



**PIPER MEMORIAL AIRPORT
353 PROCTOR STREET
LOCK HAVEN PA 17745**

For Immediate Release:

Santa Brings Retiree a Pilot's License

**For more information, contact Prof. H. Paul Shuch, Chief Flight Instructor
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Lock Haven, PA, 23 December 2019 – Just two days before Christmas, after nearly three years of effort, Bill Harkleroad Jr. earned his Sport Pilot license at AvSport of Lock Haven, the sport aviation school on the Piper Memorial Airport. “It was the best Christmas present I ever received,” says the retired mining maintenance superintendent from Huntingdon PA.

It was a long haul for Harkleroad, originally from Illinois, which involved three different aircraft, four different instructors, and invaluable encouragement from his wife Galene, who was at the Lock Haven airport in July of 2018 to witness Bill's very first solo flight, and remained supportive of his efforts throughout the balance of his training.

Harkleroad came to Lock Haven to train in October 2017, after having received several flight lessons at Mifflin County Airport, Reedsville, PA, in a Piper J-3 Cub which had actually been born in Lock Haven more than seventy years prior. However, the cost of insurance for a student pilot to fly a valuable antique became prohibitive, so Bill transitioned to flying a modern Light Sport trainer aircraft with Prof. H. Paul Shuch, AvSport's founder and chief instructor. But, Bill preferred the feel of the legendary Cub, and shortly after his first solo flight he purchased a Kitfox experimental aircraft, a modern incarnation of that iconic design.

Basing his own plane in Reedsville, Harkleroad resumed flying with his original instructor, until he was ready to take his FAA checkride. Unfortunately, that instructor is not a computer user, and the Federal Aviation Administration now requires all pilot applications to be processed online. So, Bill flew with a recommending instructor from Jersey Shore, PA, in preparation for his practical test.

Tragically, that instructor was killed in an aviation accident just two days before he was scheduled to sign Bill off for his practical test. So, Bill had to find yet another instructor, Dave Dix from Center Hall, PA, to recommend him for testing. The final exam was conducted by Prof. Shuch, by now an FAA Designated Pilot Examiner. Since he had not flown with the applicant in well over a year, Shuch was able to look at Bill with fresh eyes, and objectively gauge his excellent performance.

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. Modern Light Sport aircraft allow pilots to recapture the bygone fly-for-fun Cub era, with increased reliability and improved safety. Anyone interested in learning more about sport flying is invited to browse the school's extensive website at <http://AvSport.org>, where a wealth of free training materials awaits.

DOWNLOADABLE PHOTO: <http://www.avsport.org/photos/graduates/BillH.jpg>

CAPTION: Bill Harkleroad Jr. performing a preflight inspection of his Kitfox aircraft, prior to a successful Sport Pilot checkride the afternoon of December 23, 2019.