual instrument time vs simulated with the Foggles on. The bases of the clouds weren't that low so I wore Foggles on the final stages of each approach but on the cruising portions of the flights I didn't have to wear them the entire time. We did decide to take off earlier though due to how we thought the weather was turning out, but it wasn't really that bad and it wasn't until late afternoon that the rain really started coming down.

The first approach was an ILS and my instructor pulled an engine on me so I went through the emergency 'jingle' (I wrote something similar to this on Day 88). This emergency checklist is modified a little when landing though.

- 1) Maintain directional control of the plane
- 2) Increase mixture (fuel), propeller RPM, and throttle to maximum
- 3) Flaps up/Gear up (but since I'm coming in to land I leave the gear down)
- 4) Identify the "dead" engine (it's related to which foot is not on a rudder pedal)
- 5) Verify the dead engine by closing its throttle
- 6) Then since I was coming in to land I *simulated* feathering the propeller and cutting the mixture off (This would reduce drag from the propeller and shut the engine down)

I seemed to have a bit of a brain fart going through this as I did it slower than usual for some reason. I think I was preoccupied with getting ready to fly the approach and reporting to ATC at a certain waypoint that was coming up. I reported when inbound and as I flew along I intercepted the glideslope, extended the landing gear, and began flying along the glideslope and localiser towards the runway. I weaved a bit left and right and up and down as there was some turbulence, but while my flying wasn't that bad it wasn't that great either so I wasn't entirely happy with my approach.

The flight back was smooth in comparison and we were expecting rain to be coming down hard at the home airport. We had a laugh at one point though when I was responding to a regional approach controller's instructions. After I answered ATC about a vectored heading there was a long pause on the radio before someone just transmitted my instructor's name. I didn't recognise the voice over

the radio but my instructor did. I know who it was though as he recently finished the program as a CFI and is working for another training company. He recognised the callsign or my accent, so it was just funny to hear a single name ring out through silence.

My final approach for the ILS at home was very good. I kept it straight and on glideslope the whole time and then did a nice crosswind landing as well, so I was quite happy with that one :-D For the remainder of the day I sat in with the other IFR student and my instructor to do some ground school for practice. I feel like my ground knowledge is pretty good so I'll be well prepared for the oral when it comes around.

- Requiem (Total hours = 124.4)

Day 108 - No Flight Today

Thu, 14 May 2015 20:01:12, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

I chose not to fly today since I have six IFR related flights left (+ a night takeoffs/landings flight) and with the way the weather has been going I want to wait until Monday to begin flying these last six because by mid next week I'll have an idea if the weather is going to be good for my checkride or not. I'd rather be flying more often leading up to the checkride than spread them out.

In place of my flight today I went over what kind of things I'm expected to do on my instrument checkride (in the simulator) with my instructor. It starts off with obtaining a clearance and flying a departure, but the departure leg finished off by figuring out some holding entries followed by actually flying a hold. After the hold practice I flew three approaches, a circling approach (VOR/DME), an ILS approach, and a RNAV (GPS) approach. The circling approach was easy and on the ILS approach my instructor had me fly it on a single engine which went fine, but on the RNAV approach my instructor covered up my attitude indicator and HSI to make me fly it as a partial panel approach. That made it more difficult and I wasn't flying it very well. I felt like I was going off course although I was maintaining the step-down minimum altitudes and instead of landing my instructor had me execute a missed approach which were both fine. It was a pain flying this partial panel approach using the compass in the simulator, but when I flew this same approach (with the panel out) in the actual plane the other day it was a lot easier. Then on the way back to the home airport my instructor made me do another partial panel RNAV approach again to practice. It was better that time at least, but it's something I need to practice more I think.

Tomorrow will be another IFR checkride sim flight + ground school.

- Requiem (Total hours = 124.4)

Day 109 - Self study + Sim

Fri, 15 May 2015 21:00:38, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

As I mentioned I chose not to fly until Monday so I spent the morning doing ground review on my own. Since my instructor flew a cross country with another student I was left to my own devices in the latter half of the day so I decided to boot up the simulator myself to practice.

I set my plane as already airborne to practice approaches I will be doing on my checkride, so the first was VOR/DME circling approach. Additionally, I planned on making this a missed approach so I set the cloud base below the minimum altitude prescribed to force me to go missed, but not so low as to force misses for other approaches I wanted to practice. The circling approach went well, but obviously I didn't see the runway so I flew the missed and the holding pattern required.

Then I moved the airplane so it was set up for the ILS approach, but on this approach I failed my engine and flew the approach on a single engine which I did successfully down to the landing. Then I moved the airplane again for an RNAV GPS approach, and on this one I failed the attitude indicator, HSI, and turn coordinator. I kept it straight within about a quarter scale deflection on the approach and maintained the step downs in altitude pretty well. After that I set up at the home airport for a standard ILS approach which was easy enough, but when I reset it again I figured I would try something I saw in the software regarding failures. I set the glideslope antenna to fail at a specific height above the ground. This way I started out flying the approach as precision, but once that antenna failed I had to revert to non precision, meaning I was no longer following the glideslope but step downs in altitude. Just something different I thought would try. My instructor usually uses sticky notes to cover instruments so I might suggest failures in this way so I need to detect the failure.

Although flying the sim myself like this took the element of surprise away it was interesting figuring out how to set everything up, briefing the approaches to myself, considering ATC calls with vectoring and frequency changes, and flying the approaches while self evaluating along the way, trying to keep in mind how I was doing overall. I have the weekend off again so I'll be doing some light reading this weekend and start flying again Monday. Hopefully next week a good weather forecast will develop for my checkride date.

- Requiem (Total hours = 124.4)

Day 110 - IFR Cross Country + VFR Night Cross Country

Tue, 19 May 2015 21:30:09, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

I had a long session of flying yesterday over two flights.

We left in the afternoon on an IFR cross country first where I had to fly under the Foggles the majority of the time. The flight involved three legs where I stopped at two different airports before landing at the destination using a VOR approach. Initially ATC cleared me for a visual approach but I requested the VOR and got it which was good. After landing there my instructor had me practice getting the IFR clearance using a mobile phone instead of the radio for something different. So I called the briefer to try and get it, but it turns out they were really busy and he transferred me to someone in clearance delivery and I picked up my clearance from him. It doesn't sound that bad, but when you are strapped into the plane, engine running, when it is hot and humid outside the 10 or so minutes I spent on hold felt like a lot longer. Yes...I still felt like I was living the dream sweating my butt off at that point :-P

We finally got the clearance with a "clearance void" time of 4 minutes and took off. This provision means I have to take off within 4 minutes or else my clearance is no longer valid. Anyway, in to the second airport I pre-empted ATC clearing me visually so I asked the approach controller before being handed off to the next one for a localiser approach. An ILS uses the localiser and a glideslope, so in a localiser approach I only get the lateral guidance...no glideslope. This approach was interesting because I was flying the profile on final at about 90kts when ATC tells me to keep my speed higher. As it turns out there was a B737 Southwest jet sequenced behind me on final I needed to keep my distance from. My instructor said that I better make the first taxiway or else that Southwest will probably go around. It wasn't a problem though, I made a nice crosswind landing and as I was taxiing the Southwest jet landed on my left. Very cool to see it up that close. I'll be doing that myself someday :-D

Then we left that airport for our destination and it was nearing sunset when we landed, which was an RNAV GPS approach where my instructor failed my heading indicator by covering it up. I flew that approach pretty well and it was another crosswind landing that had some extra gusts thrown into it. We only had maybe 30 or 40 minutes to kill until sunset, but there was a large storm moving towards the airport. The problem being that the flight back at night needed to be VFR, so if the conditions turned IFR before we left we would need to wait until it passed before leaving. We went out to the plane and you could see the dark sky with lightning and thunder to the south of us, and it was just starting to sprinkle rain. The runway faced south, so we had to takeoff to the south and turn back north to move away from the storm. After that we flew east and picked up VFR flight following all the way back home between there and our stops. Flying at night is just so much smoother. It was also very cool to see the lightning show off the right wing as it closed in on where we just were. If we were 10 minutes slower we would have had to wait a while.

Getting near home I was able to land at a couple of new airports I hadn't flown into yet. One of them had a tower still operating and there were a couple of FedEx jets parked. It was fun landing here because this place had two runways parallel to each other. I knew which one I was cleared to land on but even still the runway was lit up like a Christmas tree while the wasn't so I couldn't miss it anyway :-)

The runway didn't seem that big until I was flaring to touchdown. It just seemed to get massively wider and I felt very small taxiing around back to takeoff!

So then we took off from there and landed at a nearby airport with its tower closed before heading home to land (tower also closed). Surprisingly there were a couple of aircraft using the pattern here so we slotted in and landed without a hitch. These legs made for long flights! 3 hours out and 3 hours back, so I didn't get home until after midnight. I'm pretty tired today which is why this entry is a day late :-)

Requiem (Total hours = 130.5)

Day 111-112 - No Flying

Wed, 20 May 2015 21:30:56, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

Not much to report on the last couple of days. I've just been doing my own study and simulator work to prepare for the upcoming instrument checkride on Tuesday. I was going to fly today but that didn't happen due to a student taking his instrument checkride today instead of next week and a new student taking his first flight with my instructor. The student passed his instrument checkride so if I pass mine next week then we should be flying our cross country flights together which would be great. The rest of the week through Monday I'll be flying each day so I'll be ready and looking forward to taking my own checkride :)

Tomorrow morning the weather is supposed to be good for actual instrument flying (ie - low clouds/rain) so tomorrow's post will have something more interesting for you to read about :)

- Requiem (Total hours = 130.5)

Day 113 - No Flight Today

Thu, 21 May 2015 21:20:10, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

I didn't get to fly today as planned. Our area and the airports I wanted to go to for approaches were covered with plenty of lightning and cumulonimbus clouds (storm clouds) so we didn't takeoff. This weather doesn't seem to have an end in sight with high chances of thunderstorms on the day of my checkride and also well into next week :-(I'm hopeful to still take the oral portion on Tuesday though, and my instructor is trying to plan ahead to have another date for me in the first week of June as a backup in case Tuesday's weather doesn't work out.

Instead my instructor went over crew procedures I need to know for cross country flying with another student after I pass the instrument checkride. Unfortunately my flying partner won't be the other student who just passed his checkride as he heads off on his cross country flights Monday, so mine will likely be with someone I haven't met at another location.

The crew procedure information was mostly a review of what we should know by the end of the instrument phase. Things like limitations of the airplane such as no flying into icing conditions, how we should find out about how the expected weather conditions for the flight, calculating performance charts, emergencies, diversions, etc... The new information was related to how the pilot and copilot are supposed to work together on these flights. Basically, the pilot in the left seat is responsible for flying the airplane and initiating checklist items while the pilot in the right seat is responsible for talking on the radio, making altitude callouts when on an approach, and ensuring the checklists are completed correctly. For example this could be accomplished by reading each checklist item for the pilot to act on then verify it was done.

It became slightly confusing when discussing how to log the flight time in a logbook though. The pilot in the left seat uses the Foggles after reaching 1000ft AGL and takes them off on approach at 1000ft AGL, so he is wearing them for the majority of the flight. During this time the pilot in the right seat acts as the "safety pilot" of the one flying the airplane and is responsible for keeping a visual lookout outside. This procedure means both pilots will log pilot in command (PIC) time, but only the pilot in the left seat can log cross country time, instrument time, and the approaches made.

I'm definitely going to be flying tomorrow though! Freaky weather notwithstanding :)

- Requiem (Total hours =130.5)

Day 114 - Instrument Flight #6

Sat, 23 May 2015 19:43:14, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

(This was supposed to have been posted last night, but I hit the wrong button...sorry!)

Hi everyone,

I did get to fly today (yay!) but my flying was average. The theme for today was emergency procedures so I didn't fly any normal approaches but ones with aircraft failures included.

I flew an IFR departure and had a few minutes of flight inside the cloud layer, but after climbing up to cruising altitude we were out of the clouds so I had to put the Foggles on. A few minutes after flying with them on my instructor took the controls and asked me to bring up the approach procedure for the airport we were going to. I looked down to my iPad and selected it, then my instructor just says "recover." He put the plane in a nose high banked attitude and I quickly recovered from it. Having the unusual attitude sprung on me like that was very surprising but I recovered correctly which was good. The problem now was that my inner ear was thrown off so when the plane was level it felt like I was climbing and banked. It took a few minutes for this to sort itself and I kept catching myself letting the plane not stay level until my inner ear was balanced again.

The first approach at the airport was an RNAV GPS, but the way ATC vectored me towards the initial approach fix (first waypoint of the approach in this case) meant that I couldn't continue on the approach directly and instead had to execute a holding procedure turn so I could come back around on the final heading smoothly. I briefed what I would be doing (hold entry + precision approach) and a few minutes later my instructor covered the HSI and the attitude indicator to make it a partial panel non-precision approach because I lost the glideslope shown by the HSI. I made the holding turn fine and came back in lined up in my final approach course, but as I began the before landing checklist (starting with my hand moving off the throttle to extend the landing gear) my instructor pulls an engine on me. I recite and act out the engine emergency jingle, but I end up well off course (past 0.3nm) by the time that is sorted and had to fix it quickly. I did fix it but my approach overall wasn't very stable. After that he told me to go visual and take off the Foggles, and from this point it wouldn't be a stable descent for landing so I went missed. Full power, climbing, gear up, pretend to tell ATC, then press the expensive button to suspend the approach for the missed approach point.

The second approach was another RNAV GPS at different airport and this one was much better than the first. Again, the HSI and attitude indicator failed, but he didn't cut an engine this time. I flew my step down fixes correctly and remained aligned with the approach path except for right near the end when my instructor asked me a question, so I had to check the approach plate for the answer and on those seconds I lost my heading a bit. I made a nice crosswind landing though and made the first taxiway, which was good because there was another right behind me, so if I didn't then he would probably have had to go around. We were running short of time by this point so we cancelled the last IFR leg back home and flew back VFR. I wanted to make the first taxiway so I setup for a short field landing. The crosswind was a bit stronger and more direct so I came in a bit faster. I touched down nicely on centerline for the crosswind short field landing (upwind wheel, then the other two) but I applied the brakes a bit too hard and they squealed for a split second. I eased off immediately and resolved for the second taxiway instead.

A bad flight from me in some ways but good in others today.

