



Chris Adams Flight Academy (CAFA) is a flight school that Adventist World Aviation (AWA) has partnered with to help with flight training. I had been scheduled with Fabien Couteaud, CAFA's owner and flight instructor, to fly with him to get signed off so I could solo fly. Getting up early to fly ahead of questionable weather did not work. When I got to the hangar the weather had taken a turn for the worse.

Fabien and I stood outside looking at the sky trying to decide whether or not to fly... when suddenly a loud *boom* cracked overhead! A thunderstorm was building right next to the airport. Instantaneously, we decided to call off the flight that morning and

pray for clearer weather later in the day. I continued to finish up the annual inspection on the plane that I was working on and by midday the storm had blown over. The weather was perfect now!

I quickly pulled the plane out and did my preflight inspection only to find out the aircraft battery was dead! The 1967 Piper Colt had not flown for a while so I quickly swapped out the battery to go flying. With the preflight done, I was ready to go.

Fabien and I took off in the plane, did some maneuvers and some pattern work to show my capabilities, then after 3 consecutive good landings, I was ready to go alone. I taxied the plane back

and Fabien hopped out. I was now on my own in a plane for the first time ever in my entire career of aviation. It was a great feeling! I knew I was ready and had the skills to do it, but that did not keep my nerves calm. I was both excited and nervous at the same time.

I taxied the plane up to runway 3 at Johnston Regional Airport and made my radio call, "Johnston Regional, Piper Colt 5302 Zulu departing from runway three, Johnston." I did my pre take off checklist: Fuel-On, Mixture-Rich, Runway heading, Full throttle. The plane came alive and started rolling down the runway. I pulled back on the yoke and I was off.

I was to do 3 consecutive landings on runway 3, but just as I started to turn downwind in the pattern I heard a radio call from Fabien informing me of a wind shift.

"You need to change runways," he informed me.

"Not a problem," I said, "I know the procedure for that."

I turned the plane for the center of the airport and overflew the runway to enter the pattern for the opposite side of the airport for runway 21. I set up for my first landing and all was going well... but my nerves got the better of me and while I made a "good" landing, I knew I could do better. I did a "full stop," taxied the plane off the runway and back around to compose myself. I took a breather for a moment; realizing what I had just accomplished.

For the first time in 20 years of wanting to become a pilot, *I was*. I had just completed my first takeoff, flight and landing all by myself. "Right," I said to myself, "2 more to go." The second time around I did better, but the wind got me at the end. The

third time was a charm and I got it perfect! I even impressed myself with the landing! Now that it was all completed, I taxied the plane back to the hangar and celebrated my newly acquired skill of being able to solo fly an airplane. This is a major milestone in my pilot training that I have been waiting to accomplish for a long time. Soon I hope to finish up my written test and be signed off to take my private pilot check ride later this year.

Thank you for your prayers and support for all of us at AWA. Some are in various stages of their flight training, but we all are committed to being the best we can be in God's service.

Thank you for your prayers and support!

*Until next month!*

*The Stevenson Family*



**Your AWA Mission Family  
stationed at AWA Headquarters  
in Smithfield, NC:  
Kyle, Rebecca, & Hadahsa Stevenson**