



LHU professor achieves first solo flight, views campus from above

LOCK HAVEN — AvSport of Lock Haven, the sport aviation school on the Piper Memorial Airport in Lock Haven, has announced that another of its primary students has achieved his first solo flight. Gerard Martorell, a professor of international business at Lock Haven University, recently demonstrated his competence to safely fly a Light Sport aircraft as its sole occupant, by viewing the campus from above.

Martorell came to LHU to teach last fall, and this January began flight training at Piper Memorial Airport, in pursuit of a lifelong dream to become a pilot.

Originally from France and until recently a resident of Spain, Martorell's desire to initiate flight training was delayed for several months while awaiting an FBI background investigation and approval from the Transportation Security Administration — requirements that were implemented following the September 11, 2001 attacks.

Martorell is receiving training from Dr. H. Paul Shuch, AvSport founder, chief flight instructor and retired professor. Martorell will now begin to receive advanced training, which will

“take him from airplane driver all the way up to licensed pilot,” Shuch said.

Upon completion of this successful first solo flight, Shuch cut the back off of Gerard's T-shirt, and autographed it to mark the occasion. This ritual dates back to the Golden Age of aviation, when barnstormers frequently had to patch rips in their fabric-covered aircraft with pieces of their own garments. Martorell's shirt is now displayed on the wall of the AvSport office, joining 19 others representing the students who have achieved this same milestone over the past eight years.

The Sport Pilot license, in which AvSport specializes, is the newest portal of entry into the world of aviation, allowing prospective pilots to become licensed in half the time, and at half the cost, of the traditional Private Pilot license.

Sport Pilots fly solely for pleasure; in fair weather; during daylight hours; in simple, low-performance Light Sport aircraft. Piper Memorial Airport is the ancestral home to the legendary Piper Cub, arguably the world's first sport plane.



PHOTO PROVIDED

Dr. H. Paul Shuch, AvSport chief flight instructor, performs a ritual that dates back to the Golden Age of Aviation, by cutting off the back of LHU professor Gerard Martorell's shirt following his first successful solo flight, which included viewing campus from above.