- Requiem (Total hours =132.4)

Day 115 - Instrument Flight #7

Sat, 23 May 2015 20:04:58, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

I flew in actual clouds today for a while and didn't have to wear the Foggles for as long which was a nice change. My instructor was going to have a busy day so we got off to an early start this morning while the clouds were low but the storms hadn't arrived yet. This flight was a straight shot out to an airport and back, so on the way out I started off at 3000ft within the cloud layer but after a while ATC cleared us up to 5000ft so we were in and out of the clouds a little bit so I didn't need to wear the Foggles. It was rather bright up here though and I was subconsciously squinting my eyes to accommodate since I wasn't wearing my sunglasses. My instructor had a laugh and asked what I was doing because I looked like I was flying very intensely due to that and the fact that the plane wasn't budging off its heading or altitude. I had him take the controls for a second so I could grab my sunglasses and put them on. It's easy to forget putting them on because under the overcast clouds it's pretty dark.

The approach to this airport was an ILS, so I followed ATC instructions and briefed the approach, but as I was doing the before landing checklist my instructor pulls an engine on me. A few seconds pass, I go through the engine out jingle, and I'm off heading so I needed to correct for that. I corrected it and remained at altitude to intercept the glideslope but I wasn't happy with how I let my heading slip again because of the engine out. I did remain on glideslope for this approach but I came in a bit too fast and I didn't put flaps in once I went visual at the decision height. I just didn't want to mess with my approach at that point because it was pretty stable so I continued with a flapless landing that turned out fine.

After taxiing back to the active runway I picked up the IFR clearance back home and we took off. On the way back I was at 6000ft so I ended up wearing the Foggles pretty much the whole way back except for when I began my descent into the home airport and re-entered the clouds for the approach. This approach was much better. I had the engine out situation again and I focused on maintaining my heading this time and intercepted the glideslope at the right altitude and started coming down. I was making minor corrections here and there but the approach was very stable all the way down, and this time when I went visual I decided to extend flaps before landing. The landing was a real greasejob (ie - very soft) and I'm sure the tower controller who gave me taxiing instructions was wondering what the noise was in the background as I acknowledged him. My instructor was happy with my approach/landing and was clapping :) It was a nice way to finish the flight. One thing I need to keep in mind is that although I am actioning items correctly my instructor said I need to be more vocal with what I'm doing for the checkride so the DPE can be sure of what I'm doing.

I only have a couple of days left until the checkride so I hope I fly well enough on the day. I'm trying hard to not get my hopes up about Tuesday's weather...but the forecast changed from 60% chance of storms to become partly cloudy...so fingers and toes crossed the weather holds off enough to let me take the checkride.

- Requiem (Total hours =134.4)

Day 116 - Instrument Checkride Review #1

Sun, 24 May 2015 19:46:15, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

For this review flight we needed VFR weather because it replicates the instrument checkride Tuesday. While waiting for the weather to clear up enough we went over oral review and sorted out the paperwork for my application to make sure all the flight hour requirements were met.

Although my preflight and departure was fine, the flight got off to a rough start with the holding entries at a waypoint. After encountering a problem trying to input the heading for the hold I just had a brain fart and wasn't going to turn correctly back for the inbound leg. I also forgot to time a couple of legs and didn't make the required radio call for the entry and leaving it. After doing them in the sim with no real problems when I went through the same motions in this plane the system didn't react as I was used to (differs in plane vs the simulator) and trying to fix it simply stumped me as to how to input my holding direction. My instructor made me do another one and I still wasn't really sure of what I was doing so I was annoyed at myself and felt my confidence drop off.

After the holds he vectored me towards the airport for my practice approaches and I set up for a circling VOR/ DME approach. This approach required step downs in altitude, but when I called ATC inbound at the final approach fix I didn't begin my descent at the same time. From then on I flew the step downs I altitude correctly and circled to land. The landing itself was perfect, greased in on centerline. I then taxied back to the runway and took off for the next approach. My instructor just said "geez you land this thing as if it's the Archer, you should be able to impress the DPE if you do that on the checkride" (the Archer is the plane I did my single engine private training in)

The second approach was an RNAV GPS, and before I made the procedure turn to head inbound my instructor turned off my display, making me rely on the GPS unit and my backup instruments. This approach changed from being precision to non precision and I flew it perfectly. I maintained altitude, kept my headings, and made the right call outs on the way down to the minimum altitude. The landing was fine and I taxied back again for the next takeoff and approach.

The third approach was an ILS, and my instructor cut my engine as I was beginning the procedure turn to come inbound. I sorted that out and came inbound and this approach was perfect as well. No altitude or glideslope issues, but as I approached the decision height my instructor told me to go missed. So I went missed and remembered to hit that expensive button, and then from here we went back towards our home airport to practice another approach. I chose to practice the partial panel RNAV GPS again. There was nothing wrong with this approach either. There was a good crosswind as I came in to land and although I copped a gust of wind right when my upwind wheel touched down, I held it off and greased it in on centerline.

At the end my instructor said my last three approaches were awesome and that I should be happy as they are exactly what I'd want to do for a checkride. He could tell I was pissed off at myself about the holds though. I've practiced a few by myself this afternoon and they were fine. I think I just had an off moment there after that system confusion as I haven't had problems doing holds in ages. I feel good about my approaches, but I'll be double checking my holds again tomorrow. I'll be going in early again for my second review flight plus reviews of course, but now the weather forecast has changed from cloudy to rainy...so I hope I still get to take the checkride.

- Requiem (Total hours = 136.6)

Day 117 - No Flight Today

Mon, 25 May 2015 17:26:24, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

I was hoping to have my last review flight for the checkride but the weather said no. It started out with low lying clouds and this progressed into some serious storm activity with a few tornadoes and plenty of lightning across the area. I did fly in the simulator this morning and that was perfectly fine. I resolved my holds brain fart from yesterday so now they are back to being no problem again. After the sim I spent a few hours reading and then did some oral review with my instructor. He thinks I should wow the examiner on the oral and I don't really need the review flight, so hopefully I'll pass the checkride tomorrow. I still have six or eight hours left to fly in this instrument phase, so if I pass then I'll have some flying to get done before I head off for the cross country portion of 35 hours flight time with another student.

Although it is terrible weather right now tomorrow is looking good with it forecast to be partly cloudy/sunny with storms later in the afternoon/evening, so let's see how it goes. I feel ready and I'm looking forward to it! :-)

- Requiem (Total hours = 136.6)

Day 118 - No Checkride Today

Tue, 26 May 2015 19:50:29, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

Today was very anti-climactic...There was no rain at all so it was looking good for a while, but the clouds remained low all day and the ceiling just didn't improve enough for me to take the checkride with the required instrument approaches :(It's out of my hands again but this weather just loves toying with me it seems...This stretch of bad weather should be behind us moving into June.

I was doing review all day and I've ended up memorising the various approach profiles as I was practicing and briefing them in my head. My checkride has been rescheduled to the first week of June, but a date isn't set yet. I appreciated the consideration from the DPE today because he bumped the other checkride he was going to do and made mine a priority to get done. At least I have flights in reserve to use this time unlike what happened with my multi-engine where I was stuck for a couple of weeks and went into that checkride cold. I'll see if there is a rescheduled date when I go in tomorrow.

I was ready today but now it's back to standing by to standby until the next chance so I'll stay on top of things so I don't get rusty.

- Requiem (Total Hours = 136.6)

Day 119 - Instrument Checkride Review #2

Wed, 27 May 2015 19:36:36, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

I'm a happy camper today. The examiner for my instrument checkride asked my instructor if I wanted to do it tomorrow (of course yes), so he's coming in tomorrow morning instead of having me wait until the 5th June :-D

Once we found that out we went on a review flight in the afternoon. So just like in the simulator and previous review flight I flew a departure with a hold then on to an airport for the practice approaches. I

flew a circling VOR/DME, non-precision RNAV GPS with a system failure, and the ILS with an engine out. At our home airport I also did another RNAV GPS approach with a similar failure for extra practice since that is the hardest of the three. I did everything no problem though so I feel good about tomorrow. Just like with the other checkrides I have the oral portion first where he asks me a bunch of questions and if that is satisfactory we go out to the airplane to do the flying.

The weather is looking good enough to get it done, so fingers crossed it goes well! :-)

- Requiem (Total hours = 138.6)

Day 120 - No Checkride Today

Thu, 28 May 2015 20:25:30, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

Not much to say really. I was standing by to take my checkride but it didn't pan out. The examiner started flying over in his plane but due to the weather he turned back. There was a slight chance of doing it in the afternoon but that didn't work out either.

It may be on for tomorrow, but I doubt the weather will be good enough so I'm not having my hopes up. The skies look to be clearing next week anyway so I'm expecting to take it next Friday when it should be nice and sunny. If the worst thing I have to whinge about is a few clouds and rain getting in my way I'd say I'm pretty happy. Still very much "living the dream" at being able to do all this :-D

- Requiem (Total hours = 136.6)

Day 121 - No Checkride Today

Fri, 29 May 2015 21:22:10, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

No checkride again today. Weather wasn't good enough so I'll be taking it on the 5th June as originally planned, and the weather will be good since it's becoming sunny all next week so at least I know I'll get it done then. Next week the plan of action is to do my 10 night takeoffs and landings on Monday then my final two flights for the instrument phase on Wednesday and Thursday followed by the checkride on Friday, so I'll be flying most of next week leading up to it. After that it will be 35 hours cross country flying so I hope I get to fly to a few out of state airports.

- Requiem (Total hours = 136.6)

Day 122 - Instrument Checkride

Sun, 31 May 2015 21:43:49, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

Yesterday morning I received a text from my instructor that my examiner wanted to do my checkride today since the weather looked good. I was all for it so I went in yesterday to practice a checkride flight on the sim which went well.

Today though I went in early and hung around waiting for the examiner until my scheduled time of about midday. The first thing to do was the oral, and that went very well. It lasted an hour and I answered everything he asked of me no problem with one exception. He picked out a symbol on an approach plate for arrestor cables on a military airfield which I didn't know but surmised based on the fact it was a Naval airfield (arrestor hooks on naval aircraft). In the debrief he said he just wanted to find something I didn't know, but my oral was excellent like my private pilot one. He said he could tell I studied and knew my stuff, plus he was happy I didn't bulls*** on about what I knew or didn't know. He explained what to expect from the flight in terms of approaches and equipment failures, and also said that if I'm doing well then I'll only shoot three approaches with the last one back at home, but if I'm struggling then he will make me do an extra fourth instrument approach.

With the oral out of the way I preflighted the airplane and we hopped in it to get ready to leave. He was acting as ATC for the departure since we were simulating IFR flying (instruments) while actually flying VFR (visual) with me wearing the Foggles. So before starting the engines I received the IFR clearance from the examiner, then started the engines and input everything related to the departure in the plane's systems (VORs and radials).

After taking off I held runway heading until he began vectoring me and instructed me to join the departure. After that he gave me holding instructions. I read those back correctly and explained how I was going to enter it and suspend the departure in the flight plan. I didn't fly that hold and instead he vectored me off to the airport where I would fly my instrument approaches.

The first one was the circling VOR DME approach. The direction I was coming from meant that I needed to fly the hold here before coming back inbound. I entered the hold correctly using a teardrop entry and although normally I would descend when entering the hold, I was instructed to maintain 3000ft, which I did do but he pretended he couldn't hear me when I made the radio call as I entered the hold so I had to explain how I would troubleshoot it and when I would start the approach inbound minus radio communications. After that while still in the hold I descended down to 2400ft and was getting ready to do the before landing checklist (minus flaps), but there was a lot of traffic out there today and with another aircraft nearby on an approach I had to do another lap in the hold before coming back around and completing the approach. After crossing the final approach fix I dropped down to minimum altitude and maintained it until the examiner told me to go visual and circle for the active runway. I came in to land and did a touch and go. After I touched down the examiner took controls and took off as I put the Foggles back on and prepared for the next approach.

The next one was an RNAV GPS approach where before reaching the initial approach fix he failed my primary flight display. As a result of that failure and declaring the emergency he began vectoring me for the final approach fix instead of me flying the entire route. It took a lot of concentration from me flying with that out because my scan changes to looking at the backup altitude, attitude, and airspeed indicators on the left side of the instrument panel over to the GPS unit on the far right side, so my head was moving around a lot during this approach. To turn inbound the examiner had me demonstrate timed turns, where I start the turn, look at my watch, and stop the turn after a time has elapsed to get a relatively accurate result. A standard rate is 3 degrees per second, so I time a turn for 30 seconds I would turn 90 degrees from North to West for example. That was good and I completed the approach as a nonprecision one using step downs in altitude until I went missed and we departed the area to go home. I didn't miss that expensive button on the missed approach :-)

He said I was doing really well so as long as I don't mess up the approach at home I would pass. The problem was that as I was listening to the airport information on the radio it indicated that the ILS wasn't working. I needed to complete a precision approach as the last one for my checkride so not having it at home was a problem. The examiner confirmed the problem with ATC, so he requested the RNAV approach for that runway. However, as I brought up at approach plate to brief it I pointed out that it was only nonprecision, meaning it therefore couldn't be used to satisfy the checkride either. The examiner then said, ok, we will go to this other airport nearby to do the ILS there. The approach controller came back and said we couldn't do it because the controllers at that airport said they were too busy to let us do it there.

We ended up turning back around to the airport I did the first two approaches at and completed an RNAV GPS approach with a failed engine. He failed it a long way out and I went through the jingle correctly, but flying in the single engine for what seemed like a long way out took felt like forever coming inbound. At one point I was off maybe a quarter scale deflection at most before bringing it back to center, and I followed the glideslope down just fine until I went missed again, not missing that button, and finally heading back home. After we departed the airspace and contacted approach again he said my checkride was complete and I could take off the Foggles. I flew back home visually and set up on the downwind leg to land and he asked me if I would mind if he landed it, so he had controls and landed the airplane and taxied it back where I shut the engines down to finish the checkride. The flight took 1.7 hours, but without having those extra delays for that last approach it should have been 1.2 or 1.3.

The debrief was pretty short. He said it went really well and that nothing really stood out to him that I did incorrectly. He was glad that I was prepared for it and wished that all checkrides went as smooth as mine did which was nice to hear :-D I'm just extremely happy to have passed this the first time as this is a checkride people can tend to fail on.

I'll write about what's coming next in future entries as this entry is pretty long...

- A now Instrument Rated Requiem (Total hours = 138.3) :-)

Day 123 - Long Night of Flying

Wed, 03 Jun 2015 17:28:27, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

I'm a couple of days behind in the blog entries because I've been busy flying and sleeping.

