



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

For Immediate Release:

## **Examiner Crosses the Country to Certify New Pilot**

**For more information, contact Prof. H. Paul Shuch, Chief Flight Instructor  
Office (570) 748-3725, Cell (570) 419-1229, email [fly@AvSport.org](mailto:fly@AvSport.org)**

**Lock Haven, PA, 4 February 2022** – Zhimin Ding was having a difficult time fulfilling his lifelong dream. Originally from China and always wanting to become a pilot, the Sunnyvale CA resident had struggled through roughly two years of rigorous flight training at the Stanford Flying Club in Palo Alto, and was now ready for his flight test. Unfortunately, no flight examiner was to be found. There had long been a nationwide shortage of FAA Designated Pilot Examiners, and the pandemic had exacerbated the problem. It almost seemed as though all of Zhimin’s efforts had been for naught.

In desperation, Zhimin, a Web-savvy Silicon Valley entrepreneur, resorted to browsing the Internet, and stumbled across the audaciously named website “SportPilotExaminer.US”. There he connected with Prof. H. Paul Shuch, the founder and Chief Flight Instructor of a small flight school in Lock Haven PA. He had previously followed Shuch’s online aviation forum posts, and learned that he also happened to hold FAA credentials as a Designated Pilot Examiner.

Examiners had long been assigned to specific local areas. But the FAA, recognizing a nationwide shortage of persons qualified to conduct flight tests, recently began allowing those willing to travel to venture away from home base, and give checkrides out of district.

“When I set up my examiner website,” states Shuch, “I never realized that I would soon become one of the *only* FAA Designated Pilot Examiners actually serving the entire US. With a global pandemic raging, few of my colleagues were willing to risk travel.”

Though Shuch was hesitant to put his health at risk, he and Zhimin negotiated a series of accommodations. Both of them agreed to a policy of full vaccination, multiple COVID tests, N-95 masking, social distancing, and quarantine periods both before and after the day-long flight exam. Last month, it all came together, and Zhimin finally earned his Sport Pilot credentials.

Sport Pilots fly solely for pleasure, in fair weather, during daylight hours, in simple, low-performance Light Sport aircraft. Shuch is based on Piper Memorial Airport, 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 about sport flying is invited to browse the flight school’s extensive website at <http://AvSport.org>, where a wealth of free training materials awaits.

DOWNLOADABLE PHOTO: <http://avsport.org/DPE/photos/Zhimin.jpg>

CAPTION: FAA Designated Pilot Examiner Prof. H. Paul Shuch congratulates Zhimin Ding on having just become the world’s newest licensed pilot, handing him his Temporary Airman Certificate following a successful checkride.