

Aviation Badge 2022

In recent weeks, several members of the troop were able to experience a unique opportunity: The aviation badge. This badge, while not commonly taught, is quite fascinating, and opens interesting paths to various careers. With two FedEx connections- both of whom are pilots for the company- troop 48 was able to receive instruction from people who had experienced the badge's material firsthand. These instructors had information that one inexperienced in requirements and tasks of a commercial pilot may not have possessed, and this made the entire badge more enjoyable and more immersive. Each participant seemed to gain interest as the sessions continued, each much more exclusive and enjoyable than the last.

The first session was mainly centered around general instruction and the completion of several basic requirements concerning the forces that act on airplanes, the mechanics of lift, and more. The participants also were able to test their model planes that they had created out of styrofoam, experimenting with their various properties and squinting themselves with the principles of steering an airplane. A concept that would prove important later, which those taking the badge began to learn, was the idea that planes turn by banking, or tilting on their horizontal axis, as opposed to a car's method of turning, which is, if everything succeeds, to rotate on a vertical axis. This made some activities during the following week's session rather difficult.

The next session continued instruction on the mechanics and controlling of planes. However, this particular session was much more hands-on. The troop 48 members present were able to train in a simulator at a FedEx training building , where these multimillion dollar simulators are run 24 hours per day, trainees gaining experience as they progress through various programs. Though what the troop members underwent did not involve the full extent of FedEx pilot simulator training, the experience was quite interesting and exciting. To actually feel the various sensations of flight- especially self-guided flight- was exhilarating. For all its merits, simulator training would almost pale in comparison to the opportunity the following Saturday. The badge class was able to take its simulator training to the skies, and fly several planes, provided by pilot acquaintances of the class' instructors. If the last experience had been exhilarating, this was beyond belief. After being familiarized with the various specifics of piloting, watching the application of principles the class had learned was interesting, and a unique experience. This entire badge class proved to be inspiring, and will undoubtedly hold an important place in the minds of the scouts who participated.