On June 1 I flew about 6 hours across two flights. The first flight was a cross country route I've flown a few times now and it was pretty routine. The weather was nice and clear though with barely any clouds in the sky with no turbulence. I didn't do an instrument approach on the way out but I did do an ILS on the way back in to my home airport. The return leg ended up being a full night cross country and with the full moon out the visibility was very good. Seeing the moonlight reflecting off the wing surfaces was especially cool. With the air being so much more stable at night my ILS approach was extremely easy. I literally just set the engine power, trimmed the plane for the descent rate, and barely touched the controls until I needed to flare and land in the runway.

So by this time it was about 2330 and I still had to complete another flight for 10 takeoffs and landings. We had to wait a few minutes for the refueling truck, it we took off again pretty quick and headed to a nearby airport for the landing practice. This flight was different compared to others because I did all the flying from the right seat. Up until now I have done all my flying from the left seat, so my first few landings were off centerline when landing in the right seat. The perspective just felt weird initially, and for some reason I was focusing on trying to make the nose wheel be on centerline which was screwing it up. After a few of those off centerline landings I just thought, ah screw it I'll just line myself up on the centerline and that solved the problem LOL. It was a lot of fun flying the pattern at this airport. The two runways were parallel to each other and as I was making my landings on the right runway there were a whole bunch of heavies coming in to land on the left runway. These guys were all the big FedEx cargo planes, very cool to be doing my thing while that was going on. After I completed my landings we went back to our home airport and we're done for the night. I didn't get to sleep until about 0300 so that was a long night with plenty of flying :-)

Requiem (Total hours = 146.6)

Day 124 - Crew Evaluation

Wed, 03 Jun 2015 20:15:37, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

Last night I had an evaluation with a different instructor to check that I'm competent to fly the cross country phase with another student. It was almost like a combination of all my checkrides so far, but it was pretty straightforward and I passed it no problem. Again I did the flying from the right seat to get used to doing so when I start the instructing course where I'll be flying from that side all the time.

I flew the same cross country route as I did the night before, and the approach controller obviously remembered my voice because when I checked in on the frequency he said "welcome back" which was funny. Even the lady at the front desk of the airport's FBO said it, so I guess I've flown that route too often. We flew the ILS in to this airport which was fine and once on the ground he had a few more questions for me until it was dark enough for us to make the return leg once it was officially nighttime. The flight back was good too. This whole evaluation was basically about practicing division of responsibilities between us. So on the way out he would do the flying and I would do the radios, navigation, etc. then on the return leg we swapped roles so I was doing the flying instead.

Since I passed the evaluation I'm cleared to go on the cross country flights with another student. The first of these flights is tomorrow morning, so I'll post about that tomorrow night. During this phase I'll be studying for my commercial pilot and flight instructor exams, so I'll be kept busy when I'm not flying at least while waiting to fly somewhere else. I'm looking forward to flying to new places :-D

Requiem - (Total hours =151.8)

Day 125 - Cross Countries #1

Fri, 05 Jun 2015 10:50:34, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

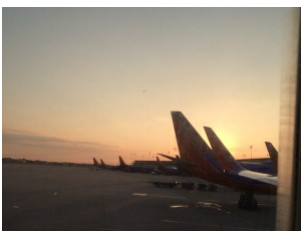
Well I'm feeling pretty lethargic today. I think I have a mild case of food poisoning or something. Anyway, yesterday got off to an interesting start. On the way to the airport I had someone rear end my car, so there is damage there that needs to be sorted out and this made me run a bit late. I ended up flying three different cross countries yesterday, where I did the flying on the second one and handled radios/navigation for the other two. The first leg was going to take a few hours getting to Mississippi, plus we had a headwind that was going to put us behind schedule so I requested a more direct route along the way and was cleared for that, allowing us get to the airport on time. We ended up having some lunch at a Waffle House nearby, but I just grabbed a plain ham and cheese sandwich since I wasn't very hungry. There were some training aircraft for the Navy (T-45) and others who I think were the National Guard flying KC-135Rs (refueler aircraft) around in the pattern and practicing what looked like missed approaches. I couldn't resist taking a couple of photos as I hopped out. Those T-45s would be a lot of fun I bet, and their pilots were preflighting as we got back into the plane to takeoff for the next destination a little bit southwest of our current position.



After leaving here it was a relatively shorter flight and this airport was quite nice. We flew through a military operations area on this route along the way to the destination, so while we heard the T-45s a couple of times we never saw them. Once I landed and taxied to the FBO a guy came out to meet us. He said that the FBO we expected to refuel at was being renovated so we had to go next door and refuel there. There was a small pool table in this other FBO and my partner wanted a quick game, so we did that and left once the plane was refueled shortly after. The final destination was an uncontrolled airport near Houston and we were cleared directly to it after a while. When we left it was clear sky but as we flew closer to the destination the clouds started building up more and growing taller. I had ATC ask me about the cloud conditions in the area so I let him know that which helped out a guy flying visually nearby. This ATC also pointed out that in front of us there was a large area of heavy precipitation so he vectored us around it. We could see it in front of us since it took on a distinctive anvil shape on top of the large cloud mass. We flew by that and descended a little then once we were past it we were cleared direct to our destination, and once we saw the airport I cancelled the flight plan and we flew over to the airport, entered the pattern from overhead, and landed. This airport was really small in comparison to the others we had been to.

My partner and I ended up leaving the plane there and went out separate ways on commercial flights back home. I definitely appreciated my commercial flight more than before I started training because I had my iPad out with the software I've been using myself while flying. Now that I'm instrument rated I understand better what the guys in the big jets do when they fly around. During the flight I actually used my iPad to determine the departure they flew as well as their chosen approach to the airport which was pretty fun to figure out. Doing this allowed me to watch what was going on. The GPS overlaid the aircraft and I set it up to show ground speed, track, and altitude so I was essentially following along as the pilots did their flying. I was watching how they slowed down for the speed restriction on an approach and how they followed the step downs in altitude for that particular RNAV approach. I thought that was pretty cool :)

(below picture is before I left for home)



Today I'm not flying so I'll be doing study for the commercial written exam. I'll be flying out to Louisiana tomorrow morning, but after that point I won't know until I land. I like the FBO at this airport in Louisiana and I've been there a few times now so I wonder if ATC will recognise my voice again :lol

- Requiem (Total hours = 158.7)

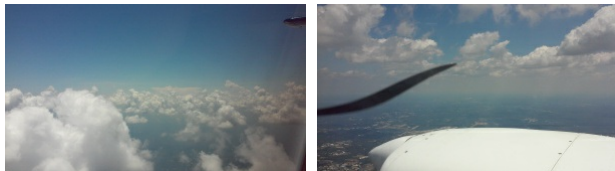
Day 126-130 - Multiple Cross Countries

Wed, 10 Jun 2015 19:03:27, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

I've been extremely busy these last few days and haven't been able to update the blog. I've been flying three legs each day for an average of about 6 hours total flying time, so by the time the day is done (dinner, hotel check in, etc) I get about an hour study in for the commercial exam before getting to sleep around 2100. I've been taking a few photos along the way I'll include with each day's entry.

Day 126: I met my new flying partner and we left for Louisiana. It was a good flight and I was the one flying. Because it was clear outside and I wanted to see how the airplane and its equipment would be on an approach so I requested a practice RNAV approach to find out. This approach was pretty ugly. The needle on the HSI that shows my position laterally didn't move much or very smoothly, so instead of a nice straight approach I ended up making a snaking S approach weaving left and right of path. I ended up resolving this by looking at the GPS for my lateral position and I finished off the approach straight and on glide path before taking off the Foggles and completing the landing.



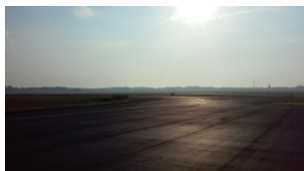
After arriving at Louisiana we sorted out the flight plan and got going to the next leg which would take us to the state of Georgia. It was here we would be leaving the plane we flew there in behind, and would be picking up a different plane to fly out in. This was to be a '78 Seminole, so it was old and I found it had a very different look and feel to it. The control yoke was a lot squarer than the modern one I've flown and the controllability of the plane was a lot stiffer too. The exterior was deceiving since it had a recent paint job, and once I opened the door and saw the bright blue interior my partner and I both said "Whoa this is retro looking"



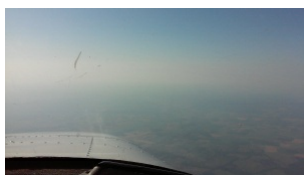
I flew this plane first and I was definitely more critical of everything due to its age. I was constantly checking the engine instruments and during the initial climb out I noticed that, relative to the other planes I flew, the cylinder head temperature was a lot higher so I lowered the nose to increase my airspeed and the temperature fell. I had a slower climb rate but I felt more comfortable. It was nice enough to fly though along the route, it was a bit heavier on the controls but it was fine. The destination was Tennessee, and apparently it was near the shop from the TV show "American Pickers" but there wasn't any time spare to spend finding it. We spent the night in Tennessee and my partner would be flying us back to Georgia in the morning. Below is a photo of the airport we landed at.



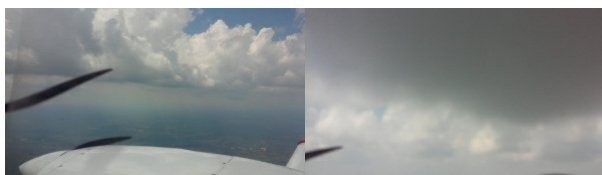
Day 127: It was a very nice morning here. The sun was out and there was some mist floating around, plus there was a blimp on the distant side of the airfield which looked pretty cool.



From here we headed off to Georgia and this flight was good, but it was VERY hazy outside so as you can see the visibility was much lower than on other flights so far. When we got near our destination the approach controller pointed out the field to us a few times, but it was really difficult to see it. You could hear it in the controller's voice...like a kid asking their parents "are we there yet?" when he was asking us if we had the airport in sight. Eventually we saw it, so he handed us off to the tower controller and we headed in to land.



After landing we got going quickly to head back towards Mississippi again. We ended up swapping out the old '78 plane for a more recent model and left for Louisiana. We reached there with no problems and spent the night in Louisiana. We had some good weather and did get some actual cloud flying in which is always great. Doing some cloud dodging here and there is a lot of fun :) We even flew under a few darker clouds, but they weren't much of anything really. No rain or turbulence to speak of underneath them. After reaching Louisiana we got out of the plane and one of the air traffic controllers greeted us as we were walking on the tarmac. He said we were welcome to come up and check out the tower if we wanted but we were short on time so weren't able to that day.



My partner wanted to see the store from the TV show "Duck Dynasty" so we borrowed a car from the operator at the airport and went out to see that and grab some dinner at the same time. Although it was closed he got the photos he wanted, then we had dinner and drove back to return the car and get a taxi to our hotel to spend the night.

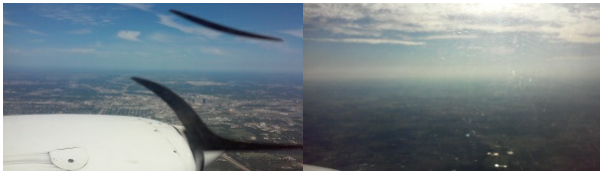


However, something really funny happened when we returned the car at the airport...while we were waiting for the taxi to turn up one of the guys from the Duck Dynasty show (Willie Robertson) was at the front desk getting ready to fly out. My partner was pretty happy about that and went over to say hello and ask for a photograph with him. I took the photo which was nice because he is obviously a fan of the show. We spent the night here and planned to fly out tomorrow morning.

Day 128:



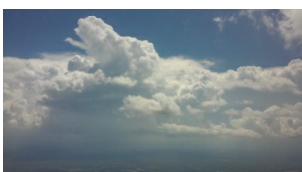
This is was a clear sunny day, but for some reason there was a problem trying to get our flight plan sorted out. We filed the plan twice but ATC wasn't getting it for some reason so we sat on the tarmac for a few minutes with the engines running waiting, but I thankfully ATC helped us out and put in the plan manually and cleared us to leave. From here we flew into Texas, then from Texas to Oklahoma, and from Oklahoma back to Texas again to spend the night. The flights around Texas were nice and I took a few different photos along the way. At one of the airfields I was on final approach behind a Cessna, and the controller asked me to slow down to my slowest possible airspeed. I ended up extends out all my flaps, slowing down about 20knots, and also began S turning on final to buy myself as much time as possible behind this slowpoke Cessna. Well, the Cessna ended up landing extremely long and misses multiple taxiways so the tower controller told me to go around. So instead of landing I had to apply full power, climb, and set up again for another landing. As my friend told me when I mentioned doing this...go arounds build character and your vocabulary of curse words. That was very true because my partner and definitely said some choice words seeing that Cessna make such a long landing and screw us over.



Day 129: On this day we flew out to western Texas early in the morning which was quite a long flight. We rested here for a few minutes and our little multiengine plane looked so out of place amongst all the big boys getting around.



Again, we flew to another Texas location out of here and we had an interesting occurrence happen enroute. Along the way we are handed off to different air traffic controllers on different radio frequencies, and at one point we were with this one controller whose transmissions were getting weaker. We were expecting to be handed off again soon, but didn't hear anything for a while. I figured that, just in case, I'll tune in what I expected to be the next frequency we would be handed off too in the backup radio and listen in. Literally no more than five seconds after I tune it in I heard the controller calling out to us. We responded and he gave us the frequency for the new controller and we changed to that and went on our way. After landing at this other Texas airport we went back to Louisiana again and spent the night. He flight out to Louisiana wa interesting because we filed the flight plan to avoid thunderstorm cells, but ATC changed our route that put us towards them... They ended vectoring us around them and I saw a few lightning strikes go down to the ground which was awesome to see. I took a few pictures of the cell as we went past it and you can see the different look and size compared to my other photos showing clouds.



Day 130: No flight today. Today I used my time to study and catch up on this blog. I also took up the controller here on his offer the last time I was here to visit the tower. So I went on a tour of the tower and spent some time up there chatting to the controllers there which I really enjoyed. I spent time at an air traffic control unit before so it was interesting to make a comparison. Very nice people :-)

Tomorrow is my final flight in the morning so I'll be going home :-) up next is my commercial written exam and the commercial checkride on the 29th June. This is a very long entry so I'll stop here and we'll see what happens tomorrow.

- Requiem (Total hours 187.5) big jump in hours with all this cross country flying!

Day 131 - Back home

Fri, 12 Jun 2015 21:55:57, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

I only had one flight yesterday and that was to bring me home. It was a route I have done several times now so it was very routine. We got back in and I parted ways with my flight partner over the last week or so. Although it's been tiring, it's also been really enjoyable being able to practice what I've learned with someone else. There was a nice sunset the night before we left and I've included some pictures of it. The airborne one was from my partner who was flying with someone else that day.



Now that this phase is over the next one is for my multi-engine commercial checkride. Getting this rating is another step on the way which allows me to be paid for flying. Like others before it I need to sit a written exam and then a checkride with an oral and flight. So I'll be taking the commercial written exam next week and the checkride is going to be on the 29th June. After I do that exam I need to take some others related to flight instructor before I attend CFI school.

With all the exams done and once I pass this upcoming checkride I'll be scheduled for training to be a CFI (instructor multiengine). Then after that I come back and I'll be working on the single engine commercial, single engine CFI, and CFI instrument. It sounds like a lot, and it is, but those checkrides will all happen pretty soon after I finish the initial CFI course.

I don't have anything scheduled until Monday so I stayed home today and worked on the commercial exam questions, although I was still feeling pretty tired. On Monday I'll be going in for an audit of my logbook to double check that I logged my time correctly and that I'll satisfy the 200 hour requirement for the commercial rating.

The weather isn't looking good for much flying next week but I don't think I'll be flying until it's closer to my checkride anyway so I'll be spending a lot of time doing exam questions.

- Requiem (Total hours = 189.7)

Day 132 - Self Study

Mon, 15 Jun 2015 20:11:37, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

My instructor wasn't there today and probably won't be back until Wednesday, so I didn't do anything but study commercial written questions. I'll be taking that exam this week sometime, and then I'll be focusing on the flight instructor stuff. Sorry for not having much to report on but I pretty much just did that one thing all day! There's going to continue being a lot of self study over the next couple of weeks.

- Requiem (Total hours = 189.7)

Day 133-135 - Self study + Logbook audit

Thu, 18 Jun 2015 20:37:53, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

Today I went over my logbook with my instructor and my hours match up (189.7) which is good. The thing is is that I need 200 hours to take the commercial multi engine checkride and since I only have 3 flights (6 hours) of preparation for that I would normally need to use some of my single engine time prep for that checkride to get me over the 200 hour requirement. My instructor is leaving later next week and won't be around for a few days leading up to my checkride, so he is going to have me fly cross country with him in his plane for a few hours so when I use up two of my multi engine checkride prep flights (keeping one in reserve) I'll break the 200 hour mark and won't need to use any of my official single engine prep flights. Confused? :) It will work out though and I'll be flying the extra time over the weekend to enable me to take the commercial ME checkride on the 29th.

In general though I've been doing more self study these last few days and will be taking my commercial written exam tomorrow or Saturday :)

- Requiem (Total hours = 189.7)

Day 136 - Commercial Pilot Written Exam

Fri, 19 Jun 2015 21:08:47, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

Today I did some self study in the morning and felt pretty comfortable so I decided to take the commercial written exam in the afternoon. This exam was 100 questions long and I missed two of them for a grade of 98%. Getting 100% would have been nice but I can't complain really. With that exam out of the way I can start working on studying for the flight instructor exams because once I pass the commercial multi engine checkride on the 29th June I will find out shortly after as to when I'll be going off for CFI training. Next week is going to consist of me studying for those, going over the commercial ME oral portion, and taking two flights to practice for the checkride itself (plus simulator practice).

Tomorrow though I'll be doing some cross country flying in a different plane altogether so that should be fun :)

- Requiem (Total hours = 189.7)

Day 137 - Cross Country Time Build

Mon, 22 Jun 2015 21:30:13, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

This morning it was a bit of self study then a couple of hours with another student going over some weather review. In the afternoon I flew a VFR cross country flight today for about 3 hours to help build some flight time for the commercial requirement of 200 hours total time. This was in my instructor's plane and it was quite a fun little plane. It is called a Piper Tripacer, and it has a steel fuselage but the outer coating is made of fabric so it is pretty lightweight. You really felt the wind on the ground and in the air, plus it also had a good climb rate compared to what I have done my single engine training on. It's an older style of plane so it had some strange design about it such as the linking of ailerons and rudder controls together. If you move the control wheel the rudders move as well without your feet providing the input, so this could make a crosswind takeoff or landing rather challenging as you need to overcome that design aspect. The brakes are also a separate handle and not part of the rudders, and the trim is on a rotating crank and not a wheel as you usually see nowadays.

The flight itself was easy enough with a strong tailwind on the way but then we had the headwind on the way back which stretched out the time a bit. I did the taxiing and some flying once we were airborne, but I told him he can do all the takeoffs and landings. The last thing I want would be to mess something up in his plane, plus I'm only getting a few hours in this plane anyway so I'd rather avoid doing takeoffs and landings in it to not mess up my own sight picture because this plane sits very high up.

Since we were flying VFR it was basically a low level flight all the way to the first destination, which ended up being pretty funny because as we taxied up to the refueling area there was another Tripacer with some guys around it. We had a chat to them for a few minutes then took off again for the second leg then went back home. During the flight we used it as an oral review session for my checkride on Monday. I had the training standards book out and went through it line by line and answered what is required of me without problems which was good :)

I've picked up the "Pilots Handbook of Aeronautical Knowledge" and been going over that again (before I just used the PDF) and I'm expecting my "Aviation Instructors Handbook" to turn up tomorrow so I can start highlighting that as well. I do have these on PDF on my iPad but reading things in paper makes review and highlighting a lot easier, so I figured it would be useful to have those in hand copy for when I go to instructor school and end up with my own students.

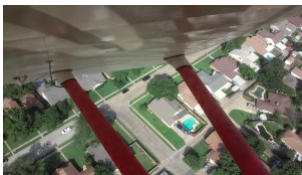
- Requiem (Total hours = 193.0)

Day 138 - Cross Country Time Build #2

Tue, 23 Jun 2015 20:41:25, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

I had another flight to build up my time today with my instructor late this afternoon. I needed 3 hours and we flew for 3.3 so I'm all set for the commercial checkride on Monday once I get my two checkride prep flights done to get me over the 200 hour mark. He was asking me plenty of questions over the first couple of legs (no issues) and then we stopped to refuel before moving on back home. By the time we refueled it was about 1700 so I knew my wife and mother-in-law were going to be on their way home together, and I decided to give them a call to let them know I'll be flying over the house about the time they will be home. We took off and made our way back towards the airport via the house, which conveniently was along the way. I recognised places of interest as we flew back, like a mall, CVS pharmacy, etc.. to guide me towards where I live, but initially I had my instructor circle an area that was a few streets south of the house because I a pool in a backyard looked really similar. After one circle around I was sure it was the wrong spot so I directed him a few streets up and found the right house :-). I spotted the correct pool and we had some crazy people waving at us (one with a beach towel) from below! It was a very cool experience and I'm really happy we got to do that :)



We circled a few times then headed back to the airport from where I drove home about 1800. It was a nice flight and I'm looking forward to practicing my commercial multi engine checkride tomorrow and Thursday. After Thursday I won't be flying until Monday for the checkride, but in the meantime I'll be studying my flight instructor material and reviewing other items relating to the checkride. My instructor hasn't seen any red flags in my theory knowledge so he's confident I'll be fine. I like the DPE I'll be flying with so I'm looking forward to it. Strange to say but I'm sure my checkride will be fun :)

- Requiem (Total hours = 196.3)

Day 139 - Commercial Prep #1

Wed, 24 Jun 2015 20:11:06, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

It was very hot today and I sweated you know what off during this flight so I ended up feeling really tired at the end... Today I hopped back into the multi-engine cockpit (a digital cockpit) and my flying was a bit rusty in general. I think having some time off focusing on so much of the theory and having all those cross country's flown in only "six pack" cockpit aircraft probably contributed a bit. I wasn't happy as I did some stupid mistakes so hopefully all the cobwebs are blown off for tomorrow's final review flight. There were a lot of things covered and most of it is like a review of a combination of things to know as a private/multi-engine/instrument pilot. The checkride is actually very similar to ones I've done before.

I have to write up a navigation log like what I did for the private pilot checkride, so I had that ready and once the plane was started I input the first navigation aids to cross reference my initial waypoint. After takeoff I headed off to the initial waypoint and noted the time and referred to visual references on the way out towards it. Once we reached the waypoint, indicated by the navigation aids, I noted the time again and that portion was complete. Then we flew off and climbed up to about 3000ft where I did a set of steep turns, but because this is the commercial checkride the steep turns are required to be at 50 degrees of bank and not 45. It was a slight adjustment with extra power but they were good and I felt fine with it so I didn't want to practice that again. At least now I can finally swap from the left to right side without stopping! If you remember the checkrides previous where I had to demo this maneuver the examiner told me to stop because it wasn't the commercial checkride :-)

With the steep turn done I entered slow flight (flaps out, gear down, low power, nose high attitude) and held it while flying North for a while. Then I had to climb up to 3400ft and transition from slow flight into the power off stall, so once I reached that altitude I cut engine power and pulled the nose up to stall the aircraft, then recovered no problem. I also did a power on stall which is the same thing but I keep some power in and retract the landing gear and flaps. Then we did something that was new (but I already knew about due to flight simming) called the accelerated stall. Basically, when a plane flies level it stalls at a certain airspeed, but when you bank it and begin a tight turn the stall speed will actually become higher than normal, so if you turn too tightly for the airspeed you are flying at you can stall the plane out of a turn. To demonstrate this I had to slow down to about 80knots, cut the power, bank it at 45 degrees, and pull back on the stick quickly. Then when the plane stalls the nose goes down and you recover as normal. I did two of these since I wasn't aggressive enough with the power on the first recovery.

Then while flying along we simulated an engine fire, so I simulated cutting off the fuel but actually shut the engine down in flight (throttle idle, propeller feathered, mixture cutoff). Then I reference the engine shutdown checklist and simulate declaring an emergency. With the engine stopped I flew along for a bit and my instructor had me restart the engine in mid-air which went fine. With both engines running he then had me do the "Vmc demo" which you might remember from my multi-engine checkride. The thing where I reduce power on one engine and go full throttle on the other, pitch the nose up to bleed off airspeed, then recover by nosing down and reducing throttle at the first sign of loss of control. I did two of those for practice and they were both good. Then my instructor pretended he was throwing up so that is a signal to do the emergency descent and I dropped down from 4000ft to 2500ft quickly which was no problem.

Those were essentially the maneuvers I had to demonstrate, so they were things I had done before except for the accelerated stall. With that complete my instructor had me put the Foggles on and we headed towards a nearby airport to practice some landings and ILS approaches on a single engine. On the way out to the airfield my instructor killed an engine on me so the first flight into the airport I flew the ILS approach on one engine. I was following the glideslope and localiser just fine but I forgot to call out 100ft above minimums and didn't ask if I could see the runway so I went below the minimum height before I took off the Foggles. I made a nice soft landing and put the airplane down at the 1000ft markers and slowed down to exit at the first taxiway.

After taxiing back to the runway I practiced a short field takeoff and a short field landing. I had a brain fart and couldn't remember what my rotate speed was supposed to be for the short field takeoff which annoyed me. After I took off I stayed in the traffic pattern and came back for a short field landing where I put it down on the runway numbers and got off at the first taxiway. I practiced another short field takeoff which was much better this time and came back for another short field landing, but since my first short field landing was a bit hard for my liking I tried to make this one softer and as a result I landed past the runway numbers. My instructor said that my first landing was fine and by trying to make the second one too pretty it threw it off. I was actually on target to hit the numbers until I

stretched out the flare to make a softer touch down.

After taking off again there were a few too many aircraft in the pattern and ATC was going to resequence us, so we elected to leave the pattern and fly another engine out ILS approach under the Foggles. I was very annoyed at myself on this one... As I was turning left to join the localiser my instructor killed the right engine. So I rolled the plane to the right to get it level but also put in right rudder at the same time (I needed to use left rudder). The sensation from doing that felt very strange and it threw me off because I've never used the wrong input like that before in response to the engine out so I didn't really understand what happened initially. My instructor told me I had the wrong input in so I fixed it, but when he asked me what the 'jingle' is for the engine out I just had a mental blank and couldn't answer. I was too busy being pissed at myself about the whole rudder thing. I then flew the ILS with the engine out pretty well and transitioned into a short field landing where I didn't try to make it soft and it was much better than the previous shortfield.

By now it was close to the time to leave so I flew another pattern and instead of landing my instructor had me do a go-around and depart back for our home airport where I flew another engine out ILS which was good, and at the end I transitioned into a short field landing and made the first taxiway which can be hard to do at our airport so I was happy with that. Getting out the airplane though I felt like I was sopping wet...I even had a sweat imprint on my pant leg from the iPad strapped to it as it dissipated the heat!

Like I mentioned before, I was annoyed with myself by using the wrong rudder in the turn with the engine out, but I can only think that happened because I was in a turn and tried to do the 'jingle' at the same time as rolling level. I think I need to just focus on getting the aircraft in level first *then* going over the jingle and sorting out what input to make instead of rushing it.

The final prep flight is early tomorrow morning (0700) so at least it will be a bit cooler when flying this time.

- Requiem (Total hours = 198.3)

Day 140 - Commercial Prep #2

Thu, 25 Jun 2015 21:20:03, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

Today was an awesome day compared to yesterday. The cobwebs were all gone and I was back to normal with my flying :-). The sequence of events for the flight was pretty much the same as yesterday so I'll try not to labour on too much and repeat myself.

After taking off we went to the first waypoint and my ETA was spot on to the second which was nice. By then we cleared the airspace and climbed up to 3000ft to do the steep turns. So I did the steep turns at 50degrees bank. First to the left then transitioning to the right and rolling out. My altitude didn't budge from 3000ft and as I rolled level I hit a distinctive bump in the air. This meant I flew through my own wake turbulence, which was a sign the turn was really good. I basically flew in the same spot of air I started the right turn from.

After that I did the usual slow flight and transitioning into the power off stall, where I recovered more aggressively which worked well. From there I did a climbing right turn to practice the power on stall and its recovery. Then it was time for the Vmc demo, followed by the simulated engine fire, and emergency descent which were all very good too.

Now that I was back down at 2500ft it was time to put the Foggles on for the single engine ILS approach. When he cut my engine I deliberately paused for a second to slow myself down and the jingle for the engine out flowed easily. The approach itself was excellent since I was right on the glideslope and localizer all the way and made the callouts on time. I was dealing with a stiff crosswind from the right, but I made the touchdown nice and soft too.

After taxiing back and taking off again my instructor wanted a "challenge round" for me so we did another engine out ILS, but on this one he turned off my digital display so I had to revert to non precision minimums and use my backup analog instruments. That was difficult but I still did well. He doesn't think the examiner will do that but he just wanted to see if I could do it.

After landing and taxiing back the theme was then for short field efforts so did the short field takeoff and landing which was right on the numbers. We taxied back again to takeoff but by now there were three other aircraft ready to leave with another in the pattern, so it was getting pretty congested. After taking off we had a slowpoke Cessna in front of us, so I adjusted my speed about 20kts slower so I wouldn't be up his tail. Due to a departure he ended up doing a 270 degree turn so someone could take off before he landed. Because of that 270 ATC asked me to extend my downwind, so I did that but with enough spacing after me to let out a departure who had been sitting for a while. This short field landing was also good. It's fun doing the short field landings in a crosswind :-). I was happy with them since they were all centerline and I would come to a stop before the 1000ft mark if I wanted (first taxiway is just after them).

We got ready to take off again for home, but before we left to go home ATC ended up thanking us for helping make things easier for them which was nice. We flew back home and I did another good short field landing making the first taxiway which is at the 1000ft markers, and that was it for the flight.

My instructor said everything was spot on and hoped I will fly like that on my checkride. That is on Monday, so I have a few days of no flying where I will be studying and practicing the checkride in the simulator. After today's flight I feel very good about Monday :-).

- Requiem (Total hours = 200.4)

Day 141-142 - Commercial Self Study

Sat, 27 Jun 2015 21:08:10, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

Over the last couple of days I've had no flying, so instead I've been doing my own thing reading up on the information I need to know for the commercial checkride. Yesterday I also did a simulator session with my friend who is also taking his commercial checkride next week. I acted as the examiner for his practice and he did the same for me on mine and that went well. Today I went in by myself just to practice the checkride on the simulator before coming home which went well too.

After I got home my instructor contacted me and asked if I wanted to do my checkride tomorrow instead of Monday. I agreed to that since the weather is still good and if I can have it done early then that's an extra day for me to study the flight instructor material which will be helpful. So since I'll be taking the commercial checkride tomorrow we did a review over our iPads using Facetime and that was good so hopefully I won't get stuck on not knowing something tomorrow. I'm heading in early to make sure everything paperwork wise is sorted out for the checkride, which should be starting about midday. I feel confident about taking it and am looking forward to getting it done :-).

- Requiem (Total hours = 200.4)

Day 143 - Commercial Multi-Engine Checkride

Mon, 29 Jun 2015 00:00:00, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

Today was my initial Commercial ME checkride and it went very well. The oral was great and the flying matched :-). After I started the engines I input my nav aids and radials, initial altitude and heading, then we taxied to the active runway to takeoff. I took off, made the initial turn and started the timer, followed by pointing out visual references along the route for this first leg to show I know what I am supposed to see around me on the way to the first checkpoint. We didn't really make it to the first waypoint, he was satisfied I knew what I was doing and had me climb up to 2500ft then 3500ft.

From there he had me do the steep turns, but instead of full 360 turns he had me do 180s instead. So I started flying South, then turned left back to North, and then swung it back right to roll out on South. I maintained altitude, airspeed, and bank angle as well as rolling out on my headings precisely. Then I entered slow flight and had to avoid traffic by making a turn before cutting the power and transitioning into a power off stall and recovering from that. Then I went through the power on stalls and accelerated stalls which were both good. During the Vmc demo we hit the stall before Vmc, and he said I maintained very good control of the plane during the demo. Because of that he wanted to show me how the plane will react if I lost rudder authority so I went into the Vmc demo again and he stopped me applying full rudder and made me watch outside to see that happen.

With those maneuvers done he simulated an engine problem that required me to act quickly to reduce throttle to idle, propeller to feather, and mixture to cutoff. This makes the engine turn off and the propeller stop and line up with the wind to reduce drag. I mentioned about declaring an emergency, etc, and he had me airstart the engine. After airstarting the engine he took controls and had me put the Foggles on and brief an ILS approach at a nearby airport. I hadn't flown the ILS at this airport before so I really focused to keep the approach numbers in mind as I briefed the approach. After I briefed the approach he killed my left engine and I did the 'jingle' for an engine out. The ILS on the single engine was very good. I had a minor deviation where I was slightly above glideslope but I caught it early on and compensated to get back on it. I made the right callouts and as I called the "100ft to go" to the decision height he told me to look outside and I finished by landing the airplane down on the 1000ft markers and getting off at the next taxiway.

Then I taxied back to the active runway and he had me do a short field takeoff, which was good, then as we came back in to land instead of doing a short field landing he had me 'go around' so full power, climb, retract flaps and landing gear, and then we left the airport flying North. From here I climbed to a higher altitude and did an emergency descent, then we were going to go back to the home airport for my final short field landing, but on the way back we were talking about the flaps usage on short field so he elected to take us on a slight detour. Instead we went to a nearby airport that has a short, narrow, upsloping runway, for me to practice a landing approach there with another go around making pretend as if I took off using flaps since normal short field takeoffs don't require flaps. The idea is that you can use them but they reduce safety margins in the airplane. As I did the go around he waited until I was over 500ft above the ground then he killed an engine and had me recover. I did the jingle but I really had to put the nose down to get airspeed back and needed to lose about 100ft to get to the safe airspeed before cleaning up the drag from the flaps and landing gear. It was interesting to do that because I really noticed the difference flaps in/out recoveries at that point.

All I had to do was the short field landing back home so we headed back and I talked to regional approach. There was a slight pause and then I just hear one word, my name, over the radio so someone out there recognised my voice ;) On the way back we were flying at 2500ft (ATC told us to maintain it) and I was basically at the field flying downwind at 2500ft when they gave us permission to descend. I put the airplane into a slip and the examiner looked over and said "you're putting it into a slip?" with a smile on his face. I needed to lose 900ft in a hurry so the slip was necessary so I didn't ruin my short field approach by being too high and fast. The approach itself was really nice, I came in and put down on end of the numbers. I could have put it on the front of the numbers but I didn't want the landing to be too hard. It was nice and soft (for a short field landing) and the examiner said I did a great job on it.

As I taxied in and came to a stop, I shutdown the airplane and I got the handshake with congratulations for now being a commercial pilot. He went inside to finish some paperwork and I secured the airplane before heading in myself for the debrief. He didn't have much to debrief me on though. He said he saw no problems and everything went great, but he expected nothing less than that from me. It's nice to hear an examiner say that, especially him because he is harder to take checkrides with compared to other examiners. I do like taking checkrides with him though because it ensures I really know my stuff and I end up learning some bonus information as well :)

So, now I'm a commercial pilot with multi-engine rating...meaning essentially I can be paid for flying multi-engine aircraft, but not single engine aircraft yet. That is another checkride down the road. Up next though is my Certificated Flight Instructor (CFI) initial course with multi-engine rating. I'm not sure when or where that will be, but it won't be very far away and I'll probably find out tomorrow I think. With that in mind I can get back to studying the information for the CFI written exams and take those before I end up going to CFI school. I'm really looking forward to that :)

- Requiem (Total hours = 201.8)

Day 144-145 - Self study

Tue, 30 Jun 2015 21:26:21, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

Not much to report on...I've just been doing my study for the flight instructor written exams. Today though I found out I'll be starting CFI school on the 13th July, so I have a little bit of wait until then. It gives me plenty of time though to take the written exams beforehand and prepare for the course, plus since I have this extra time I'll hopefully be able to get some flying done in the single engine plane to take the checkride for the commercial single engine add-on. I don't know the examiner's availability though, so if he can do it before I leave for CFI school I'll get it done. I'll leave a message for him tomorrow and see. At least that way I can save some time and when I get back from CFI school I'll have one less checkride to take care of.

- Requiem (Total hours = 201.8)

Day 146-149 - Self Study

Mon, 06 Jul 2015 20:02:22, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

It's been a few days since I've written but it's been pretty much the same thing for me, but due to examiner scheduling I've not been able to fly and prepare for the single engine commercial checkride so I'll be doing that after I get back from CFI school. I've just been studying for my Flight Instructor Airplane (FIA) written exam which I'll be taking tomorrow morning. Once I take that I'll finish studying for the Fundamentals of Instruction (FOI) written exam and take on Wednesday.

Since my CFI class starts on Monday 13th July I'll probably be leaving for that on Sunday sometime. The CFI course will have me doing ground school for two weeks then two flights with a checkride. My instructor believes I'll do very well because I have a solid knowledge base for the ground school material already, so he thinks some new things I will be learning will be related to the fundamentals of instruction stuff.

So yeah, a couple of exams this week with some studying with no flying, but I'll be preparing for the CFI school anyway so I'll be good to go on day one there :)

- Requiem (Total hours = 201.8)

Day 150 - Flight Instructor Written Exam

Tue, 07 Jul 2015 19:58:05, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

I had my flight instructor written exam today and got 91% on it. I would have liked to do better of course, but now I'm down to my last written exam for a little while which is the Fundamentals of Instruction exam (FOI). I got back into reviewing for the FOI after my other exam today, but I have to take the FOI exam by Thursday to be eligible for the CFI class starting Monday. The FOI information is like a combination of psychology and communications topics, so I plan having the full day tomorrow to continue studying for that. I've also started organising the lesson plans I need for the CFI class (used to teach a student) and I'm going to be using a pretty hefty binder carrying all that paper around. The lesson plans basically go through the Practical Test Standards used for the CFI checkride line by line for each area of examination (and there are a lot of areas covered). After I submit paperwork on Thursday I'll be finding out when I leave for CFI school :)

- Requiem (Total hours = 201.8)

Day 151 - Self Study

Wed, 08 Jul 2015 20:24:55, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

Only a little to talk about today. I just kept preparing for the Fundamentals of Instruction exam which I'll be taking tomorrow. I've been doing well in practice tests for it so tomorrow should be fine. I also picked up another textbook today (FAA Flying Handbook) and a sectional (map) for the Florida area where I'll be going for CFI school. Like the other textbooks I got recently I already had a digital copy and read it, but the physical copy is easier to read/highlight. I only have a few days left until I head off for the CFI course which is pretty exciting. I did receive a schedule today for what is going to happen next week, and it appears as if I'll have a solid week of theory and then the week after I'll have my flights and CFI checkride. Once I get the test done tomorrow I'll be finalising my preparation for CFI school. Really looking forward to it :)

- Requiem (Total hours = 201.8)

Day 152 - Fundamentals of Instruction Exam

Thu, 09 Jul 2015 21:06:48, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

I took the FOI exam today and got 96%. After that test was done all my paperwork was faxed away so I've satisfied the requirements to attend the CFI class on Monday. My instructor thinks that due to my scores I could end up being assigned an FAA examiner like he was for the CFI checkride, but that comes with a pro and con. The pro to such a thing is that the checkride is free, but the con is that FAA examiner checkrides are a *lot* harder than with a normal examiner.

I'm pretty much prepared to go now, so I'm just waiting on travel information. It also looks like a friend of mine who is at the same stage as me is going to be going through this with me which will be great. I read that I need to be prepared to take the CFI checkride no later than Wednesday on the second week, so that week of ground school is going to be extremely busy. Doesn't seem like much time to get ready for it, but I should be ok as most ground school stuff should be a review. The only thing my instructor said I should need is a little plastic multi-engine plane to use for explaining some aerodynamics, so it's time for some toy shopping!

- Requiem (Total hours = 201.8)

Day 153 - Packed and Ready to go to CFI school

Sat, 11 Jul 2015 22:06:44, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

Just a short post to say I'm leaving for the location of the CFI school tomorrow. The class starts on Monday morning so everything travel wise is sorted out, my lesson plans are done, and I have everything else I need ready to go. The other student I thought would be in the same class as me is unable to go now which is a bummer so I'll be on my own meeting a bunch of other new students. I've been hearing the course is pretty brutal too so let's see how it goes for me. I'll try my best to post something on the blog as I go through it, but I can't guarantee that so if I do it probably won't be very long. I'll just have to see what my workload is like first, but if I don't get to post much I'll be able to do a more in-depth review of it after I get back.

Off to CFI school I go!

- Requiem (Total hours = 201.8)

Day 154-170 - CFI School and Back

Wed, 29 Jul 2015 19:56:44, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

I returned from CFI school last night and I enjoyed it. Although I didn't get to take my checkride while I was there, I am scheduled to do that this coming Monday, so hopefully that goes well. I feel good about taking it though. I'll try and give an overview of how my trip went...

I was sitting in the airport waiting for my flight to leave, but my first flight at 1130 was cancelled. Then the flight they put me on was at 2000 so I had a long wait until I finally flew to my destination. Luckily a couple of other guys who were going to the CFI school with me were there and we happened to find each other so that made the wait more bearable. We ended up getting to where we staying by 0200. After getting inside I noticed that the beds were bare. I assumed that there would be some kind of linens here, but there weren't so I spent the first night on a bare mattress. Good thing we arrived so late and that I didn't need to sleep very long because I wasn't able to sleep much anyway in the foetal position :)

As expected the ground school covered the Fundamentals of Instruction and what endorsements as instructors we need to give to students to allow them to take tests, fly solo, etc...It was fast paced but I kept up pretty well and fortunately didn't struggle with it as much as others. I was roomed with a good couple of guys (the same ones I flew out with) and working together helped a lot. Our class started with 22 people and when I left to go home it was down to I think 8 or 9. That is a lot of people to quit, but from my time there it seemed to be "par for the course" so to speak.

The instructor for my ground school classes was excellent, and he was also the instructor I flew with to prepare for the checkride. He kept to the schedule, covered the material really well, and provided good feedback for us as we practiced teaching lessons up in front of the class quite often. For the first week the days themselves were routine with the same thing day in day out. We went in at 0800 and finished at 1700, then at night myself and the guys I was roomed with would practice teaching each other what we learned thus far to reinforce the material. We did no flying at all this week.

The second week was on us...in that we were responsible for our own study. That suited me fine as it's what I was used to, and since we bought a small whiteboard we didn't need to go in to the training center unless we wanted to chair fly the airplane's. We did do this a couple of mornings where we drove in about 0600 to chair fly the real airplanes before class started to practice the checkride itself on the ground. This allowed us to memorise everything we needed to know for the demonstrations of maneuvers. Things like why we do a maneuver, when would we use it, what are the standards to meet when demonstrating it (Altitude and speed tolerances for example), student errors when students fly the maneuver, and of course the flow of the maneuver itself. This second week is where a lot of people started disappearing.

During this second week though is when I did some flying. I had three flights, two were preparation flights for the checkride, and the other was a flight in a Cessna where I performed some spins over the beach. The first flight was a preparation flight and that went very well. I did all the maneuvers as I was supposed and taught them well, so that was great. The spins flight was brilliant! After we climbed out over the ocean a little bit away from the beach the instructor demonstrated one then had me do it. I did three spins to the left and three spins to the right (only one 360 degree rotation) and was really loving it :) He then decided to show me a fully developed spins with multiple rotations before recovery and I really felt the difference. Once the spin gets past that incipient stage you feel the plane whip around and descend/spin even faster. The spinning itself was very cool, but when you recover and pull out of the dive you have to maintain a higher G-load on the plane and climb back up. It was very funny as I recovered to hear the instructor reminding me to maintain that back pressure on the yoke to "melt the face" as the G-forces pushed us down into the seat. I did probably another 5 or 6 of those fully developed spins since they were a lot more interesting and fun than recovering from the incipient phase of a spin. I love rollercoasters but this was something else...doing those spins makes me want to try out some real aerobatics as feeling those G forces was awesome :-D

That same day I flew my second preparation flight and this one didn't go so well. I flew the spins at 1000 and I felt great after we landed, but after a couple of hours back at the apartment I seemed to hit a wall of tiredness and needed a nap about 1300. During that nap I missed a call to say I was being put on the schedule to fly at 1600, so I woke up at 1400 and saw the message, then got changed and headed in. Like I said, this flight wasn't that great and the instructor said it was probably due to me flying that spins flight and feeling out of it due to the nap as well. He still signed me off for my checkride though so even with that bad second flight he believes I can do it.

I was supposed to have my checkride on the 27th July, but due to some scheduling issues with the examiner up there I ended up being assigned another examiner back home on the 3rd August, this coming Monday. So right now I'm just going in and practicing teaching things. I taught a couple of the guys at my location a few things which was good practice. I have a spare 2 hours to fly, so I'll be using those on Friday to practice for the checkride one last time and see how it goes for Monday. My checkride starts on Monday at 0500 (not looking for sympathy here, I already found it in the dictionary :-)), so I get through the oral portion of me teaching everything then hopefully the flight will be completed before serious heat bears down on us in the plane.

I am very glad to be home :)

- Requiem (Total hours = 206.2)

Day 171-175 CFI Initial Prep

Sun, 02 Aug 2015 18:10:16, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

Since I came back from CFI school I've flown twice and have been practicing plenty of teaching. Quite often it has just been to myself in an empty room but it's been good practice nonetheless. My first flight was a bit rough and I wasn't very happy with it, but today's flight was much better since my instructing while flying and maneuvering was a lot better. At CFI school they had all the older types of airplanes but where I am we have the newer ones with glass cockpits so I think it just took me a flight to readjust. I'm headed to bed shortly and will be getting up at about 0300 as I have a decent drive to get to the airport I'll be taking my checkride at 0500. I feel ready for it, so it is just a matter of me doing things right tomorrow :)

Let's hope I have good news to report tomorrow!

- Requiem

Day 176 - Certificated Flight Instructor (CFI) Checkride

Mon, 03 Aug 2015 16:40:47, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

Well today was a big day because this checkride is the one that a *lot* of people fail on. From what I've read the amount of people that pass a CFI initial checkride first go is around the 20% mark, so **(spoiler alert)** the fact that I did manage to pass it and become a flight instructor today makes me very happy and proud of myself for getting it right the first time. The difficult aspect of this checkride was how the examiner was unknown to me, and all examiners have some preference for what they want. I had no idea what mine would like/dislike so I was refining what I knew so I could present and teach anything if asked. Plus getting up at 0300, leaving at 0330, and driving for about an hour to get to the airport makes for a long day, but the early start was worth it because without the big heat buildup we get in the afternoon the air was nice and smooth in general which made my flying much easier.

As with all the other checkrides there is the oral portion and then the flight portion, but the oral is different for the initial CFI than previous checkrides because I needed to stand at a whiteboard and teach topics on command to the examiner sitting in front of me. Some people have orals that go for up to 8 hours if they are struggling, but luckily my oral was only about 3 hours including a couple of breaks. I covered a lot of material from different sections, but once the examiner could tell I knew what I was talking about we would just move on to something else and I'd start over with a new topic so that sped the process up a lot. It was along the lines of once I hit the main points of each section he would then ask me to talk about other areas and ask me to pose scenarios or examples for those, so I didn't end up following my lesson plans precisely and had to think on the fly a lot in response to what he was asking of me. I also rarely referenced my notes, so being able to know a lot without needing to use my notes would have worked in my favour to show him I knew my stuff. As I said I went over a lot of material, but talking about endorsements was probably the best part for me. Endorsements are what instructors need to give students to let them solo or take checkrides, and when he posed the scenario to me I just rattled all of them off on the board very quickly, plus towards the end I tangented off his question a little bit by throwing in changes/additions to what I had written up there depending on what else a student could be going for. Things like additional classes or categories and any experience requirements depending on private or commercial. I figured it was better to talk in excess instead of waiting for prompting from him, which was something I did throughout the oral and flight. Better to talk too much and be asked to stop than to hold short on talking and need to continue answering questions. By the end my throat was feeling a bit hoarse :)

He needed a few minutes so he let me go out and perform the preflight inspection so as I was finishing that up he came out and asked me some different questions about what I would teach a student to look for and what various parts of the plane were. In the plane I ended up having a bit of a struggle getting the left engine started...so I started thinking "Great, now I'm going to have to get out and switch planes." I left that engine alone and tried starting the right engine which was no problem, so I went back to the left and tried again. It took a little bit of coaxing but it ended up being fine once it was up and firing (The left engine didn't have a problem in the runup either so it must have just been a bit picky this morning). While taxiing I was jabbering about maintaining centerline, situational awareness, listening on radios for traffic, etc.... all that kind of good stuff which filled the time in until we hit the runup area where we bring the engines up to high power to make sure they are good to go.

First up was a short field takeoff and that was right on the performance numbers, then we departed the area and I went over the principles of flight (including things like how to trim the plane and the sight picture outside/inside when climbing/descending/turning/straight and level) and I used some gentle maneuvering to illustrate the points I was making. He then had me put the Foggles on and I was ready to do some unusual attitude recovery, but he elected for me to demonstrate and explain some basic attitude flying where I turned to various heading with climbs to altitude. Now normally the first thing I expected to do once reaching altitude of about 4500ft was steep turns, but he wanted to see slow flight first. No worries! :) So I set it up in slow flight just above the stall and made some turns along with a climb where he wanted me to demonstrate/explain accelerating to a certain airspeed with a transition into the power off stall. That stall was good too so after that he wanted the steep turn demonstration.

After my last couple of flights I wasn't really looking forward to steep turns as I figured if I was going to bust the checkride then this is where it would happen. As with all the maneuvers I did some talking about the objective, the standards to maintain, student errors, and scenarios when we would use it. I configured the plane and entered the steep turn at 50 degrees angle of bank, explaining things as I go, then I trimmed it out and let it fly hands off around the circle until I get back to the entry heading where I rolled back to the right and let the plane settle at the 50 degree bank again. My altitude dipped about 20-40 ft but I caught it and brought the plane back up and used that to describe how to fix altitude loss in a steep turn. I rolled out on my heading and then the plane shook as I hit my own wake turbulence :) Knowing the problems I had flying steep turns from the right seat I was super focused on those steep turns because my altitude and airspeed barely budged overall! (The instructor sits in the right seat, and up until now I'd been doing all my maneuvers from the left seat so the sight picture outside is different can throw you off) The fact I hit my own wake turbulence when finishing the maneuver was great because that showed I finished it pretty much in the same airspace where I started. I hadn't done that on a checkride before so I hit that big bump and said "Oh, there's our wake turbulence so that means it was a good one :)"

After that he asked me to do some flying with an engine inoperative, so I shut down the engine, feathered the propeller and talked about that for a bit (simulating securing it) before restarting the engine in the air. That was pretty straightforward so I moved into the Vmc demo and did that pretty well. I might have spent a bit too long explaining as I used the opportunity to talk about Vmc, stall speed, and critical altitude among some other factors. When I took a pause for a second he said he understands and to go ahead and do the maneuver, so I did that no problems. Then it was time for some fun and do an emergency descent from 4500ft to 2500ft. I explained/demoed that and leveled out right on 2500ft which was great :) He wanted to see some landings at this point so we headed off to an airport which at this point was only about 12 miles out. I suggested that we could circle here and get the approach checklist done. He said that is good advice for a private pilot, but as a commercial pilot he was sure I could manage it in time. This is where I think he got a little tricky on me. I completed the approach checklist and made my call to the airport that I was inbound at 2500ft about 8 miles SE of them. I didn't hear anything in response, but I noticed the radio showed the "RX" (means receive) for a few seconds (when I speak over the radio it shows "TX" for transmit). Catching that RX had me thinking...they heard my transmission but I obviously heard nothing back. For a split second I thought we had a receiver failure, so I did a quick check of things before making that announcement over the radio. I checked my headset plug which was fine, then I adjusted the volume of the radio as it was turned down to its lowest point. After that adjustment I asked them to say their last transmission again, which I heard so I was good to enter their airspace and the traffic pattern to show some landings. I think the examiner turned it down to see how I would react. He might have been expecting me to look over at him and ask about it, but I just fixed it, moved on, and didn't even mention it lol:

The first landing was just a normal landing, so I set up on a left downwind and talked about the wind direction and how that is affecting my heading and how I need to crab for the wind correction so I fly a straight downwind leg. I made all my calls and actions on time and finished with a greased (very soft) touchdown on the 1000ft markers with a slight chirp of the tires. I was expecting to do full stop landings and taxi back to the runway, but the examiner wanted me to do a go around so I carefully advanced both throttles and took off again. I hadn't done touch and go's in the multi-engine plane before so I made sure to do it right.

After taking off again the controller instructed me to fly a right hand pattern which wasn't a problem, and as I began the climb out and started on crosswind the examiner pulled back a throttle to simulate the engine failure. So I slowly/deliberately went through the jingle for the engine failure, explaining as I went and continuing my crosswind turn onto downwind climbing to pattern altitude and holding the target airspeed Vyse 88kts. I leveled off at 1700ft for pattern altitude and went through the flow again, this time to land with an engine inoperative. I adjusted my pattern a bit here and came in about 5 kts faster to get it down sooner, mentioned that in case of go-around or landing to use both throttles, then once I crossed the runway threshold I started working the power out and was about to roundout for the flare when he tells me to go around...So in goes full power (for both engines) and I pitch to climb slightly, begin accelerating and start retracting the gear then the flaps. I set up again for another landing which will be a short field one. The only differences with this are that on final I slow to 75kts instead of being at 88kts, and I use full flaps. The touchdown for this was right on the 1000ft markers as well and was really soft for a short field landing. It was great :) As I started doing the maximum braking he told me to continue taking off for another touch and go with a departure back to our starting airport.

Leaving there was easy enough, I turned away and climbed up to 2500ft and contacted the home airport's tower who got a little snarky with me. They told me to report inbound at a certain mall (shopping center). I took a confused glance at the examiner and quickly replied to the controller that I didn't know where that mall was. Well, that response didn't sit very well with this controller and I got a nice response with plenty of attitude in it..."If you're flying in and out of here all the time as an instructor you should really know where it is!" Before I could reply the examiner chimed in to say how I wasn't familiar with the airport, but the controller just said that I should still know the reporting points anyway, so apparently this mall is a VFR reporting point but I had no idea that's what it was. The tower controller just made an assumption about me based on the tail number so he chewed me out over it. I looked over and asked the examiner if I did something wrong because I'm supposed to pretend he's the student, which is why I responded immediately to the tower guy about me not knowing where this place is. He said I absolutely did the right thing and the controller was just being...something...and said he would ring them once on the ground about it. Looking for those reporting points is something I'll have to keep in mind because I've never had ATC ask me to use them before although I am aware about what they are. In my, limited, experience controllers tend to have an idea of where you are relative to their airport after you report your position so they'll ask you to report again when entering whatever leg of the pattern they approve you to enter. Sometimes they give you road references or points of interest to get to or cross which aren't reporting points, which is why I said I didn't know where that mall was and didn't realise it was an actual reporting point.

The landing to finish up was another greaser, so all of my landings today were awesome and right on target :) I kept up the talking and explaining about clearing the runway, taxiing, etc until I shutdown the airplane. I've written a lot in this entry so I may have missed something but I believe I've covered the majority of what transpired today. The examiner was pretty quiet as I finished up and I had to ask if he was happy with how I did. He was and said he didn't really have any feedback for me as everything was great and he could tell I really came prepared. After getting back into the office he filled out some paperwork, and at 11:16am he called me in to shake my hand and give me the piece of paper (license) that has my name plus the words "Flight Instructor" on it :D

It only seems like the other day I started flying and yet here I sit having just passed the CFI checkride. As always I can never thank those who have helped make this happen enough, I can't imagine doing anything else. I just hope I've made you all proud with my progress so far. I'm not done yet though, next on the list is going back to the single engine airplane and knocking out my commercial add-on for the single engine, the CFI add-on for single engine, then the instructor add-on for instrument flight. That should take about 2-3 weeks at the most depending on examiner scheduling, so pretty soon I'll finish up and be ready to start instructing students of my own :)

- Requiem

As I was finishing this entry I received an email. I just got a instructor job offer from the flight school I'm training with so that's something to consider. Good news to have a guaranteed job before I've even finished my training :)

Day 180+ 2/3 Checkrides scheduled

Wed, 12 Aug 2015 20:31:01, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

I haven't been flying this last week at all, so I haven't really done much apart from reading and some simulator practice flying at home for a couple of days. I have three checkrides left, with two of my checkride dates sorted out but not the third yet. On the 25th August I will have my Single Engine add-on for my Commercial certificate in the morning, then once I pass that I'll have lunch and go back up again in the afternoon to do the Single Engine add-on for my Flight Instructor Certificate. So that's two checkrides in a day but the examiner and my previous instructor believe I can handle it. They are both essentially the same checkride with a few additional maneuvers I haven't had to do before. These new maneuvers are Chandelles, Lazy Eights, Eights on Pylons, Steep spirals, and Power off 180 degree landings. I have plenty of flight time to practice these so when the checkrides roll around I should be good to go. The remaining checkride after those two is the Instrument add-on for my Flight Instructor Certificate which lets me teach people who want their Instrument rating.

I'll start my flying on Friday morning for the checkride preparation, so I'll have a better entry to report on then when I see how that goes. Once I go back I'm going to ask again about having my remaining checkride scheduled as well. The sooner I knock these last ones out the sooner I can begin working somewhere with all my ratings and start teaching students of my own :)

- Requiem (Total time = 211.6)

SE Commercial/CFI Checkride Prep #1

Fri, 14 Aug 2015 22:10:33, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

Today was the first time I've flown the single engine in a long time (about 100 flight hours ago) and it was from the right seat too, so my flight wasn't very good. Now that I'm back in the single engine those left turning tendencies I never had to worry about in the multi-engine now become a factor again. On a quick turn to demonstrate an accelerated stall I made at a higher altitude I suddenly noticed how much I was slipping, then remembered...oh yeah...I actually have to use the rudder more now. The multi-engine plane had counter rotating propellers so their effects on handling cancelled out.

Getting into the main maneuvers we practiced some steep spirals. These are like turns around a point but coupled with a descent with idle power at best gliding airspeed. Those were rough to start with but the last one was ok. After those I tried some eights on pylons. These involve picking two reference points and flying around them to create a figure eight shape in the air. Again, they were rough to start with and better towards the end. Then it was lazy eights which were ok. These are about managing the energy of the plane, so you convert the airspeed of the plane into altitude as you perform 180 degree turns, then lose the altitude and regain the airspeed so after you complete 180 degrees you end up at the same altitude and airspeed you started with. Then the last maneuver to practice was a chandelle. This is another maneuver with a 180 degree turn, but you use up all your airspeed and finish near your stall speed at a higher altitude. Because you are near stall speed you need to lower the nose slowly and accelerate without losing altitude.

Then we went off to an airport to practice landings which were pretty bad in my opinion. The multi-engine plane definitely spoiled me as the landings weren't as easy as I remember them to be. I had plenty of ballooning and floating, plus the sight picture from the right seat was making me feel as if the plane was flying along with the nose pointed to the left, so I was consistently coming in with too much right rudder applied. I would come in thinking I was straight, but I was actually coming in with the nose pointed to the right, and my instructor was telling me to add left rudder which wasn't making sense to me because I thought I was straight. I ended up making two go-arounds this flight because I wasn't comfortable with the landings as I was flaring, and I've never had the need to do that before on any of my flights up until this point so I wasn't happy at all with my landings. It wasn't until we got back to our home airport and taxiing on the ground did my instructor point out what is straight. The perspective still looked cockeyed to the left from the right seat so that's something I'm going to be getting used to next week.

I'll be flying most of next week so I have a lot of flight time to use to prepare for the checkrides. I just need to be accustomed to flying this single engine plane again like how I used to fly it.

- Requiem (Total hours = 213.6)

SE Commercial/CFI Checkride Prep #2

Mon, 17 Aug 2015 20:54:44, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

Today I flew later in the afternoon so it was, and I use the term loosely, 'cooler.' It was still about 30 degrees C at the surface, but up a few thousand feet it was much better. Again today I practiced the maneuvers of chandelles, eights on pylons, lazy eights, and a steep spiral, but the focus was doing a lot more landings to improve on last flight. My flying in general was a lot better, and my landings were much improved compared to last time as well.

I did a couple of normal landings as a warm up then did some short field and soft field landings as well as a couple of power off 180's. The short field and soft field are similar up until I put the plane down on the runway. They both use full flaps and the same approach speed, but the short field goal is to not use much runway to come to a stop so you land a bit firmer and the soft field is all about touching down as gently as possible because you pretend that you aren't landing on a paved runway but something like a grass strip. Those were all pretty good, but on one of the soft field landings I let the nose come down too quickly instead of holding it up in the air as long as possible. The power off 180s are different to these because the instructor pulls the power to idle when I'm abeam the touchdown point and I have to manage my energy so I land on the 1000ft markers without using any additional engine power. I practiced two of these and hit the 1000ft markers each time which I was pretty happy with considering I hadn't done those for months. We'll see how they go when we switch up the airport later.

Overall though my sight picture was so MUCH better and sitting on this side in this plane is beginning to feel a lot more normal to me. I'm flying early in the morning tomorrow and we should be going to a short, narrow, and upsloping airport to make the landing more challenging as that is where I'm expecting to go for my upcoming checkrides next Tuesday so I might as well start getting used to it :)

- Requiem (Total time = 215.5)

SE/CFI Commercial Prep #3-5

Sun, 23 Aug 2015 20:01:41, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

During this week I've continued getting ready for both my checkrides on Tuesday. On the whole I've been improving as I've gone along. Going back to the single engine was a challenge initially so I'm glad I had the extra time to practice with it.

These two checkrides coming up are add-ons to certificates I already have so there isn't as much theory I need to worry about for the oral portion because I already covered it on the first checkrides to get the commercial and flight instructor certificates. The hard part is the flying and I've been doing well, but I've been a bit inconsistent sometimes with a couple of maneuvers like the power off 180 landing and soft field landing. For example I flew two flights today a couple of hours apart, where on the first I did both these landings correctly but on the second flight they weren't that great. I feel ready to take the checkride of course because I can do the maneuvers, but I just need to perform on the day. I need to pass the first checkride to be able to take the next one, so fingers crossed they both go well :-)

I'm close to having finished the program and having all my qualifications to be ready to start working, which I'm really looking forward to. If everything goes to schedule I should be done by September 5th :-)

I still have one prep flight left though, so I'm using it tomorrow morning and I asked to take it with a different instructor. That's so I had a different set of eyes looking at what I'm doing in case my new instructor has missed something. I don't want to go in to the checkride with me unwittingly doing something wrong.

- Requiem

Challenge Round - Two checkrides in one day

Tue, 25 Aug 2015 21:03:42, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

Well, today was a big day. I had two checkrides scheduled back to back and I needed to pass the first one (SE Commercial add on) in order to have a shot at the second one (SE CFI add on). I'm extremely happy to say that I passed both of them and am one checkride away from completing the program and starting to work with my own students :)

As usual it started out with the oral which was pretty short. I've already earned a commercial certificate (license) so all I had to do was answer some questions about the systems of the plane, its limitations, weight & balance, and a few other bits and pieces. Then we went out to the plane and got started with a normal takeoff from the home airport before flying north and going over the maneuvers. First was the chandelle, which is a 180 degree turn where you basically trade off your current airspeed for altitude, finish the turn near stall speed, then accelerate back to cruise speed without losing altitude. Then I did the lazy eight which is a couple of 180 degree turns where you start and finish at the same altitude and airspeed, so it's another exercise for energy management because you don't touch the power during it. Those were within standards but the examiner said they were a bit robotic and not smooth, so he quickly demonstrated one for me to show how I can get it to be smoother. We climbed up a bit more in altitude and he had me do the steep spiral over a pool complex. I started out doing it at best glide speed and around 30 degrees angle of bank, adjusting the angle of bank so I could keep circling the complex evenly, but he emphasised that it's a *steep* spiral so the bank was increased closer to about 50 degrees bank (maximum is 60) which made him much happier. After completing the steep spirals he then killed my engine and had me go through a simulated emergency landing, so I went through the process of picking a place to land before recovering at about 1000ft and getting ready to complete some eights on pylons. The eights on pylons is basically flying a figure eight around two reference points on the ground. Swapping between the two. I was probably three quarters of the way through the first one and he stopped me since I handled it fine and explained everything I was doing such as pivotal altitude and its adjustments correctly.

Then it was on to the landing side of things at a nearby airport, so I tuned in to the radio and got ourselves set up to land there. I was #2 behind another aircraft and the examiner just wanted a normal landing to a full stop, which I did as it was pretty straightforward. We taxied back and he wanted a short field takeoff followed by the short field landing. Those were both good, but he was especially happy with my short field landing. He wanted me stopped the smaller markers at 1500ft, but if I did the full braking I would have been stopped by about 600ft or so maximum, and he said it was very good I didn't fly the whole final at the slow speed on final because he has had students start flying at the minimum speed on a 2 mile final before. I didn't slow down until landing was pretty much assured. After that landing we taxied back again and he had me a soft field takeoff followed by the maneuver I'd been concerned about because of how my last couple of flights had gone...the power off 180 degree accuracy landing.

The soft field takeoff was really good since I had the stall horn blaring as I lifted off, and stayed in ground effect (low to the ground so the plane accelerates easier) to go faster and climb out back into the traffic pattern. I thought the examiner was going to cut my engine and I had to ask him if he was going to. He just said to cut it when I felt comfortable, so I just said "Ok I'll just cut it now." I was at about the end of the runway when I did that, so with no power the plane turns into a glider and I have to manage the airplane's airspeed and altitude to land precisely on the 1000ft markers. I don't like doing the strict base leg then turn onto final method, I prefer to make it a circle instead of squaring them off when practicing in the last couple of flights. I think that stems from my simulator flying as when I do the circling base-final I find it easier to adjust the flight path when coming in to the runway. It feels more natural for me to do it that way and it worked. I was coming in right on the money and I popped the last notch of flaps before landing on the 1000ft markers. The examiner asked me what I thought about it, and I explained that I landed a bit flat because I used the last notch of flaps in ground effect that extended my glide further than I wanted. The examiner said that was right and I was looking perfect until I extended that extra bit of flaps. Still, actually hitting my point given how I flew those power off approaches over last couple of days felt great :D

The examiner then said that the hard part is all over with so we went back to the home airport where I finished up the checkride with a soft field landing that was pretty good. I missed the taxiway he wanted but that was because I was holding up the nosewheel as long as possible... "popping a wheelie" so to speak. I shut down the plane and I wasn't sure if I passed as he didn't tell me if I did or not, but since he asked if we'd be flying this one again because he wanted to leave the headsets in the plane that was as good as hearing I passed :)

It was lunchtime so I grabbed some food and came back to get started with the oral for the SE CFI (instructor) add-on. Like the commercial add-on I just passed it was relatively short because I already have a flight instructor certificate. I did some talking about other things like runway incursions, logbooks, certificates, and endorsements for students which he was very happy and said he could tell I knew my stuff. He was posing various scenarios that he had encountered as an examiner where instructors had screwed up before when he has turned up to checkrides, and I worked through those with him to show I caught on to what was wrong and how the instructor should have properly done things. With the oral out of the way we went out to the plane and took off again.

The maneuvers for the SE CFI add-on are for the most part all the same as the commercial ones I did, but with me talking through them instead (which I did during the commercial checkride anyway so it was the same flight essentially). Some of the extra maneuvers I did were a steep turn, power off stall, secondary stall, and an accelerated stall but the highlight of this checkride was the power off approach I made. At about 2500ft the examiner killed the engine and asked me what I'm going to do. I explained that since we are relatively high I have some time on my side so I set up best glide speed and my descent rate was about 700ft per minute, giving us about three minutes until we hit the ground somewhere. I knew that geographically we were probably north-west of an airport I know (that short narrow one) so I looked outside and found it, pointed the plane at it and went through the troubleshoot checklist for the engine failure. The checklist didn't "fix" the simulated engine failure so I planned to land at the airport instead of a field somewhere.

Originally, the runway I took off from was RWY 15, so I assumed this uncontrolled airport is going to have roughly the same wind direction since it is close by. Because of that assumption I set up on a right base, announced it over the radio, and began approaching the airport to land on RWY 17. After that I tuned in to the automatic weather there to see what the winds were doing. Well, it turns out the wind was blowing from a heading of 050, so that means I was technically lined up for the wrong runway end and would be landing with a slight tailwind instead of a headwind. The examiner then asked if I'm thinking about going for the other runway, but I said I wouldn't make it anyway so I'm committing to the tailwind landing. I had plenty of excess altitude while I was on base leg, so I extended the first notch of flaps and as I came in on final I performed "S-Turns" to bleed off the extra altitude without getting too much closer to the runway. This means instead of flying straight to the runway I flew a snaking flight path towards the it. I was in a much better position now, so I extended the next notch of flaps and performed a slight slip over the power lines at that end of the runway to bleed off that little bit of excess altitude, leveled off, put in the last notch of flaps, slowed down, and landed right on the runway numbers. The examiner said that was an excellent approach because I managed the energy of the plane really well by getting those S-turns and slip done perfectly to come in right on target. It's hard to describe how happy I was at nailing that landing...considering the circumstance it really couldn't have been any better and it left me almost in a state of disbelief at doing it :D I mean, I had only done one tailwind landing before months ago and never with a power off approach. After that it was a short field takeoff, flew back home for a normal landing and a quick debrief on the flights.

I'm pretty tired after today but I really enjoyed both of these checkrides as I always have with this examiner. Although I had to show the knowledge and skill required of the training standards the examiner said that since he has done the majority of my checkrides he knows what I'm capable of, so he also wanted to use the opportunity to give me some extra insights to help make me a better instructor. The examiner finished by saying he enjoyed the checkrides, that I really did a great job today, and he thanked me for making his job easier and not keeping him until 5 or 6 o'clock at night as happens elsewhere. I said that my job is to make my instructor look good and to make his job easier, but I gave a lot of credit to my previous instructor for how I fly now because he helped set up a very solid foundation for me to build on.

I only have about five hours of flight time left in the program and one checkride remaining...the CFII which is the add-on that lets me teach students how to fly using instruments. I should find out when that will be precisely in a day or two. If I can get through this final checkride without problems then I will have completed the program and attained all of my certificates and ratings without having "busted" (failed) a checkride :D

- Requiem (Total hours = 229.1)

CFI Instrument Prep #1

Sat, 29 Aug 2015 21:02:27, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

I'm onto training for my final checkride which is the CFII. Once I pass this it will allow me to teach students how to fly around using only their instruments. I've been doing self review these last couple of days after my last two checkrides I took on Tuesday, so that has been plenty of reading and a couple of simulator sessions to try and shake the rust off. I did pretty well for my instrument rating, so it's just taking some practice and revision to make the information fresher for me.

Today I flew the first preparation flight which was a good start. Since it is an instructor checkride I have to spend the time talking through things to explain them as I fly. Flying with the instruments while wearing the goggles is fine, but explaining everything while doing it definitely made it more challenging. After taking off we flew off to the east and my instructor wanted me to fly an imaginary DME arc off a VOR but after I made the first 90 degree turn it just didn't work for some reason. My instructor and I weren't really sure why, so I just elected to do one in the sim at another time with a published DME arc to save time. Then we flew off to an airport nearby and flew three approaches; a VOR/DME, ILS, and a GPS approach with the main display simulated as being broken.

Because of where I was in relation to the VOR/DME approach, I had to fly a "procedure turn" which allows me to reverse direction and fly at a specific altitude to a waypoint called the final approach fix (FAF). Once I passed the FAF I descended to minimum altitude, or "minimums", and maintained my course following the VOR inbound to the runway. To save time I didn't land and instead did the "missed approach" so I flew off and setup to practice the ILS approach. Flying the ILS approach was passable, but I had trouble with the power setting and trim with the turbulent air so that made descending at a constant rate difficult. Then towards the end of the approach I ended up being skewed off center to the left a bit. Out of the three approaches this was the worst one.

The last approach was the GPS approach, and for this my instructor covered up the digital flight display which meant I would no longer be following a glideslope but would be flying towards the airport using backup analog instruments, stepping down from one specific altitude to another as I flew closer to the runway. This approach was really good. I stayed on course and maintained altitudes correctly. I didn't go missed on this one but did a touch and go, so I landed on the runway, then powered up and took off again. Then it was time to go back so we flew back and landed at the home airport.

I have two more prep flights for this checkride then I'm finished training. Although I have a guaranteed job when I'm finished I looked at other options and I have an interview (involves me teaching a lesson and going for a flight with their chief pilot) with a different flight school after I'm done. My chances of working there are pretty good and I would prefer to be there so hopefully it works out. It's pretty exciting to so close to being done...soon I'll be teaching people how to fly! :D

- Requiem

CFI Instrument Prep #2

Mon, 31 Aug 2015 20:33:04, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

I flew my second last flight today and it was another prep flight for my CFI instrument checkride on Wednesday. It was pretty much the same thing as last flight. We flew out and I practiced a VOR/DME circling approach, ILS, and a partial panel GPS approach. Those were all very good because I maintained the step-down altitudes required on the VOR/DME and GPS approaches, but then on the ILS I set it up perfectly. After I intercepted the glideslope I set the power and trimmed the airplane out and it basically flew hands off for the approach. I didn't need to touch the controls after that and the plane came down on glideslope and on course, so that was pretty cool. The calm winds in the morning definitely helped out there. Then I did a touch and go landing which was super soft...we barely heard the squeak of the tires over our headsets :)

I did practice a couple of extra things today though. During the other portion of the flight I flew a couple of steep turns while wearing the Foggles which were pretty good, and dare I say it, almost easier than flying while looking outside. Once on the ground I practiced a couple of DME arcs and sorted out my brain fart with those. Later in the afternoon I met up with my old instructor and he went over some ground school with me related to instruments which I really appreciated since my new instructor hasn't been the best at covering things as thoroughly as I was used to. He helped refresh my memory on a lot of things which I needed. I was going over a lot of things by myself, but there are lots of little details and fun facts that slipped from the front of my mind he helped bring out. I also got an idea about the checkride from him as well so I'm going to practice the flow of that for my last flight tomorrow morning.

So yeah, my last flight tomorrow morning before my checkride Wednesday and that will be the end of my program :) My interview is on Friday, followed by standardisation (learning to fly for this other company) on Monday, so it won't be long until I'm working :)

- Requiem

CFI Instrument Prep #3 (final)

Tue, 01 Sep 2015 20:07:49, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

I had my last prep flight and my last checkride is tomorrow. The flight went good. I taught holds, steep turns, timed turns, and the approaches I needed to fly pretty well. The only thing my instructor suggested is that I slow the rate of information I'm putting out there a bit. My tendency was to explain everything that what was expected to happen before I did something, then explained what I was doing while I was flying it. This ended with providing too much for a student to take in at once. I was basically rushing the information a bit, so it would be better if I just slowed down the pace of how I was explaining things.

I'm looking forward to the checkride tomorrow and I'll be extremely happy to pass this like all the others because then I am officially finished with the program. I know the information, can teach it, and I can fly accurately using the instruments, so as long as I can show that tomorrow I'll be fine.

I'll post tomorrow about how I did obviously, so fingers crossed it will be good news :D

- Requiem

CFI Instrument Checkride (the last one)

Wed, 02 Sep 2015 22:30:00, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

Today is officially the last day in my flight training program because I passed the CFI instrument checkride! Who would have thought that someone whose flight experience was almost entirely due to flight simulators, would be able to cut the mustard and transition into the real thing without major hiccups? I know of at least one person! :)

The oral went well which was a good start before heading out to the plane. After the engine started I received the fake ATC clearance, input the departure, then picked up the real ATC clearance to taxi and got on our way. I explained what I was doing as we climbed out and what to see on the instruments when joining the departure using the VOR which was good. After a bit of that he had me turn away and explain unusual attitudes with a demo. I did that fine, but the examiner called the demo "a little wimpy" and quickly showed a steeper version. After that we headed off to an airport nearby for the first approach (VOR/DME) but this required a hold based on our direction of flight. So I explained holds (EFC time, etc) and how we would go about determining what kind of entry we would use to enter this hold. In this case it was a teardrop entry, so I emerged the hold and flew one lap in it. There was a strong tailwind so I had to talk about adjusting my leg timing. Normally it is one minute legs (or specific distance) but the tailwind meant I had to make one leg a shorter time than the other to compensate. We were then cleared for the approach so descended down to the altitude for the final approach fix and held it until I passed it. Once we passed it I began descending to the minimum altitude and got ready to do the circling approach. Closer to the runway he had me take the Foggles off and I circled to land for a touch and go.

After the touch and go we did the missed approach so I explained how that was going to happen then did it no problem before he had me start setting up for an RNAV (GPS) approach. Along the way he simulated a flight display failure so I talked about how I would declare an emergency and request vectors to the final approach fix because I wouldn't want to fly the entire approach with a partial panel relying on the backup analog instruments. Because I lost that display I had to demonstrate timed turns using the compass. These timed turns were right on the money, and the approach was great. I stayed very close to the course throughout and hit my altitudes as appropriate. We ended up doing the missed approach, but he told me we would be doing it early on to see if I would do the missed approach at the proper point, which I did once we reached the runway. This is the whole: cram the throttle, pitch for a climb, clean up any flaps, cool the plane with a bit more airspeed, call ATC to say we are missed, *then* hit that suspend button (remember that expensive button I've talked about that causes checkride failures? I did :)) From that missed approach we turned off towards the home airport to finish up with the ILS back home which was a good note to finish on. After landing we got out of the plane and the DPE slapped me on the back, said I did a great job and met me inside to do the paperwork to give me my new CFI certificate.

It's surreal to think that I've gone through all of this and achieved something I never thought would have been possible. All my life I've dreamed about being a pilot and thanks to some very special people they helped make this a reality. Of course I have my loving wife, her family, and my family back home who have been very supportive of this change and my efforts to study hard and do well. Also, I can never say enough good things about my mentor (and best friend) during this because he has always been there to give advice/support and talk with me about how everything was going. He has simply opened up a whole new world to me and always entertains my questioning about what he does when flying the big jets (big to me that is). I've even been able to answer some questions of his! Something that wouldn't have been possible at the beginning of this year. This experience really has been a complete life changing experience for my wife and I...About a year ago I was expecting to move back home and rejoin the Air Force, yet I'm here now as a flight instructor with my ratings about to start teaching students of my own and begin a new career.

This has been an incredible journey for me where I've learned and applied a *lot* of information during my training. It hasn't even felt like work though because I've loved every minute of it, even the checkrides! Throughout training the checkrides are a very big deal because they are a measurement of your progression as a pilot at that point, and I'm proud of having gone through all 8 of them without failing any. I've put in a lot of effort and tried to be a good pilot to show those who put me through this that I was worthy of both their friendship and generosity, so knowing that I've made them and my family proud by being the best I could be means everything. With the amount of faith shown towards me there is no way I could let them or myself down. Every time I walk out to a plane and get in it is humbling because I recognize how lucky I am to do this. It was a special moment for me when I finished up my last flight of the program today. It makes me so grateful for being given the chance to be a pilot, and I know that one day I'll be able to pay it forward and help someone else just as I have been.

I'm probably rambling on a bit here, so I'll explain what happens next for me. I have an interview at a flight school on Friday 4 Sep for me to start "Standardisation" (basically learning company/airplane procedures for training) on Monday 7th Sep, before having my own students the week after that. I've even been getting early practice in as I've been helping out some of the students here with problems they're having for a while now :) This means I'm now starting on the next stage, training my own students to build the 1500 hours I need for me to start flying the larger jets with passengers! :D

- Requiem CFI, MEI, CFII (Total hours = 234.9)

Standardisation Week

Sat, 12 Sep 2015 09:44:19, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

This week I started working at my new job, but I didn't do any instructing. This week was my "standardisation" at the flight school where I will be instructing. This process is basically about getting up to speed with company procedures and rules as well as becoming familiar with the local area and the planes to be flown. It's important to be familiar with all this so all students receive the same type of instruction regardless of the instructor who gives it. I passed everything for standardisation so that was good, plus I also received my first paycheck as a pilot! :)

Over this week the mornings consisted of a lecture covering various topics followed by a quiz, then in the afternoon we would try to either hop on an "observation" flight or we would be on a "checkout" flight. For observation flights you sit in the back seat of the airplane to watch the instructor and student up front go about and do their thing. These flights were very interesting because of seeing the student-instructor interaction from a third person perspective. I was on two observation flights, the first was in a multi-engine plane so by this point in the program the student is more experienced flying wise so the flight itself was straightforward. I was shown the various reporting points of the area as well. These reporting points are landmarks on the ground where ATC will ask me to fly over and call in on the radio to say I'm there to help them locate the plane and sequence it in for landing.

The second observation flight in the single engine where the student was learning instruments was also pretty normal, but there was a couple of moments which stood out. By this point in the program the students learning instrument are already private pilots so they should know how to land, but on this student's first landing attempt after going visual on an instrument approach well above minimums he remained *excessively* high and needed to go around. On the second approach he was better, but he started his flare about 10ft off the ground and ended up coming down pretty hard and swerved left and right on the runway (which was a bit narrow at 60 feet wide). Sitting in the back without access to the controls when that was happening was a bit uncomfortable because I could see the bad landing coming really early, but the instructor sorted it out so the student could do the touch and go to become airborne again. After that we flew back home and the instructor added some commentary to his landing and it was much better. After we got out I said to him that the second landing was much better than the other one and he explained about how the narrowness of the runway made him uncomfortable. I just smiled and replied "Well, you were able to land right on the centerline for this runway...so if you're aiming for centerline the narrowness of a runway doesn't matter" :)

As I mentioned, I also flew a couple of "checkout" flights. These flights are where I go up with an instructor and perform various maneuvers so that the school can be sure I know how to fly the plane and instruct the maneuvers in them. My first checkout flight was in a Cessna 172, of which I had a grand total of 8 hours flight time (all cross country a few months ago), so I hadn't really flown it maneuvers wise. My checkout instructor was very happy with how I flew the maneuvers, instrument approaches, and with my landings. This meant I passed the flight and I can teach students in the C172, which is usually used to teach students how to fly by instruments. I think my flying in it was better than I expected it to be because I made a serious effort to remember the sight picture out the front. All my single engine training was in a low wing Piper Archer where I sit low to the ground, and the Cessna 172 is a high wing airplane where you sit up higher off the ground. It's like comparing a racing car seat position to a monster truck in terms of height. So coming from sitting down low I wanted to be cautious of flaring in the Cessna at the wrong height based off what I was used to seeing when sitting lower in the Archer. The second checkout flight was in a Cessna 152, which is a little two seater training plane which is underpowered at 110HP compared to the Cessna 172. I had never flown it before, but I found it very responsive and a lot of fun to fly. After the flight the instructor said I flew it very well which was good to hear, so I can instruct in that one too now. Although I have my multi-engine instructor rating I don't have a checkout flight in a multi-engine plane for a while, so it will be a couple of months probably until I begin instructing in that one.

I start at my new location next week, but because it's a different location I will need to do a couple of observation flights to get familiar with that area as well as flying the C172 and C152 checkout flights again. I'm not complaining about getting to fly the C172 and C152 again because I don't have much experience flying them. It was easier than I thought it would be to adjust to flying them, but we'll see on the next flights if those were flukes or not :) Once those flights are done I will be assigned students and can officially begin flight instructing! :D

From what I've heard from other flight instructors I will more than likely have some stories of my own to share moving forward, so I plan on continuing this blog to write about those as they come up.

- Requiem (Total time = 239.0)

First Week of Instructing

Sat, 19 Sep 2015 16:10:34, requiem009, [category: uncategorized]

Hi everyone,

Today the weather has kept me grounded so I'm taking the chance for a blog update about how my first week as a flight instructor has been going.

I've been kept very busy this week. I was checked out in the Cessna 152 and 172 on Monday and was then assigned 4 students of my own. I'm teaching them how to fly by instruments which is going pretty well. Two of them are brand new to the concept, so by teaching them from the start of instrument phase I have been drilling into them how to do things correctly. Hopefully doing that will give them a solid foundation to work with moving forward.

For their training I've been doing a mixture of simulator flying and actual flying. I was a bit nervous on my first flight as the instructor. After we took off though that went away and the flight went well. I'm really loving instructing though. It's very rewarding to be in the sim or airplane seeing how the student progresses in understanding through the session. My students all work very hard too so that is great to see. After I am done teaching them they will have another instructor teach them how to fly instrument approaches and a few other things, so hopefully what I'm doing with them will hold them in good stead.

I don't have much to report on from my instructional flights, but I did do something funny to my students. On a couple of the flights I needed to introduce unusual attitudes to them, so I also used the chance to demonstrate spatial disorientation where you don't know which way the plane is oriented. They had their Foggles on and I asked them to close their eyes, put their hands in their laps, and give me the controls. I put the plane into a standard rate turn and maintained it for about a minute. I also made minor power adjustments before finishing with a quick whip of the controls to bring the plane back to straight and level flight. Then I asked them how the plane felt oriented and they all thought it was heavily banked to one side. I told them to open their eyes to look at the instruments and the surprise on their face at being straight and level was hilarious. I gave them some serious spatial disorientation and used it to show them why you need to trust the instruments instead of your body when flying IFR.

I won't just be working with these four guys though, sometimes I'll be assigned to fly with a student to fly cross countries or something, but flying with other students are one off occurrences to fill my schedule. Speaking of schedules, I'm kept pretty busy. I work six days a week with an optional second day off if I don't want to fly, and they are 12 hour days where I've either been flying or in a simulator. Everyone is very busy here and the average flight time is 100hours a month, so getting flight time isn't a problem if the weather allows it. I actually had to cancel a flight yesterday because if I flew it I would have flown more than 8 hours flight instructing in one day which is against regulations. I love flying though so I'll be flying as much as I can :)

To sum up it's been a very good first week and I'm getting in a good rhythm for instructing the lessons. The people I work with here are great as well and it makes for a really nice work environment. I can tell I'll be enjoying my time here. It doesn't even feel like work :)

- Requiem (Total hours = 252.0)